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AISWA Literacy Project B P-3 assessment : teachers developing effective literacy assessment strategies

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AISWA LITERACY PLAN

AISWA Literacy Project B
P-3 Assessment:
Teachers Developing
Effective Literacy Assessment Strategies

Every child leaving Primary School should be numerate, and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level

Every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have happened without the enthusiastic participation of several classroom teachers with the support from their schools. Those who participated and their schools were:

Sarah Arrowsmith Celine Bellve	Yiyili Aboriginal Community School, Halls Creek
Sally Glass Stephanie Egginton	Frederick Irwin Anglican Community School, Bunbury
Lee Konig Rhonda Foss	Hale Junior School, Wembley Downs
Anne Lewis Ruth Jones	Methodist Ladies College Junior School, Claremont
Marion Barnes Jody Love	Presbyterian Ladies College, Peppermint Grove
SallyHerron Melanie Greenland	Quintillian School, Mount Claremont
Eleanor Jones Margo Calder	Tranby College, Baldivis
Aaron Guppy Sandi grime Gaye Entwhistle	John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School, Beechboro & Mirrabooka
Joan Hollingsworh Helen Adams	Scotch College, Swanbourne

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project originated from recommendations from Phase 1 in the development of the National Literacy Plan for the Association of Independent Schools. These recommendations included the need for a systematic approach to literacy assessment and teaching. The current project aimed to address this situation. The primary purposes of the project were: to explore how teachers can best improve outcomes for children by understanding assessment measures more effectively; to provide time for reflection and discussion about what participating teachers find out from using the assessment procedures; to explore how this knowledge will help teachers select appropriate teaching for all children, particularly those at risk; and for teachers to record and report what they found out.

An action research model was used to provide teachers with a critical friend to help them to reflect on what they had found out from the assessments they used. Teachers used a range of assessments from *An observation survey* (Clay, 1993); the *New Zealand School Entry Assessment* (NZ Ministry of Education, 1997); *Assessment Resource Kit* (ACER: Foster & Masters, 1996 and Masters & Foster, 1996); and a test of phonemic segmentation (Yopp, 1995). Information from the assessments and the teachers' reflections were then used by the teachers to plan for their teaching. Participants were assisted in making links between assessment materials and the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994), the English Learning Outcomes and Standards Framework (EDWA, 1998) in the *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998).

Outcomes

Initially, teachers found working from an action research model difficult, as they had not previously experienced this as a way of participating in professional development. However, as they became more and more familiar with the process, they found it most empowering in providing refined information about several issues including: their students' learning; different assessment tasks; links between assessment and teaching; the way different skills played a critical role in enabling students to meet success; and their own teaching.

Issues

The major issues which arose for the teachers related to time, school and classroom organisation and the need for more time to access suitable professional development opportunities. At the conclusion of the project, all of the teachers developed a school specific draft plan and timeline for assessment of students in Years P to 3. The plans included informal and formal assessments the teachers would like to implement in their school as part of a systematic whole school approach to literacy assessment and teaching in the P-3 area. They were also able to see the links between a range of assessment procedures including mapping students' progress of the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994), and the English Learning Outcomes from the *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998).

Timing

Timing of the project initially caused some concern for teachers as they thought they were going to be learning about assessment strategies which could be applied immediately to all their classes. Instead the aim of the project was to provide them with a range of assessment procedures which would help them plan for a systematic approach throughout the P-3 section of their schools.

School and classroom organisation

Several teachers found it difficult to assess children within the classroom during normal class times. At some schools, other staff such as the school psychologist assessed students, at others, teachers discussed the need for more release time (DOTT) to assess children at specific times during the year while other schools rearranged learning groups and activities and considered the need for additional classroom support staff such as a teacher assistant.

Access to suitable professional development opportunities

For many of the teachers, it was difficult to reach the venue for the workshops by 4pm. Often this did not allow for sufficient time in the workshops to really carryout the reflection needed for action research. It might be more appropriate to conduct future professional development of this nature on weekends.

Several recommendations were made by participants in this project.

Recommendation 1:
Schools be supported to develop whole school approaches to literacy assessment especially in the early years.

Recommendation 2:
Ongoing professional development be provided to support the development of in head knowledge of assessment tasks and related tools such as the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994).

Recommendation 3:
Schools receive assistance in developing sufficient appropriate resources for assessing the literacy development of all children.

Recommendation 4:
Professional development be provided for teachers who wish to develop stanines and adapt assessment tasks for use within their school's specific context.

1. Introduction

The AISWA Literacy Project B: P-3 Assessment came from recommendations contained in the report titled *Students at Risk in Pre-Primary/Year One.* The *Students at Risk in Pre-Primary/Year One* report was commissioned by AISWA as Stage On of the AISWA National Literacy Plan. In this report it was noted that many schools did not have a systematic approach to assessing students across the P-3 class. The purpose of this document is to report on the outcomes of the AISWA Literacy Project B: P-3 Assessment. During the course of this project, teachers were assisted in developing systematic literacy assessment strategies for their schools and their students.

Schools self selected to participate in the project and included one or more schools from each of the following categories of schools (see *Students at Risk in Pre-Primary/Year One,* p2).

- **Aboriginal Schools** - These are rural or remote schools whose population is mainly Aboriginal children
- **Philosophically Based Schools** - this category represents those secular schools which have been established to explicitly provide children with a particular pedagogical or philosophically based education, other than that of a non-secular education
- **Commonwealth Category Low Fee Schools** - this category includes those non-secular schools who draw from families of low socio-economic status as classified by Commonwealth funding criteria
- **Commonwealth Category Medium Fee Schools** - this category includes those non-secular schools who draw from families of medium socio-economic status as classified by Commonwealth funding criteria
- **Commonwealth Category High Fee Schools** - this category includes those non-secular schools who draw from families of high socio-economic status as classified by Commonwealth funding criteria

2. What AISWA schools were already doing to assess students' literacy development

In the *Students at risk in Pre-Primary/Year One* report a cross case analysis showed:

i.   Except for the Commonwealth Category High Fee schools, few of the schools have a clearly articulated whole school policy on assessment, intervention and reporting;

ii.   At the pre-primary level teachers tended to mainly rely on their experience and intuition to identify children at risk;

iii.   On the whole records at the pre-primary level were often limited to anecdotal notes or notes related to specific observations of children who were causing concern;

iv.   It appeared that the prevalence of resource teachers to take over responsibility for those children who were seen to be at risk, overcame the need for most of the classroom teachers to develop programs specifically to meet the needs of individual children; and

v.   Some of the more commonly identified needs were as follows:

- More professional development in *First Steps*;
- Professional development about parent participation and parent programs;
- Opportunities to find out what other teachers do;
- Smaller classes in Year 1;
- More resources to support *First Steps* strategies; and
- More professional development related to recent Commonwealth initiatives (pp73-75).

AISWA schools wishing to develop a more systematic approach to literacy assessment were invited to participate in professional development sessions run by Edith Cowan University during terms three and four in 1998. Ten

schools chose to participate in the project which focused on the following recommendations from the Students at risk in Pre-Primary/Year One report.

i. [T]hat schools be offered the opportunity for pre-primary and Year 1 teachers to participate in one of a range of systematic professional development programs which focus on:

  • Systematic use of the Observation Survey and Reading Recovery strategies (a full Reading Recovery Program is very expensive and possibly unsuited to the needs of AISWA schools);

  • Systematic use of the School Entry Assessment (New Zealand Ministry of Education);

  • Systematic assessment and teaching strategies from the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) Language program;

  • Systematic use of the *Keys to Life* (State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) program developed in Victoria (Bradbury, et al, 1997); and

  • A whole class approach based on the guided reading program from Ohio, USA (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

ii. [U]pdating knowledge about *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) would provide teachers with an appropriate mechanism for addressing an outcomes approach to language and literacy learning.

iii. Schools needed support to implement a whole school systematic approach to assessment and teaching.

iv. The historical divide between preschool and school is one that needs to be bridged.

3. Assessment Tasks used during the project

A minimum of two teachers participated from each school with participating teachers choosing to be in one of two clusters, Cluster A and Cluster B.

Cluster A used the following assessment tasks from the Marie Clay An Observation Survey.

    a.   Running Records;

    b.   Letter Identification;

    c.   Concepts About Print;

    d.   Ohio Word Test; and

    e.   Writing Samples (Years 2 & 3) or Writing Vocabulary (Year 1).

Cluster B used all assessment tasks from the *New Zealand School Entry Assessment*, Second Edition. The tasks in this assessment battery are:

    a.   *Concepts About Print* (in *An observation survey*, Clay, 1993);

    b.   *Checkout/Rapua: A shopping game to assess numeracy* (in *New Zealand School Entry Assessment*, Ministry of Education, 1997); and

    c.   *Tell Me/Ki Mai: A collaborative language activity* (in *New Zealand School Entry Assessment*, Ministry of Education, 1997).

After some negotiation, both Clusters chose to cover, in brief, materials in the *Assessment Resource Kit* (ARK - ACER: Foster & Masters, 1996 and Masters & Foster, 1996) and the *Keys to Life* (State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997). One school, however, chose to look only at the ARK materials and from those developed school based checklists which covered areas of concern for them. A *Keys to Life* (State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) video titled Learning Centres was used to demonstrate how teachers can assess children in their class using existing school resources.

Participating teachers were initially given the opportunity to choose other assessment tools such as the ARK materials if they felt they were more appropriate for their needs. However, none chose any other tools although one school did choose not to participate as they felt they were adequately assessing literacy development using First Steps. An effort was made to ensure that schools were introduced to assessment and monitoring of progress through the *First Steps* continua as well as Student Outcome Statements. In the final sessions of the project , the assessment data which

has been covered was mapped against the English learning outcomes in the *Curriculum Framework.*

The findings from the teachers using these assessment tasks were then linked to the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994), *Student Outcome Statements* (EDWA, 1998) and the *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998). Since the *Curriculum Framework* is the only document mandated for AISWA schools, it was left up to the schools to make decisions about how they record outcomes.

4. Background information about the assessment tasks used in this project

The assessment tasks were selected on he basis that they provided a broad assessment of literacy related skills such as letter identification, phonemic segmentation, sequencing and identification of strategies used by readers.

4.1 *An observation survey of early literacy achievement* (Clay, 1993)

For the purposes of this project, several assessment tasks from *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 1993) were used to assist teachers to develop their understanding of literacy assessment. The tasks used from this assessment battery included:

- Running Records
- Letter Identification
- Concepts About Print
- Hearing and recording sounds in words (Dictation Task)
- Ohio Word Test
- Writing Samples (Years 2 and 3)
- Writing Vocabulary (Year 1).

The Concepts About Print test also forms part of the *New Zealand School Entry Assessment,* Second Edition (Ministry of Education, 1997) which is addressed below.

4.2 *New Zealand School Entry Assessment,* Second Edition (Ministry of Education, 1997)

This assessment battery is now given to all children commencing school in New Zealand. The tasks in this assessment battery are:

- Checkout/Rapua: A shopping game to assess numeracy
- Concepts About Print (from the Marie Clay An Observation Survey)
- Tell Me/Ki Mai: A collaborative language activity

The assessments provided by each of the assessment schedules were also linked to the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) and to the English Learning Area Outcome Statements in the *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998).

5.   The process of the project

A series of five two-hour workshops were held for each of the two clusters during terms three and four, 1998. Participants were introduced to a series of assessment tasks (see sections 3 and 4 above) and encouraged to trial them on a small group of children in their classes.

5.1.   The Workshops

The structure of these workshops were such that participants were provided with a forum to share their needs, issues, insights and reflections on literacy assessment. This provided teachers with the opportunity to learn what others were doing and to consider how they might re-view their own practices. Each participant was provided with an information booklet (see Appendix I).

5.1.1. The First Workshop Session[1]

This workshop was held in early August, 1998 with all participants attending together. Additional people also attended from each school. These people mostly included principals, deputy principals, and resource/support staff. The plan for each workshop was presented at the beginning of each

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[1]   Copies of overheads and handouts for this workshop are included in Appendix II.

workshop. Goals for the first session were presented followed by the context and purposes for the project. Participants were also introduced to process of action research.

5.1.1.1 Goals for the first session

During the first session participants were familiarised with the context, the purposes for the project (refer to Section 2 above) and the process of action research. Participants were invited to identify an issue they wanted to investigate during the course of the project and were then provided with an overview of how the project would proceed.

5.1.1.2 Context for the project

The project was conducted within the context of the need for AISWA schools to comply with and/or meet national and state literacy standards. These national and state literacy standards include:

- National Literacy Plan, including the literacy Benchmarks; and
- The West Australian mandated Curriculum Framework with the English Major Learning Outcomes.

The EDWA Student Outcome Statements, while not mandated, provided an additional perspective from which to explore literacy assessment within AISWA schools against national and state mandated requirements and thus fulfil the purposes of this project.

5.1.1.3 Purposes of the project

The primary purposes of this project were:

- To explore how teachers can best improve outcomes for children by understanding assessment measures more effectively;
- To provide time for reflection and discussion about what participating teachers find out from using the assessment procedures;

- To explore how this knowledge will help teachers select appropriate teaching for all children, particularly those at risk;
- For teachers to record and report what they found out; and
- To provide teachers with a range of assessment procedures from which they could select when developing a systematic approach to literacy assessment across the P-3 area of their schools.

To fulfil the purposes of this project, teachers undertook to participate in an action research project during Terms Three and Four, 1998.

5.1.1.4.   The Action Research Project

There are three main phases in the action research cycle:

- Observation;
- Reflection; and
- Action.

Each of these three phases is briefly described below.

i.   Observation

Teachers regularly observe the children in their classroom.   Some observations will be informal and some more formal.

ii.   Reflection

By reflecting on their observations, teachers will already be making teaching/learning (curriculum) decisions.

iii.   Action

Insights gained during reflections on what teachers have observed form the basis for what they will do next with their class and specifically with individual children. How they do this will also be driven by their observations and reflections. This is usually referred to as using their professional judgement.

In the action research cycle, teachers record the process by which they develop and exercise their professional judgement. This cycle looks something like Figure 1 below.

OBSERVATION

ACTION
RESEARCH/
LEARNING
CYCLE   ACTION

REFLECTION
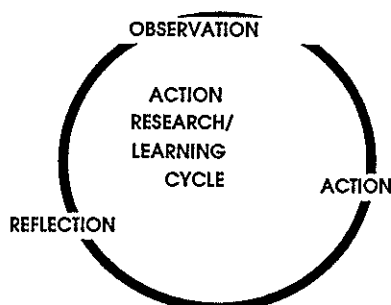
Figure 1: Action Research Cycle: Teacher-as-researcher developing curriculum

Participants were encouraged to explore their role in the interative process of teaching/learning/assessment/teaching/learning assessment. For this purpose, McKernan's (1996) model of action research in educational settings, was adapted to show, specifically, how the classroom literacy assessment cycle operates.

This initial workshop session provided a broad context and process for professional development in literacy assessment as well as a framework for further workshops during the project.

The action research approach to exploring the different assessment procedures did initially cause some concerns for the participants. They clearly had expected a different approach where they would be instructed in how to do the assessments and would then carry these out for the whole class. However, as the teachers became engaged in the action research cycle, they found this approach more helpful.

5.1.2 Subsequent sessions

For Workshops 2, 3 and 4, participates attended on one of two days with one Cluster meeting one afternoon for two hours after school and the other cluster meeting a couple of days later for a couple of hours after school. For Workshop Session 5 participants from both clusters met together with some bringing other persons such as early childhood co-ordinator, primary principal, resource teacher, etc., with an interest in literacy assessment in the school.

5.1.2.1   Workshop Session 2[2]

This second workshop session introduced participants to what was specifically required of them. The following issues were addressed in the second workshop:

- The project rationale (see recommendations from *Students at risk in Pre-primary/Year One* report in Section 2 above) including why specific assessment tools were being used;
- Participants were introduced to some of the assessment tasks; and
- What to do between now and the next session was discussed at the conclusion of the workshop. Participants were encouraged to:
  a. Try out the assessment tasks;
  b. Keep a reflective journal; and
  c. Meet with their critical friend to discuss what they did and what they found, etc.
- For next session participants were asked to:
  a. Please bring *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) or Resource books if you have them
  b. Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

Participants were asked to consider the following issues about literacy assessment within the context of this project. Points for discussion included:

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[2] Copies of overheads and handouts for this workshop are included in Appendix III.

- Which children are you selecting and why? How different are these children? How do you know this? How did you make your judgements?
- What can you find out about students from each of these assessments? When might you make use of these assessments?
- How will this knowledge help you plan for better outcomes
- How does the knowledge you have learned from this assessment tool link to how children learn to read and write?
- How will this knowledge help you achieve the English Outcomes?
- How will it help ensure children achieve the Benchmarks?
- How does this form of assessment link to First Steps?
- How can *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) help in planning for outcomes for the child?
- A model of the reading process (see Figure 2 below).

Social + Cultural Context
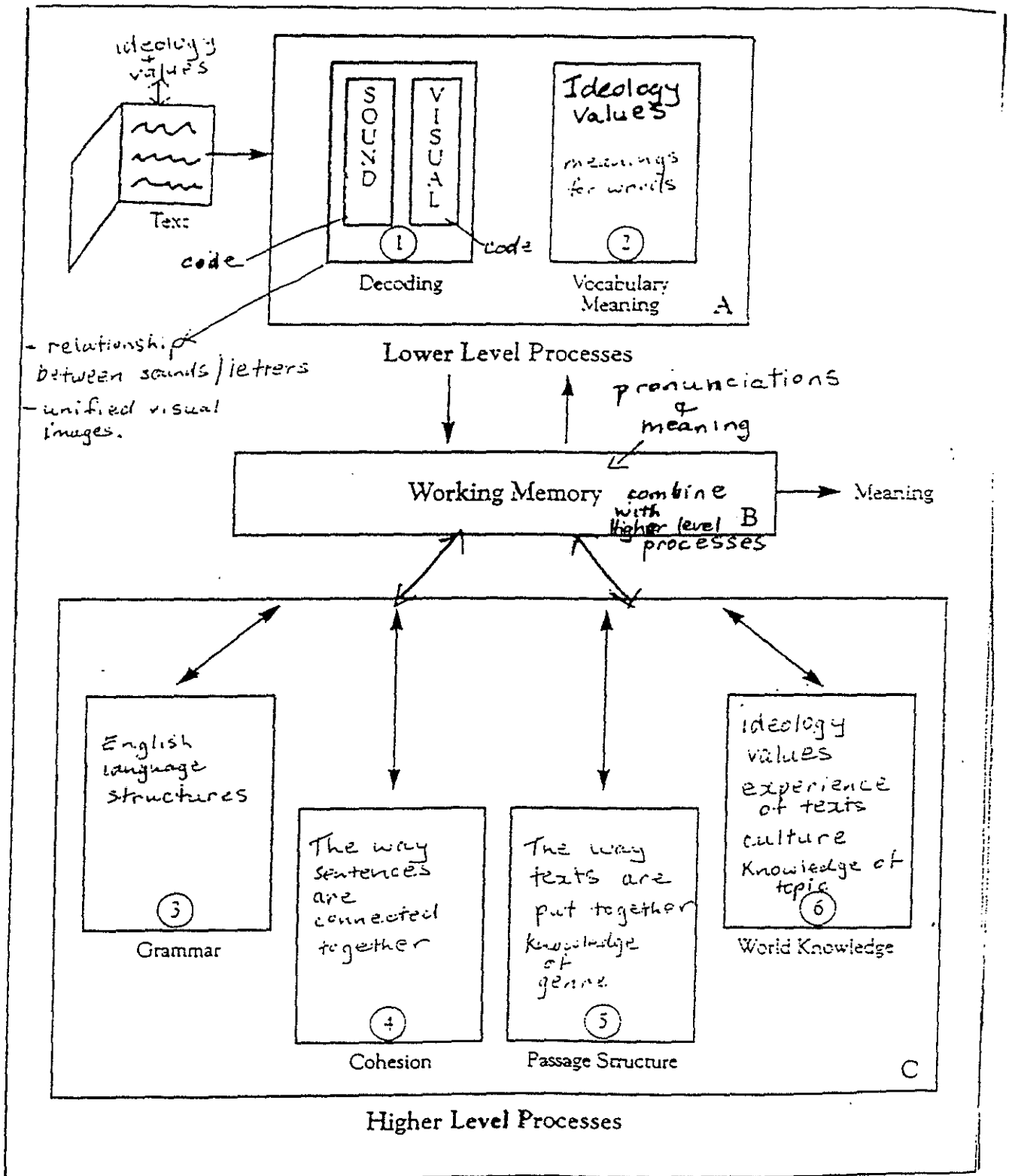
Figure 2: An adaptation of Roller's (1998) model of literacy development

The assessment tasks, with the exception of the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation (Yopp, 1995), for Cluster A, were from *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 1993) and included:

    i.   Letter Identification;

    ii.   Ohio Word Test;

    iii.   Hearing and recording sounds in words (Dictation Task);

    iv.   Writing samples (Years 2/3);

    v.   Writing Vocabulary (Year 1); and

    vi.   Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation.

Cluster B

Similarly, assessment tasks, with the exception of the *Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation* (Yopp, 1995), for Cluster B were from: *New Zealand School Entry Assessment*, second edition (Ministry of Education, 1997) and included:

    i.   Tell me: A collaborative language activity;

    ii.   Concepts About Print Test (see Clay, 1993);

    iii.   Checkout: A shopping game to assess numeracy; and

    iv.   Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation.

5.1.2.2   Workshop Session 3[3]

A time was provided at the beginning of the workshop session to debrief and update on what participants were finding during their use of the assessment tasks. Participants were also introduced to two more assessment tasks from *An Observation Survey of Early Lteracy Achievement* (Clay, 1993). For Cluster A, these tasks were Concepts About Print and Running Records.

An additional assessment tasks for Cluster B included the Concepts About Print (Clay, 1993) from the *New Zealand School Entry Assessment* plus two Phonemic Awareness Tasks and a miscue analysis:

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[3]   Copies of overheads and handouts for this workshop are included in Appendix IV.

i.   Names Test (Dufflemeyer, Kruse, Merkley & Fyfe, 1994);

ii.   Yopp-Singer *test of phonemic segmentation* (Yopp, 1995); and

iii.   Miscue Analysis (see Burns & Roe, 1989 & Kemp, 1987).

Before the next workshop session, participants from both clusters were encouraged to trial each of the assessment tasks, keep their reflective journal, meet with their critical friend to discuss what they did and what they found. For the next workshop session, they were asked to bring points for discussion about what they did and what they found out about their students.

A video on how to organise the classroom using learning groups (see *Keys to Life* , State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) was used during this workshop to promote discussion on organisational and pedagogical issues associated with completing a literacy assessment battery for a whole class.

5.1.2.3   Workshop Session 4[4]

As now established, a time was provided at the beginning of the workshop session to debrief and update on what participants were finding during their use of the assessment tasks. For this session, it had been planned to link the assessment tasks and the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994), to look at the *Keys to Life* (State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) and the *Assessment Resource Kit* (ARK) materials produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research (see Foster & Masters, 1996 and Masters & Foster, 1996). However, the discussion around the assessment tasks was vigorous and valuable for participants as they made links between the assessment tasks to the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994). The *Assessment Resource Kit* (ARK - ACER: Foster & Masters, 1996 and Masters & Foster, 1996) materials were also covered very briefly as a result of requests by some participants and agreement of the group to briefly introduce the materials. The one school which developed checklists from the ARK materials (Foster & Masters, 1996 and Masters & Foster, 1996) was invited to present what

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[4]   Copies of overheads and handouts for this workshop are included in Appendix V.

they did and their findings. However, the *Keys to Life* (State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) materials were held over to the next workshop session. Additional readings were also provided and these are listed in Section 8 below.

Again, before the next workshop session, participants from both clusters were encouraged to trial each of the assessment tasks. They were also asked to finalise their reflective journal, meet with their critical friend to discuss what they did and what they found. If possible, participants were to meet with their critical friend, they were to map an initial plan of where they (and their school) would go do next with literacy assessments for children in P-3.

For the next workshop session, they were asked to bring points for discussion about what they did and what they found, their reflections, etc. for the project as a whole. They were to be prepared to discuss their initial plan for the next stage in literacy assessments for children in P-3.

5.1.2.4   Workshop Session 5[5]

Each of these workshops provided information on assessment tasks including how to administer, score, interpret scores using stanines, what the assessment results show and when to use the assessment tasks. A stimulus was also provided for further exploration of literacy assessment in terms of how and when to assess children, classroom and other resource management and communication of assessment results with other staff and parents. Much of the work of the participants, however, took place between workshops.

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[5]   Copies of overheads and handouts for this workshop are included in Appendix VI.

5.2   What happened between workshops

Participants were encouraged to trial the assessment tasks on a small number of children in their class and to discuss their experiences and findings with their critical friend.

5.2.1 Between the workshops participants were encouraged to:

- Observe their children's literacy learning;
- Use the assessment batteries provided to assess their children's literacy development;
- Reflect and debrief regularly with their critical friend;
- Keep a reflective journal (see pages included in this Booklet);
- Take action to further their children's literacy development based on their assessment derived from their observations including those made during administration of the tasks from the assessment batteries and their reflections on those observations;
- Share their insights with the co-researcher from Edith Cowan University during in school visits and through your reflective journal. There was one school visit for each school;
- Keep moving through the Action Research Cycle (Observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action.....);
- Contact co-researcher from Edith Cowan University for support, clarification, etc as required (contact details were included in the Information Booklet, appended in Appendix I).

The aim of maintaining a reflective journal was for participants to gain an overview of the reflective action research cycle and better understand the literacy assessment/teaching/learning cycle for them as teachers and for assisting their students.

5.2.1.1   Reflective Journal

Participants were encouraged to keep a reflective journal. The following headings were provided in the Information Booklet (see Appendix I).

- Insights;
- Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment;
- Issues; and
- Other comments.

Participants could use their own headings or no headings if they wished. The reflections recorded in the journals formed part of our data for the project. Reflections were also influenced by interactions with a critical friend also participating in the study.

5.2.1.2 The role of critical friends

Two teachers from each school participated in the project with one teacher participating in Cluster A and the other in Cluster B[6]. Each member of the pair acted as a critical friend to the other. Since each school operates within very different contexts, the intention was that the two teachers with intimate knowledge of the school could support each other through regularly debriefing and sharing their school specific experiences, issues, and insights, and together work out an effective approach to literacy assessment for their school after having the opportunity to trial several assessment tasks. The diverse contexts within which the teachers were required to assess their children's literacy development was clear from visits by the co-researcher to each of the schools. Unfortunately, lack of time both at school and in getting to the workshops held after school made it difficult for some teachers to use their critical friend as extensively as possible.

5.2.1.3 School visits

With the exception of one school[7], each school was visited once during the course of the project. The aim of these visits was to provide the co-researcher with the insights into the diverse contexts within which the teachers were assessing their students' literacy development. Visits to the

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[6] One school had four participants on two separate campuses. Particpants from each campus worked in the same rather than different Clusters.

[7] It was not possible to visit one school which was in a remote area in the north of the State. This school, however, was provided with extensive support via the telephone, fax and email.

schools also provided additional support for teachers within their own environment. Additional phone support was also provided by the co-researcher during the course of the project.

5.2.1.4 Phone support

The co-researcher provided phone backup for all participants during the course of the study. A remote area school was able to successfully participate in the study entirely through continued phone support throughout the study.

The process of the project was both challenging and insightful for all participants with many feeling they now have a more substantial and consistent overview of the literacy development of the children they teach.

6. Findings

Frequently, use of the assessment tasks confirmed what the teachers already knew regarding individual children's literacy development. However, on quite a few occasions, teachers were surprised to discover a child they perceived as experiencing difficulties in developing adequate literacy skills performed quite well on some specific assessment tasks. All of the teachers found the opportunity to focus specifically on particular assessment tasks with a small group of students both refined their understandings about literacy in general and gave them new insights into different aspects of their teaching. In many cases teachers commented on how a particular skill needed to be given greater emphasis in their teaching. In one instance, a child will now be allowed to move on at the beginning of next year rather than repeat this year. These observations raised several such issues for the participants.

Throughout the project, participants were invited write any issues regarding the project in their information booklet and bring them to the next workshop or phone the co-researcher if they needed to discuss them sooner. Issues raised fell into two main areas of implementation and pedagogy each of which is discussed in detail below and may be summarised as follows.

- Issues about the implementation of assessment tasks included:

    a. The format of the tasks;
    b. Organisational issues including:
        i. The time required to conduct assessments; and
        ii. Opportunities for professional development.
        iii.
- Pedagogical issues included:
    a. What the assessment tasks assess;
    b. Adapting assessment tasks to meet the teacher's and students' needs in specific schools;
    c. Standardisation of scores and the development of school specific stanines;
    d. When to conduct literacy assessments and by whom should they be done;
    e. Which assessment tasks to use; and
    f. Actions required to ensure a consistent approach to literacy assessment.

6.1 Issues about the implementation of assessment tasks

Several issues were raised regarding the implementation of the various assessment tasks. Issues included the format of the assessment tasks, their adaptability to different groups and the time required to complete the tasks.

6.1.1 Format of assessment tasks

Some assessment tasks were perceived to need an update or Australianisation. Others were very positively received, especially the numeracy assessment game, *Checkout*, in the *New Zealand School Entry Assessment* (Ministry of Education, 1997). In the following section specific implementation issues raised by participants are addressed.

6.1.1.1   *An observational survey of early literacy achievement* (Clay, 1993)

- Concepts About Print: Sands & Stones books

Children reading for meaning (both strong and weaker readers) frequently did not notice some changes such as letter and line order changes. Other able readers seemed to have been puzzled that an adult would deliberately reverse letters in words. One teacher expressed concern that her students were so compliant that this test became a real challenge for them.

- Running Records

Several participants adapted recording protocols in this assessment task as they found the child's reading speed too fast to do more than record miscues and use a coding system for identifying incorrect responses. One child who read in a monotone voice, was identified as not appearing "to process chunks of meaning when reading".

- Letter Identification

Some participants felt it would be useful to assess children's knowledge of both letter names and letter sounds. One participant suggested two separate assessments using this task, one for assessing the child's knowledge of letter names and one assessing their knowledge of letter sounds usually at the end of Pre-primary or early in Year One.

6.1.1.2   *New Zealand School Entry Assessment* (Ministry of Education, 1997)

This assessment battery consisted of three separate assessment tasks:

i.   Checkout;
ii.   Concepts about print (Clay, 1993); and
iii.   Tell me.

Teachers' responses to using each of these tasks, with the exception of Clay's (1993) Concepts about Print test which is described above, is described below.

- Checkout

This assessment task was hugely successful with its game based format. Scoring was clearly identified and it was an enjoyable task to administer. While its focus is numeracy assessment, it provided interesting information for teachers about children's understanding of language required to perform mathematical tasks. The need for children to understanding sequencing language (e.g., "before/after") was particularly noticed by several teachers.

One teacher reported that when working with two children together, they were able to work out that both had the same questions.

- Retell

It was generally agreed that this task could be adapted to most groups with a few adaptations such as working with children who tried to "reread" the story word for word and those of scoring the children's retelling of the story. Teachers' understanding of the expectations of the assessment tasks and this resulted in their scoring frequently differing for similar responses. Taping the children retelling the story was helpful for some participants who found scoring the task too complex to accurately make a judgement on the spot.

If this assessment task was used with the whole class, there would need to be a sufficiently wide range of books for all the children to read. Some participants felt the books supplied for Tell Me were well suited to their children's experiences while others felt the pictures and language were not suitable for Australian children with some words being closer culturally to Maori than the Australian English. For one teacher who had felt the children were reasonably confident, identifying lowered confidence in some children was a salient discovery from this assessment task. Several participants felt this task could be adapted for use across the year groups using different sets and books of literature.

6.1.1.3   Other assessment tasks

- *Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation* (Yopp, 1995)

This assessment task was seen as a valuable assessment task by most participants.

- *The Names Test* (Dufflemeyer, *et al* , 1994)

None of the participants chose to use this assessment task.

Throughout the duration of the project, time and timing were of essence with participants being occupied by their need to fulfil end of year requirements as well as assess a small group of children. The issue of time required to complete the assessments was a significant organisational issue which needs attention.

6.1.2   Organisational issues raised by participants during the course of the project

Organisational issues mostly concerned teachers having sufficient time to complete assessments for all children in their classes or for the school to provide sufficient support personnel such as a resource teacher or school psychologist to complete the assessments. Teachers also felt more support was required for them to participate in professional development to ensure they have contact with other teachers to learn from them and to learn new skills together in a mutually supportive environment both within the school and outside the school during and out of school hours.

6.1.2.1   Time required to conduct assessments

All participants found the assessments very time consuming and needed to consider alternative ways of ensuring there is sufficient time to complete assessments for the whole class at or over a specified time. How teachers organised the classroom became an item for discussion and a video on organising learning centres (see *Keys to Life,* State of Victoria, Department of Education, 1997) was used to further this discussion.

- School and classroom organisation

Most participants were concerned about the time required to use the assessment tasks especially if required to assess the whole class. Some were prepared to rethink their timetabling within the classroom but also clearly would require extra support from within the whole school network including withdrawal of students for assessments if necessary.

- Withdrawal

While some teachers felt they would be able to assess children within the classroom, others felt the classroom was too distracting and preferred the assessment to be done by the teacher away from the classroom. Others felt another person such as the resource teacher or the school psychologist would be suitable persons to complete the assessments.

- Resource teachers and school psychologists

Some teachers were able to avail themselves of the services of resource teachers or a school psychologist when the assessment process became too long to complete without assistance.

6.1.2.2   Opportunities for professional development

Most teachers felt they needed more time away from face to face teaching to allow them to complete assessments as well as further professional development to help them develop a more comprehensive and consistent approach to literacy development and assessment.

Participants identified the following areas in which they would like school support for their ongoing professional development.

- DOTT (Doing Other Things than Teaching) time;
- During/after school hours/ weekends; and
- Opportunities for inschool reflection, dialogue and innovation.

Many of these implementation issues related to literacy assessment also impinged on pedagogical issues raised by the participants.

6.2 Pedagogical issues raised

Participants felt the assessment tasks, overall, provided a comprehensive approach to assessing children's literacy skills especially in the pre-primary Year 1 area but also for students whom teachers felt may have been at risk in later years, especially Year 2. While teachers were mostly familiar with the concepts used in the assessment tasks, several were unfamiliar with the systematic and standardised approach used to construct the tasks and thus their use. During the workshop sessions teachers were able to develop a better understanding of standardised testing procedures and what was involved with each of the assessment tasks.

6.2.1 What the assessment tasks assess

Understanding theoretical underpinnings of literacy development and the assessment task seemed crucial to supporting teachers in developing a consistent and systematic approach to literacy development. Roller's (1998) model of literacy development was adapted to provide an overview of the theoretical understandings related to literacy development (see Figure 2 above).

An example for further development of understanding about what each assessment task assesses includes participants who initially reported confusion over the interpretation of the scoring for the *Tell me* task (see *New Zealand School Entry Assessment*, Ministry of Education, 1997). Participants found that while the same score was possible for several children, individual children displayed very different behaviours and problems. This issue arose from two observations: The definitions of observed responses and the method for scoring of responses. Different teachers scored responses differently depending on their definition of how complex the response was, for example, the difference between a basic, plain and developed response for vocabulary. The scoring advice to score a child with the higher score if they exhibit a response once only. The apparent intention of this is to acknowledge that the child is capable of the more complex response although not on all occasions. It was the fact that a child might give a more complex response then revert to less complex responses that was confusing. A recommendation which arose from this situation was that there needs to be a space on the record sheet to note

such observations rather than simply scoring the higher response (perhaps this is akin to "scoring" a child's hesitant first steps as "walking" before they become competent walkers).

Most felt a sense of assurance at being able to use standardised assessment tasks with their related stanines. This seemed to reduce the teachers' sense of isolation when making assessments of their children's literacy development but they also felt the need to adapt tasks to better meet their needs.

6.2.1.1   Adapting assessment tasks to school specific contexts

Several participants expressed a wish to adapt the assessment tasks to their specific school contexts to better meet the needs of the teachers and their students. Some felt it would be useful to learn how to develop within school stanines for specific assessment tasks.

Timing of assessments and who should complete the assessments were also issues which schools are beginning to consider and most plan to trial different times and different assessors in 1999.

6.2.3 When to conduct literacy assessments and by whom should they be done

Age appropriateness for the assessment tasks was an issue for many teachers. Many felt early identification of children especially with lowered phonemic awareness was important. Such identification would change what the school would do to support each child's literacy development including rearranging existing literacy groups to meet individual needs more in this area. For example, one school suggested they needed to reconsider grouping across multiple age groups to meet individual needs rather than by need within a specific Year grouping.

Either the Year One or the Pre-primary teacher was identified as the person or persons best suited to conducting the assessments. Some schools regularly identified a support person such as the resource teacher or school psychologist as the best person to complete the assessments of the children on a withdrawal basis. Usually, but not always, the higher the

Commonwealth Government fee category, the more access the school had to additional support staff to assist with assessments. Two major times for assessment were clear from participants' discussions and reflective journals. These were:

- End of Pre-primary early Year 1; and
- End of Year 2 for children perceived to be at risk.

Several schools agreed there needed to be a within school discussion about the flow of assessments and information across pre-primary and Years 1, 2 and Three. Most of the participating schools are now beginning to seriously plan for their literacy assessments from 1999 based on the work they completed within this project.

6.2.5 Which assessment tasks to use

Mostly, teachers felt the range of the assessment tasks provided in this project was useful and helped them focus on specific issues in individual children's literacy development. However, most also felt such assessments formed part of an overall assessment which included the teacher's day to day assessment of the children in their class. All agreed they would use most if not all assessment tasks at some stage during the first few years of school.

Two of the assessment tasks, however, presented some issues for their administration and scoring. The scoring of *Tell me* needed some work and clarification by and for the teachers and the range of books needs extending to suit most Australian classrooms. Several participants reported children who were competent readers, were confused and puzzled as to why adults would make changes to letter, picture, word and line order in the *Concepts about print* test (Clay, 1993). Clearly this test is intended for use with children the year they turn five and use at other times needs careful consideration.

6.2.6 Actions required to ensure a consistent approach to literacy assessment

Participants identified a number of actions required to ensure a consistent approach to literacy assessment. Actions identified include:

- Developing a whole school approach to literacy assessment;
- Linking assessment battery tasks to *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994), mandated Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998), the National Literacy Plan and National Literacy Benchmarks; and
- Linking the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) to a whole school approach to literacy assessment.

Participants were keen to be able to integrate a comprehensive literacy assessment battery into their teaching frameworks. Some teachers reported some assessments were already covered by existing classroom practices but found access to standardised scores (stanines) was helpful when planning to ensure their students met National Literacy Benchmarks.

6.2.7 Efficacy of using the assessments

Ensuring that the assessments would enhance their existing literacy programs was important for all participants. Overall, participants felt the assessment tasks refined their way of assessing literacy. However, there were some issues which participants felt needed to be finely balanced with standardised literacy assessment tasks. For instance, one participant reported that running records did not provide any additional information than that gained from regularly listening to children read. Providing immediate feedback to children as they read was seen by participants as an important learning process and recording the child's reading may distract the teacher from that process. Further, they felt that recorded information was out of date as soon as it was recorded. Most reported, however, that running records and the other assessment tasks helped the teacher focus on the strategies the children use when reading and particularly helped them to reassess their understandings of children's learning and achievements in literacy during the early years of formal schooling.

6.2.8 Reassessing children's learning and achievements in literacy

From using the assessment tasks, several participants were able to identify specific areas of need in individual children. In one school, the results of the *Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation* (Yopp, 1995) will be used to identify children requiring extra support in 1999. Other tasks also provided the teachers with unexpected information about what some of their children could or could not do.

6.2.9 Reassessing areas of strength in one's teaching and areas to develop further

Several participants found the assessment tasks were helpful in reviewing their teaching practices. Specifically teachers were able to identify what they emphasised in their teaching as evidenced in how well the children completed specific assessment tasks. Conversely, they were also able to identify what they needed to emphasise more in their teaching.

These findings provide solid basis for conclusions about both the process by which professional development was delivered during this project and teachers' ongoing professional development needs.

7. Conclusions

Teachers need and want more professional development in the area of literacy assessment. They need ongoing support from their schools to pursue their knowledge and develop skills specific to literacy assessment in the early years of school. They need collegial support both in material ways and in providing opportunities for debriefing and reflection on their practices and the learning of their students.

Time

Time seems to be an enduring issue. Time to discuss teaching, learning and assessment issues, time to reflect with colleagues, time to develop an understanding of literacy assessments, time to develop an in head knowledge of assessment tasks and time to complete assessments. At least one teacher chose to complete the assessments during her lunchbreaks. While this very dedicated, experienced and committed teacher willing chose to do this for her students. This situation does not reflect

effective management of people resources in schools and does not augur well for children's literacy development. Such acts of commitment and devotion need urgent attention by schools if teachers are not to become so put upon that they crack under the weight of it all and become ineffective in the classroom. Some teachers called upon resource teachers and the school psychologist to assist with the assessments. Each of these practices raises other issues.

Organisation

Organisational considerations were invariably intertwined with pedagogical issues for the teachers. Improving outcomes for children by understanding assessment measures more effectively requires a reorganisation of staff and material resources within schools. There was a strong sense of a need for schools to consolidate the school language/literacy program across the early learning years to ensure a consistent and reliable program to develop children's literacy skills. Additional motivations for these emphases were derived from schools' strong desires to meet National requirements and State mandated education goals in the National Literacy Plan including the National Literacy Benchmarks, the State mandated Curriculum Framework and the overarching Student Outcome Statements

Teacher's felt the information gained from the assessments should be used to support their students language/literacy development. They further suggested schools needed to provide time for teachers to :

- Engage in ongoing reflection and discussion about what they were doing about literacy assessment and what they had found out from doing the assessments. This was seen as especially important at the end of a school year when students were moving onto other teachers;
- Explore how their knowledge from assessments can help them select appropriate teaching for all children, particularly those at risk; and
- To develop their in head knowledge of literacy assessment tasks and the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) to support their assessments and tracking of children's literacy development over the school life

Apart from time, developing a sufficient and appropriate assessment battery and related material resources for assessing all children was a focus issue for most schools.

From the above findings and conclusions, a set of recommendations has been developed for the development of literacy assessment across pre-primary, Years 1, 2 and three.

8. Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Schools be supported to develop whole school approaches to literacy assessment especially in the early years.

Recommendation 2:

Ongoing professional development be provided to support the development of in head knowledge of assessment tasks and related tools such as the *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994).

Recommendation 3:

Schools receive assistance in developing sufficient appropriate resources for assessing the literacy development of all children.

Recommendation 4:

Professional development be provided for teachers who wish to develop stanines and adapt assessment tasks for use within their school's specific context.

9. References and Additional Readings

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Information Booklet
                 31st August, 1998

AISWA LITERACY PLAN

AISWA Literacy Project B
P-3 Assessment:
Teachers Developing
Effective Literacy Assessment Strategies

Project funded by AISWA
Undertaken by:

Judith Rivalland

and

Adrienne Huber

Edith Cowan University

1998

Every child leaving Primary School should be numerate, and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level

Every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years

CONTACT DETAILS

First point of contact
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GOALS FOR THE FIRST SESSION

1. Context for the project

2. Purpose for the project

3. Familiarise participants with the Curriculum Frameworks and English Major Learning Outcomes

4. To familiarise participants with Action Research

5. Get participants to identify an issue they want to investigate

6. Overview of the rest of the project

CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

a. National Literacy Plan: Benchmarks

b. Curriculum Framework (Mandated)

c. English Major Learning Outcomes

PURPOSES OF THE PROJECT

a. To explore how you can best improve outcomes for children by understanding assessment measures more effectively.

b. To provide time for reflection and discussion about what you find out from using these assessment procedures

c. To explore how this knowledge will help you select appropriate teaching for all children, particularly those at risk

d. To record and report what you find out

e. To provide you with a range of assessment procedures from which you could select when developing a systematic approach to literacy assessment across the P-3 area of your schools

ENGLISH LEARNING OUTCOMES

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE	ATTITUDES, VALUES AND BELIEFS	CONVENTIONS
1. Students understand the way that the language is used varies according to context.	2. Students understand that language has an important effect on the ways in which they view themselves and the world in which they live.	3. Students use conventions of Standard Australian English with understanding and critical awareness.
PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES	**LISTENING**	**SPEAKING**
4. Students select from a repertoire of processes and strategies by reflecting on their understanding of the way language works for a variety of purposes in a range of contexts.	5. Students listen with purpose, understanding and critical awareness in a wide range of situations.	6. Students speak with purpose and effect in a wide range of contexts.
VIEWING	**READING**	**WRITING**
7. Students view a wide range of visual texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	8. Students read a wide range of texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	9. Students write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms using conventions appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

- ***Opportunity to learn***

Learning experiences should enable students to engage with, observe and practice the actual ideas, processes, products, skills and values which are expected of them.

- ***Connection and challenge***

Learning experiences should connect with students' existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and challenging their current ways of thinking and acting.

- ***Action and reflection***

Learning experiences should be meaningful and encourage both action and reflection on the par of the learner.

- ***Motivation and purpose***

Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose clear to the student.

- ***Inclusivity and difference***

Learning experiences should respect and accommodate differences between learners.

- ***Independence and collaboration***

Learning experiences should encourage students to learn both independently and from and with others.

- *Supportive environment*

The school and classroom setting should be psychologically and materially safe and conducive to effective learning.

ASSESSMENT

- *Valid*

Assessment should provide valid information on the actual ideas, processes, products and values which are expected of students.

- *Educative*

Assessment should make a positive contribution to student learning.

- *Explicit*

Assessment criteria should be explicit so that the basis for judgements is clear and public.

- *Fair*

Assessment should be demonstrably fair to all students and not discriminate on grounds that are irrelevant to the achievement of the outcome.

- *Comprehensive*

Judgements on student progress should be based on multiple kinds and sources of evidence.

Phases in the Action Research Cycle

OBSERVATION

You will already be regularly observing the children in your classroom. Some observations will be informal and some more formal.

REFLECTION

By reflecting on your observations your will already be making teaching/learning (curriculum) decisions.

ACTION

Insights gained during reflections on what you have observed form the basis for what you will do next with your class and specifically with individual children. How you do this will also be driven by your observations and reflections. This is usually referred to as *using your professional judgement.*

In the action research cycle, you record the process by which you develop and exercise your professional judgement. This cycle looks something like Figure 1 below.

OBSERVATION

ACTION RESEARCH/ LEARNING CYCLE

ACTION

REFLECTION
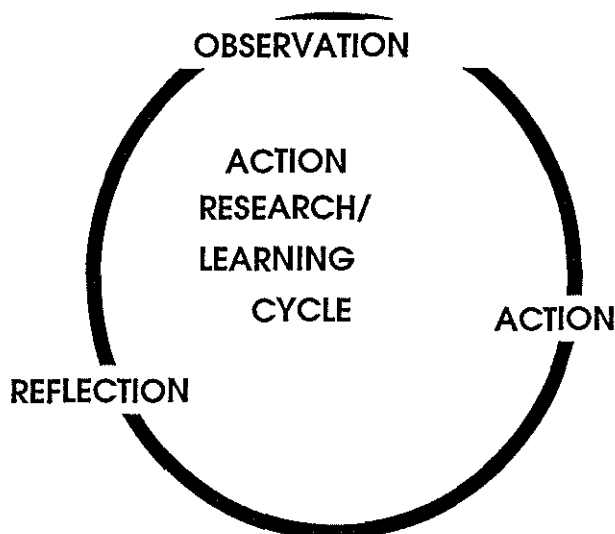
Figure 1:   Action Research Cycle: Teacher-as-researcher developing
curriculum

*Dates, Rooms and Times for workshops**

	Date		Room	Time	Cluster
August					
	Mon	31st	3.124	4-6 pm	A & B
September					
	Mon	7th	3.124	4-6 pm	A
	Wed	9th	5.112	4-6 pm	B
October					
	Mon	19th	3.124	4-6 pm	A
	Wed	21st	5.112	4-6 pm	B
November					
	Mon	2nd	3.124	4-6 pm	A
	Wed	4th	5.112	4-6 pm	B
	Mon	16th	2.128/9**	4-6 pm	A & B
	Mon	30th	3.124	4-6 pm	A & B

*   **NOTE**   You only need to attend either a Monday or a Wednesday workshop (depending on which cluster you are in) when both are offered. All other Monday workshops are attended by all participants

** **NOTE**   Room change for this day only

Format for future workshops

Welcome

Debriefing

Reports on your experiences using NZ School Entry Assessment or the Observation Survey
- Insights into your assessment experiences and needs
- Exercising professional judgement: Meeting your assessment needs
- Issues arising

Things to do between the workshops

- **Observe** your children's literacy learning

- **Use the assessment tool** you have NZ School Entry Assessment or the Observation Survey

- **Reflect** and debrief regularly with your critical friend

- Keep a **reflective journal** (see pages included in this Booklet)

- **Take action** to further your children's literacy development based on your assessment derived from your observations (including using either the NZ School Entry Assessment or the Observation Survey) and your reflections on those observations

- **Share your insights** with the co-researcher from Edith Cowan University during in school visits and through your reflective journal. There will be one in school visit for each school.

- **Keep moving through the Action Research Cycle** (Observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action, observation, reflection, action.....)

- **Contact co-researcher** from Edith Cowan University for support, clarification, etc as required (see contact details below).

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	Other comments

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	**Other comments**

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	Other comments

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	Other comments

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	Other comments

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions taken for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	**Other comments**

ISSUES

Please write any issues regarding the project on this page and bring them to the next workshop or phone the co-researcher if you need to discuss them sooner.

Appendix II: **Workshop 1 Handouts and Overheads**
31st August, 1998

GOALS FOR THE FIRST SESSION

1. Context for the project

2. Purpose for the project

3. Familiarise participants with the Curriculum Frameworks and English Major Learning Outcomes

4. To familiarise participants with Action Research

5. Get participants to identify an issue they want to investigate

6. Overview of the rest of the project

CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

a. National Literacy Plan: Benchmarks

b. Curriculum Framework (Mandated)

c. English Major Learning Outcomes

LEARNING TEACHING
and
ASSESSMENT
(English Curriculum Framework)

LEARNING AND TEACHING

- *Opportunity to learn*

- *Connection and challenge*

- *Action and reflection*

- *Motivation and purpose*

- *Inclusivity and difference*

- *Independence and collaboration*

- *Supportive environment*

LEARNING TEACHING
and
ASSESSMENT
(English Curriculum Framework)

ASSESSMENT

- *Valid*

- *Educative*

- *Explicit*

- *Fair*

- *Comprehensive*

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

a. To explore how you can best improve outcomes for children by understanding assessment measures more effectively

b. To provide time for reflection and discussion about what you find out from using these assessment procedures

c. To explore how this knowledge will help you select appropriate teaching for all children, particularly those at risk

d. To record and report what you find out

e. To provide you with a range of assessment procedures from which you could select when developing a systematic approach to literacy assessment across the P-3 area of your schools

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT
AN
OUTCOMES BASED APPROACH
TO
TEACHING?

a. Greater opportunities for students to achieve at different rates

b. Flexibility for teachers to provide different teaching and learning programs to suit individual children

- Teachers can facilitate learning through student centred approaches

- Teachers can develop explicit and comprehensive criteria that contributes to student learning

OBSERVATION

ACTION
RESEARCH/
LEARNING
CYCLE
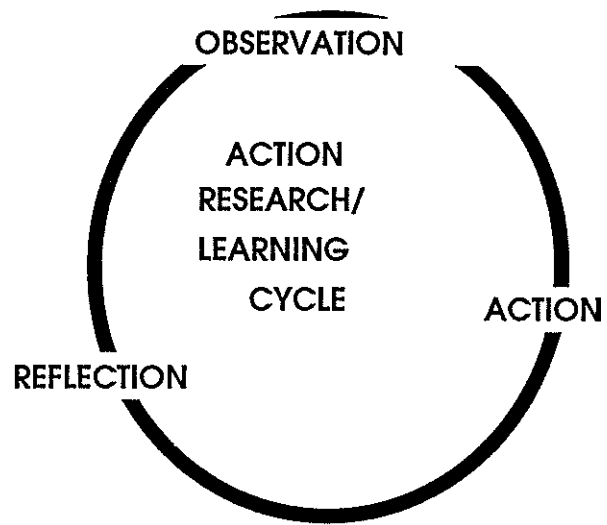
ACTION

REFLECTION

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Insights	Actions for Literacy Learning/Teaching/ Assessment
Issues	Other comments

How the project will work

a.   Use the assessment Tools

   Cluster A: Observation Survey

   Cluster B: New Zealand School Entry

b. Format for future workshops

c. In between sessions

d. Dates, etc

e. Final Sessions

Format for future workshops

Welcome

Debriefing

Reports on your experiences using NZ School Entry Assessment or the Observation Survey

- Insights into your assessment experiences and needs

- Exercising professional judgement: Meeting your assessment needs

- Issues arising

Things to do between the workshops

- Observe your children's literacy learning

- Use the assessment tool you have NZ School Entry Assessment or the Observation Survey

- Reflect and debrief regularly with your critical friend

- Keep a reflective journal

- Take action

- Share your insights

- Keep moving through the Action Research Cycle

- Contact with co-researcher

Dates, Rooms and Times
for
Workshops*

	Date	Room	Time	Cluster
August				
	Mon 31st	3.124	4-6 pm	A & B
September				
	Mon 7th	3.124	4-6 pm	A
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October				
	Mon 19th	3.124	4-6 pm	A
	Wed 21st	5.112	4-6 pm	B
November				
	Mon 2nd	3.124	4-6 pm	A
	Wed 4th	5.112	4-6 pm	B
	Mon 16th	2.128/9**	4-6 pm	A & B
	Mon 30th	3.124	4-6 pm	A & B

* **NOTE** You only need to attend either a Monday or a Wednesday workshop (depending on which cluster you are in) when

both are offered. All other Monday workshops are attended by all participants

** **NOTE** Room change for this day only

Appendix III: **Workshop 2 Handouts and Overheads**
7th September, 1998

Plan for Session 2

1. So why are we looking at these assessment tools?

2. Introduce participants to some of the assessment tasks

3. Discuss what to do between now and the next session

Why are we looking at these assessment tools?

1. Which children are you selecting and why? How different are these children? How do you know this? How did you make your judgements?

2. What can you find out about students from each of these assessments? When might you make use of these assessments?

3. How will this knowledge help you plan for better outcomes

4. How does the knowledge you have learned from this assessment tool link to how children learn to read and write?

5. How will this knowledge help you achieve the English Outcomes?

6. How will it help ensure children achieve the Benchmarks?

7. How does this form of assessment link to First Steps?

8. How can *First Steps* help in planning for outcomes for the child?

9. A model of the reading process

Why are we looking at these assessment tools?

1. Which children are you selecting and why? How different are these children? How do you know this? How did you make your judgements?

2. What can you find out about students from each of these assessments? When might you make use of these assessments?

3. How will this knowledge help you plan for better outcomes

4. How does the knowledge you have learned from this assessment tool link to how children learn to read and write?

5. How will this knowledge help you achieve the English Outcomes?

6. How will it help ensure children achieve the Benchmarks?

7. How does this form of assessment link to First Steps?

8. How can *First Steps* help in planning for outcomes for the child?

9. A model of the reading process

ENGLISH LEARNING OUTCOMES

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE	ATTITUDES, VALUES AND BELIEFS	CONVENTIONS
1. Students understand the way that the language is used varies according to context.	2. Students understand that language has an important effect on the ways in which they view themselves and the world in which they live.	3. Students use conventions of Standard Australian English with understanding and critical awareness.
PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES	**LISTENING**	**SPEAKING**
4. Students select from a repertoire of processes and strategies by reflecting on their understanding of the way language works for a variety of purposes in a range of contexts.	5. Students listen with purpose, understanding and critical awareness in a wide range of situations.	6. Students speak with purpose and effect in a wide range of contexts.
VIEWING	**READING**	**WRITING**
7. Students view a wide range of visual texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	8. Students read a wide range of texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	9. Students write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms using conventions appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

Assessment Tasks for Cluster A: Marie Clay Observation Survey

1. Letter Identification

2. Ohio Word Test

3. Hearing and recording sounds in words (Dictation Task)

4. a. Writing samples (Year 2/3)

b. Writing Vocabulary (Year 1)

POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT USING EACH OF THESE ASSESSMENT TASKS

a. What does this assessment task look like and how long does it take to do?

b. Administration

c. Scoring

d. Interpretation of Scores

• Stanines

e. What can you find out from this assessment task?

f. When might you make use of these assessments?

Letter Identification

a. **What does this assessment task look like and how long does it take to do?**

b. **Administration**

    i.   To introduce the task

- What do you call these?
- Can you find some that you know?

    ii.   Pointing to each letter in horizontal lines

- What is this one?

    iii.   If a child does not respond

Use one or more of these questions and try to avoid bias towards any one of them

* Do you know its name?
* What sound does it make?
* Do you know a word that starts like that?

Then moving to other letters:

* What is this? And this?

Letter Identification

c. Scoring the record

- Letter Identification Score Sheet
- Score as correct:
  - * an **alphabet** name
  - * a **sound** that is acceptable for that letter
  - * a response which says "...it begins like..." giving a **word** for which that letter is the initial letter
- Obtain subtotals for each of the three types of correct responses
- Note down:
  - * the child's preferred mode of identifying letters
  - * the letters a child confuses, so they can be kept apart in the teaching program
  - * the unknown letters

d. Interpretation of Scores

e. What can you find out from this assessment task?

f. When might you make use of these assessments?

What to do between now and next session:

a.   Try out the assessment tasks

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found,
       etc

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Developmental Continua (EDWA, 1994) or
       Resource books if you have them

b.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections,
       etc

What to do between now and next session:

a. Try out the assessment tasks

b. Keep reflective Journal

c. Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

For next session:

a. Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b. Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

Workshop Session 2 Plan
Page 1

1.	O/H 1	Judith	Plan for Workshop Session 2
			Talk through overhead **(20 mins)**
	O/H 2a & H/O 1		*Why are we looking at these assessment tools?*
	O/H 2b		English Learning Outcomes
2.	O/H 3	**Adrienne**	Assessment tasks to be covered **(5 mins)**
3.		**Judith & Adrienne**	Give out materials: a. Observation Survey
4.	O/H 4	**Adrienne**	Model for looking at the Assessment Tasks: POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT USING EACH OF THESE ASSESSMENT TASKS
	O/H 5a & O/H 5b		Demonstrate Letter Identification Task **(20 mins)**
	O/H 6		Letter Identification List
	O/H 7		Letter Identification Test Score Sheet
	O/H 8		Letter Identification Test Stanines

BREAK (5 mins)

Workshop Session 2 Plan
Page 2

5.	O/H 4 O/H 3	Adrienne	a. Go through small group activity requirements re model for recording information b. Each group has two overheads. One on which to write the mains points as in O/H 4 c. Second overhead to record points for discuss linking back to *Why are we looking at these assessment tools?* **(O/H 1 & H/O 1)** d. Break into groups of 4 (a,b,c,d) as follows **(15 mins)** Task **a** = Ohio Word Test Task **b** = Hearing and recording sounds in words (Dictation Task) Task **c** = Writing samples (Year 2/3) Task **d** = Writing Vocabulary (Year 1)
6.	O/Heads various	Adrienne	Reporting back **(30 mins)** Discussion Points linking back to *Why are we looking at these assessment tools?* **(O/H 1 & H/O 1)**
7.	O/H 9 & H/O 2	Adrienne & Judith	Discuss what to do between now and next session: a. Try out the assessment tasks b. Keep reflective Journal c. Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc
8.	O/H 9 & H/O 2	Adrienne & Judith	**For next session:** a. Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books in you have them b. Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

9th September, 1998

Plan for Session 2

1. So why are we looking at these assessment tools?

2. Introduce participants to some of the assessment tasks

3. Discuss what to do between now and the next session

Why are we looking at these assessment tools?

1. Which children are you selecting and why? How different are these children? How do you know this? How did you make your judgements?

2. What can you find out about students from each of these assessments? When might you make use of these assessments?

3. How will this knowledge help you plan for better outcomes

4. How does the knowledge you have learned from this assessment tool link to how children learn to read and write?

5. How will this knowledge help you achieve the English Outcomes?

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2. What can you find out about students from each of these assessments? When might you make use of these assessments?

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UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE	ATTITUDES, VALUES AND BELIEFS	CONVENTIONS
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VIEWING	**READING**	**WRITING**
7. Students view a wide range of visual texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	8. Students read a wide range of texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.	9. Students write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms using conventions appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

Assessment Tasks for Cluster B:
New Zealand School Entry Assessment

1. Tell me: A collaborative language activity

2. Checkout: A shopping game to assess numeracy

POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT USING EACH OF THESE ASSESSMENT TASKS

a.   What does this assessment task look like and how long does it take to do?

b.   Familiarisation and Administration

c.   Scoring

d.   Interpretation of Scores

e.   What can you find out from this assessment task?

f.   When might you make use of these assessments?

Tell me:
A collaborative language activity

a.   What does this assessment task look like and how long does it take to do?

b.   Familiarisation and Administration

   i.   Assessment Step 1: Collaborative reading

   ii.   Assessment Step 2: Retelling

Tell me:
A collaborative language activity

    c.   Scoring standards

        i.   Sentences

        ii.   Vocabulary

        iii.   Organisation (global judgement)

        iv.   Description/Expression
                (global judgement)

        v.   Content (global judgement)

        vi.   Other information

    d.   Interpreting the scores

        2-3 on each subscore (a total $\geq$ 15):
        Very competent language user

        10-14: A competent language user

        $\leq$ 9: Not a competent language user

Tell me:
A collaborative language activity

e.   What can you find out from this assessment task?

   i.   Comprehension

   ii.   Sentence constructions

   iii.   Vocabulary

   iv.   Content

   v.   Organisation

   vi.   Description

   vii.   Other aspects of the child's learning (e.g. social stressors; self esteem, etc)

f.   When might you make use of this assessment?

Links across the curriculum

Overarching Learning Outcomes

Children "use language as a means of learning across the curriculum and are aware of the special ways language is used in each of the learning areas. Students know the specialist vocabulary for particular disciplines, the typical text types used in a subject area and the conventions of those text types. They understand and use visual images and symbolic forms such as numbers, musical notation, diagrams, graphs and tabular information, for example, students may .... explain a mathematics operation to another student." (Curriculum Frameworks, p20)

Linking English and Mathematics Learning Outcomes

"Mathematics develops students' abilities to identify, analyse and represent patterns and relationships in the world around them. Links are made with the Mathematics learning area [and the English learning area] when, for example, students: learn to read, write and speak mathematics in a variety of contexts and forms; interpret prose containing mathematical notation or ideas; confirm and reject their own ideas about mathematics and prepare arguments to convince others; clarify and refine questions, plan surveys; and write concise but meaningful summaries using statistics." (Curriculum Framework, p112)

"The English learning area provides the language foundations essential for the learning of mathematics and the development of numeracy. Equally, developing students' capacities to draw on a wide range of mathematical ideas in their reading and viewing generally is a major contribution of English to numeracy. English and Mathematics together provide the basic information skills involved in reading the daily newspaper or a telephone book and in preparing reports." Curriculum Framework, p216)

Links across the curriculum

Overarching Learning Outcomes

Children "use language as a means of learning across the curriculum and are aware of the special ways language is used in each of the learning areas. Students know the specialist vocabulary for particular disciplines, the typical text types used in a subject area and the conventions of those text types. They understand and use visual images and symbolic forms such as numbers, musical notation, diagrams, graphs and tabular information, for example, students may .... explain a mathematics operation to another student."
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Checkout: A shopping game to assess numeracy

a.   What does this assessment task look like and how long does it take to do?

    i.   Components of the game

       14 cards:
- 7 numeral recognition cards
- 4 pattern recognition cards
- 3 "teacher" cards ("Get" cards)

    ii.   Mathematical skills

- Numeral recognition

- Pattern recognition

- Forming sets

- Number sequence knowledge

- Mental operations

b.   Preparation   for   playing   the   game (Administration)

    i.   Setting up the game
- 1 child/2 children

    ii. Familiarising each child with the game

Checkout: A shopping game to assess numeracy

c.   Suggestions for recording

d.   Interpreting what you have recorded

$\geq$:   Novices in using numbers

11-24 :   Quite competent using numbers

$\leq$: 25:   Experts using numbers

e.   What can you find out from this assessment task?

i.   1-to-1 correspondence

ii.   Number sequence

iii. inconsistencies in responses

f.   When might you make use of this assessment?

What to do between now and next session:

a.   Try out the assessment tasks

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

.

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

What to do between now
and
next session:

a.   Try out the assessment tasks

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you
     did and what you found, etc

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Continua or
     Resource books if you have them

b.   Points for discussion re what you did and
     what you found, reflections, etc

Appendix IV: Workshop 3 Handouts and Overheads
19th October, 1998

Plan for Session 3

1. What's been happening so far?

2. Introduce participants to two more assessment tasks

3. Link the assessment tasks and the *First Steps* continua, ELO and SOS

4. Discuss what to do between now and the next session

Assessment Tasks for Cluster A:
Marie Clay Observation Survey

1.   Concepts About Print

2.   Running Records

What to do between now and next session:

a.   Try out the assessment task

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

Next session:

a.   ARK materials

b.   Links to First Steps, Outcome Statements

c.   Any other requests

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b.   English Learning Outcomes and Students Outcomes Statements handouts

c.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

What to do between now
and
next session

a. Try out the assessment task

b. Keep reflective Journal

c. Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

Next session:

a. ARK materials

b. Links to First Steps, Outcome Statements

c. Any other requests

For next session:

a. Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b. English Learning Outcomes and Students Outcomes Statements handouts

c. Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

Plan for Workshop 3, 19th Oct, 1998
Page 1

1. 20 mins	OH1	Judith 20 mins	What's been happening so far? Journals, issues.
2. 5 mins	OH2	Adrienne	Assessment Tasks: a. Concepts About Print b. Running Records
3. 20 mins	Video Tape 1 (mins)	Adrienne	Points to note about using a. Concepts About Print Video NZ SEA Concepts About Print Have Sands book available to follow (10 mins) Small group discussions to review the video
4. 20 mins	OH3 HO1	Judith	Link First Steps continua and Concepts about Print ELOs SOS

BREAK (5 mins)

5. 30 mins	Audio Tape 1 HO1 HO2	Adrienne	Points to note about using b. Running Records (cp. Neale Analysis stanines) Go through taped example and recording conventions with score sheet (HO1) Small group work: Practice taking a Running Record from the tape What does this assessment task tell us about a child's reading?
6. 10 mins		Adrienne & Judith	Small group discussions: re taking a Running Record Whole group discussion: a. Issues arising b. What does this assessment task tell us about a child's reading?
7. 10 mins	OH3 HO3	Judith	Link First Steps continua and Running Records ELOs SOS
8. 5 mins	OH4 HO4	Adrienne	What to do between now and next workshop session

21st October, 1998

Plan for Session 3

1. What's been happening so far?

2. Introduce participants to more assessment tasks

3. Link the assessment tasks and the *First Steps* continua, ELO and SOS

4. Discuss what to do between now and the next session

Assessment Tasks for Cluster B:

1. Concepts About Print (NZ SEA)

2. Phonemic Awareness Tasks
   i. Names Test
   ii. Yopp-Singer
   iii. Miscue Analysis

What to do between now and next session:

a.   Try out the assessment task

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

Next session:

a.   ARK materials

b.   Links to First Steps, Outcome Statements

c.   Any other requests

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b.   English Learning Outcomes and Students Outcomes Statements handouts

c.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

What to do between now
and
next session

a.   Try out the assessment task

b.   Keep reflective Journal

c.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

Next session:

a.   ARK materials

b.   Links to First Steps, Outcome Statements

c.   Any other requests

For next session:

a.   Please bring *First Steps* Continua or Resource books if you have them

b.   English Learning Outcomes and Students Outcomes Statements handouts

c.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc

Plan for Workshop 3, 21st Oct, 1998
Page 1

1. 20 mins	OH1	Judith 20 mins	What's been happening so far? Journals, issues.

2.
5
mins
	OH2	Adrienne	Assessment Tasks:
			a. Concepts About Print
			b. Phonemic Awareness Tasks
			   i. Names Test
			   ii. Yopp-Singer
			   iii. Miscue Analysis

3. 20 mins	Video Tape 1 (mins)	Adrienne	Points to note about using a. Concepts About Print Video NZ SEA Concepts About Print Have Sands book available to follow (10 mins) Small group discussions to review the video
4. 20 mins	OH3 HO1	Judith	Link First Steps continua and Concepts about Print ELOs SOS

BREAK (5 mins)

5.	HO2
	HO3
	HO4
	HO5
		Judith &
		Adrienne
			Points to note about using
			b. Phonemic Awareness Tasks
			   i. Names Test
			   ii. Yopp-Singer
			   iii. Miscue Analysis
			
			Small group discussion: What do these assessment tasks tell us about a child's reading?

6.	OH5 HO1	Judith	Link First Steps continua and Phonemic Awareness tasks ELOs SOS
7.	OH6 HO6	Adrienne	What to do between now and next workshop session

Appendix V: Workshop 4 Handouts and Overheads
2nd & 4th November, 1998

Plan for Session 4

1.   What's been happening so far?

2.   Linking assessment tasks and the *First Steps* continua

3.   *Keys to Life* (& ARK)

4.   Discuss what to do between now and the next session

ELEMENTS OF A
TWO HOUR DAILY LITERACY BLOCK_

- Oral Language

- Reading to children

- Language experience (reading and writing)

- Shared book

- Guided reading

- Independent reading

- Modelled writing

- Shared writing

- Interactive writing

- Guided writing

- Independent writing

Process:

- Whole group focus (teacher directed)

- Small group teaching focus

- Whole class focus: Sharing (teacher directed)

What to do between now
and
next session

a.   Finalise your reflective Journal

b.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you
     did and what you found, etc

c.   With your critical friend, map an initial plan of
     where you will go from here (in the context of
     your school) with literacy assessments for
     children in P-3

For next session:

a.   Points for discussion re what you did and what
     you found, reflections, etc for the project as a
     whole

b.   Be prepared to discuss your initial plan of
     where you will go from here (in the context of
     your school) with literacy assessments for
     children in P-3

What to do between now and next session:

a.   Finalise your reflective Journal

b.   Meet with critical friend to discuss what you did and what you found, etc

c.   With your critical friend, map an initial plan of where you will go from here (in the context of your school) with literacy assessments for children in P-3

For next session:

a.   Points for discussion re what you did and what you found, reflections, etc for the project as a whole

b.   Be prepared to discuss your initial plan of where you will go from here (in the context of your school) with literacy assessments for children in P-3

Plan for Workshop 4, 2nd & 4th Nov, 1998
Page 1

1.	OH1	**Adrienne**	What's been happening so far?
2.		**Judith**	Linking assessment tasks to Fisrts Steps Continua
3.		**Judith**	*Keys to Life*

BREAK (5 mins)

4.		**Judith**	ARK a. Developmental Assessments b. Portfolios c. d. Assessing and evaluating qualitative work
5.	OH2 HO1	**Adrienne**	What to do between now and next workshop session

Appendix VI: Workshop 5 Handouts and Overheads
16th November, 1998

THIS IS WHAT WE THINK WE HAVE ACHIEVED

1.   You have had the opportunity to reflect on:

   a.   What assessment can tell you about your students

   b.   How assessment can help you make decisions about what to teach

   c.   How assessment can help you understand your own teaching strengths and weaknesses

2.   Given you the opportunity to try out, practice and assess the usefulness of a range of assessment tools and inform teaching and help implement the National Literacy Strategy and Curriculum Framework

3.   Provided time for you to work with a partner to reflect and plan on how to meet the National and State imperatives.

   Provided time to reflect on how you can implement a co-ordinated approach to this in your school

AISWA Literacy Project B: Assessment P-3
Evaluation of the Project

What have you learned from participating in this project?

.

How has the project helped you understand how to use appropriate assessment strategies?

What changes do you and your colleagues in your school intend to implement as an outcome of the action research in which you have participated during this project?

How has this project helped you plan to ensure you meet the requirements of the National Literacy Plan and the Curriculum Framework?

.

What recommendations would you make if the project was run again?

How helpful were the workshop presentations?

How have the resources provided helped you?

How have you found the support during the project?