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Profiling ESL children: How teachers interpret and use national and state assessment frameworks: Volume 3: The Eastern States case studies

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Profiling ESL Children

How Teachers Interpret and Use National and State Assessment Frameworks

Volume 3: The Eastern States Case Studies

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AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS·

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

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

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

** These titles are available from The Curriculum Corporation, 141 Rathdowne St. Carlton, Victoria, 3053. Email: sales@curriculum.edu.au. Fax: 03 9639 1616

A Guide to the Case Studies

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

Volume 2: The Pilbara, Western Australia
Perth Metropolitan, Western Australia

Volume 3: Melbourne Metropolitan, Victoria
A Regional City in New South Wales
Cape York and Metropolitan Brisbane, Queensland

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

The Data Base

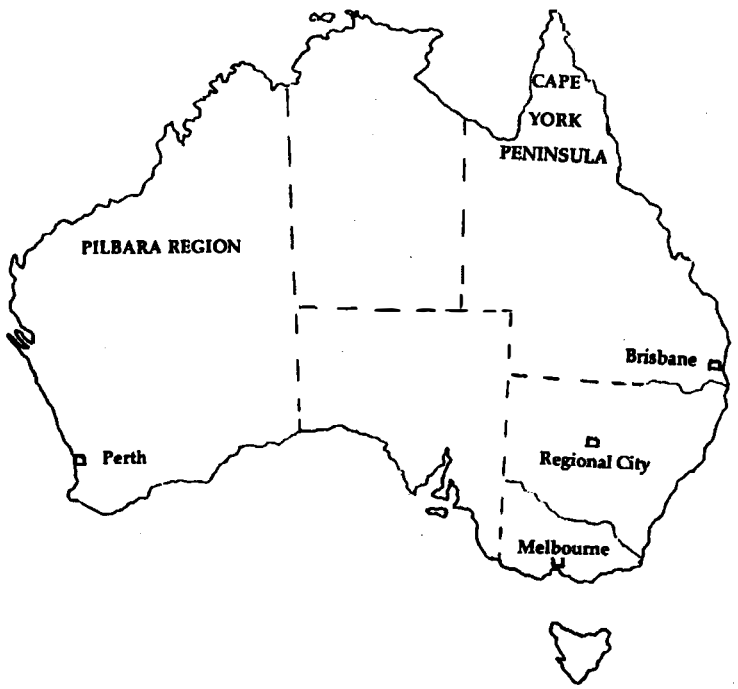
Each Case Study presents a detailed picture of a teacher's approach to the assessment of the ESL students in her/his class with particular reference to the teacher's interpretation and use of one or other of the assessment frameworks which were the focus of this study. The data from the Case Studies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

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

The Eastern States Case Studies

Teacher	Location	Type of School	ESL Learners in Class	Assessment Framework
Sara: Yr 2 ESL Coord Mainstream (20 yrs exp.) Carly: Support Teacher (7 yrs exp)	St Bertrams NSW	Catholic Primary Mainstream/ESL	20%ESL	ESL Scales Early Learning Profile ESL Scales Early Learning Profile
Meredith: ESL Teacher Various yrs (16 yrs exp)	Daviston NSW	State Primary Mainstream	20%ESL	ESL Scales Early Learning Profile
Barry: Kindergarten (24 yrs exp)	Daviston NSW	State Primary Mainstream	20%ESL	Early Learning Profile
Deidre: ESL Teacher (16yrs exp)	Greenvale NSW	State Special School	Severely intellectually impaired ESL	ESL Scales First Steps
Laura: Yr 2 ESL Teacher (11 yrs exp)	St Cecilia's Brisbane QLD	Catholic Primary School	30%+ ESL	Year 2 Diagnostic Net (First Steps Adaptation) ESL Bandscales
Minh: Yr 2 ESL/Bilingual Teacher (8 rys exp)	Lachlan Street Brisbane QLD	State Primary Mainstream	High percentage ESL Mostly Australian born.	Year 2 Diagnostic Net
Erika: ESL Specialist (20 yrs exp)	Four Schools Brisbane QLD	State Primaries	Work with ESL students only	ESL Proficiency Scales Year 2 Diagnostic Net
Maree: Yrs 1-3 (12 yrs exp)	Andelu Campus Ichuru State School QLD	Community School Mainstream	Torres Strait Islander	Year 2 Diagnostic Net in English and Torres Strait Creole
Stephanie: ESL Specialist Whole School Teaching P2 (20 yrs exp) Clare Yrs 1-2 (6 yrs exp)	Oxford Street Melbourne VIC	Catholic Primary Mainstream	Mostly ESL Australian born	ESL Bandscales ESL Scales CSF English and ESL Companion Document CSF English and ESL Companion Document ESL Scales. Victorian English Profiles.
Stephanie: ESL Specialist Whole School Teaching P2 (20 yrs exp) June: P-1 (25 yrs exp)	Oxford Street Melbourne VIC	Catholic Primary Mainstream	Mostly ESL Australian born	ESL Bandscales. ESL Scales. CSF English and ESL Companion Document ESL Scales CSF and ESL Companion Document
Jenny: P-2 (10yrs + exp.)	Hillsdale Melbourne VIC	State Primary English Language Centre (ELC)	All ESL Mostly new arrivals	ESL Scales CSF and ESL Companion Document. Victorian English Profiles
Sue: Yrs 3-5 (15 yrs exp)	Hillsdale Melbourne VIC	State Primary ELC	All ESL Mostly new arrivals	ESL scales CSF and ESL Companion Document

Location of The Case Studies



The Narrative Organisation of Each Case

Each written Case Study in this volume is organised so that it provides, in turn:

- An account of the school context and the provision for ESL students within it.

- An account of the classroom context in which the teacher worked, including the linguistic backgrounds and proportion of the ESL children in the class and the typical classroom activities which focused upon the learning of English language and literacy.

- A detailed picture of the teacher's assessment practices in relation to the development of English of their ESL students, including their on-going assessment of classroom tasks, how the teacher monitored and kept records of the students' progress, and the ways in which the teachers reported student achievement to parents, the school and the system. This detailed account is illustrated in each Case Study with relevant samples of students' work, samples of the teacher's record keeping, and examples of reporting documentation.

- An account of the interaction between the teachers' assessment practices and their daily classroom pedagogy, including the reasons why the teachers undertook assessment in the ways they did.

- The teacher's views on the assessment frameworks which they had chosen or were required to use, including their preferences regarding appropriate assessment frameworks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The National English Profile

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

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

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

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

Figure 1: Levels and Strands within Speaking and Listening

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

NOTE:
1. Terms such as 'speak', 'ask', 'talk', 'tell', 'explain' are intended to include forms of communication such as signing and the use of communication aids (boards, Compic, Canon communicators etc.).

OUTCOMES

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

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

2. The term 'listen' is intended to include all forms of attending (lip-reading, watching signed language etc.).
3. The term 'oral' is intended to include forms of communication such as signing and using communicators.

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

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

At level 1, a student:

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

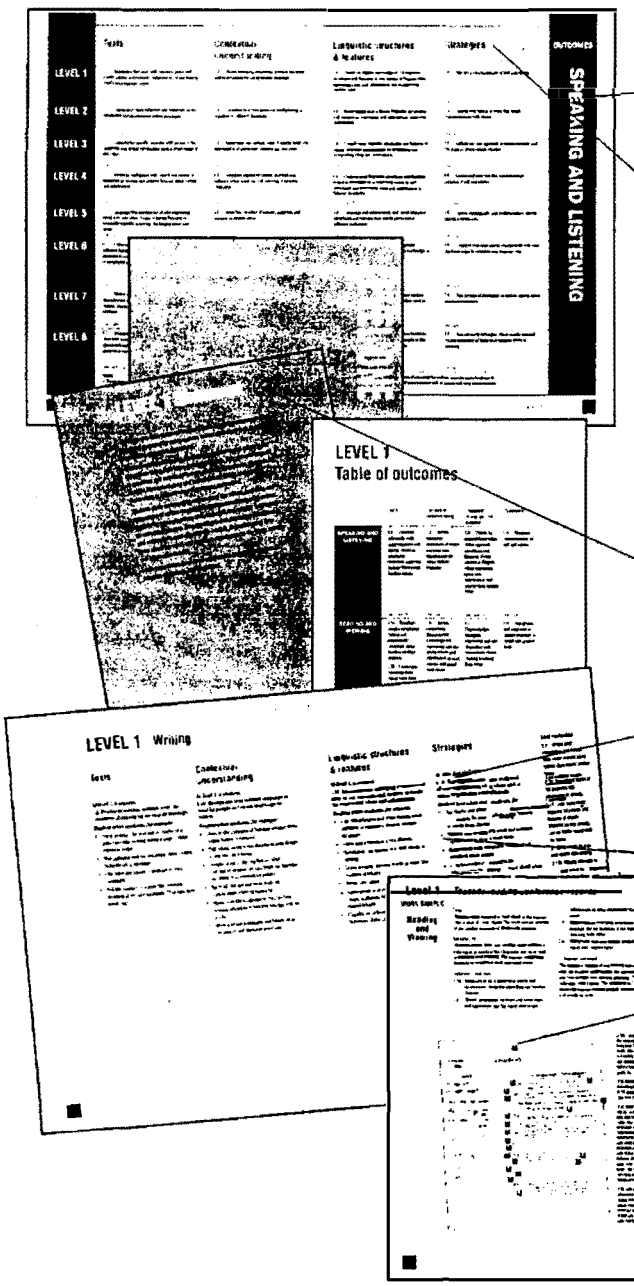
Evident when students, for example:

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

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

Figure 3: The Elements of the Profile

Elements of the profile



Strand display

Strands are the major organisers of a learning area. They can be groupings of content, process and/or conceptual understanding.

Strand organisers are organisers of content, process and/or conceptual understanding within a strand. There are four strand organisers in the English profile, common to all strands. These are Texts, Contextual understanding, Linguistic structures and features, and Strategies. The strand organiser is indicated by the number after the decimal point in the number sequence before each outcome.

Level display

Levels indicate progression in student learning. There are eight levels covering the compulsory years of schooling (Years 1–10). The level is indicated by the number before the decimal point at the beginning of each outcome.

Level statements are general descriptions of student performance at each of the eight levels within the profile.

Outcomes describe in progressive order the various skills and knowledge that students typically acquire as they become more proficient in an area. They outline the knowledge, skills and processes that are essential and distinctive to the learning area. They are the building blocks of the profile.

Pointers are indicators or signals of the achievement of an outcome. Unlike outcomes, pointers are only examples. Other pointers could also indicate achievement of the outcome. Bracketed sections are examples which further develop pointers. The brackets indicate a sample from a larger set of items.

Annotated work samples show student work which demonstrates the achievement of one or more outcomes at a level. The samples are annotated to show the reasons for this judgement.

ESL Scales

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 4: ESL Scales - Oral Interaction

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

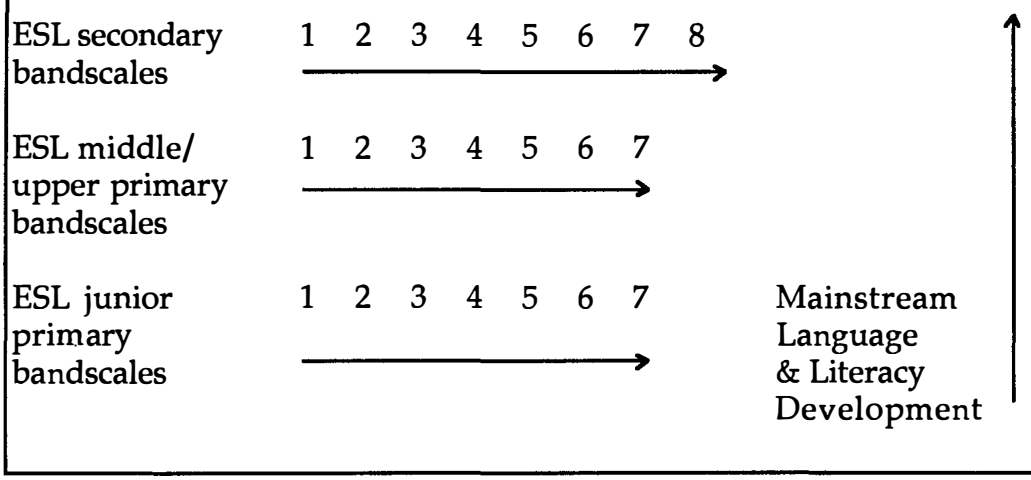
Oral Inter-action Level 4	OIC 4.1 Understands the gist of unfamiliar topics expressed in familiar language and communicates in predictable social and learning situations, expressing simple messages in connected speech.	OI L&C 4.2 Demonstrates awareness of basic register requirements of spoken English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

NLLIA ESL Bandscales

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

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

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



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

Figure 6: ESL Bandscales Speaking

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

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

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

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

New South Wales English K-6 Syllabus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New South Wales Early Learning Profiles

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

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

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

Queensland English Syllabus in Years 1 to 10

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

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

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

The syllabus provides a perspective on issues such as the needs of individuals and groups, the teaching of language in use, and the related underlying attitudes, thinking processes, skills and knowledge. The syllabus requires the explicit

teaching of the knowledge and understanding of language and language learning which are seen to assist the young school leaver to become an independent learner. This explicit teaching about language and language learning also provides teachers and students with a metalanguage with which they can explore this area of study.

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

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

Queensland Student Performance Standards in English

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

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

The Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net

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

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

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

Teachers are encouraged to interact on an individual basis with each student as part of the process of monitoring and assessment. Schools, in consultation with the parents, have the option of exempting ESL students who are at Level 2 or

have been assessed already with reference to the Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels (see below).

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

Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels

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

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

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

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

Victorian English Curriculum and Standards Framework

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

The Introduction to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework states:

'The Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) provides the basis for curriculum planning in Victorian schools for years Prep-10 and for reporting on student achievement. It sets out the major areas of learning to be covered and describes learning outcomes to be achieved by students. Its content is divided into eight key learning areas agreed nationally. The CSF will be used by schools to plan their curriculum and to refine their assessment and reporting procedures.' (p. 2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Victorian ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework.

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

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

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

'The ESL companion recognises the need to control English language input, and systematically and explicitly teach English language skills to ESL students before the outcomes of the English CSF will be appropriate for them. This will vary from student to student depending on their age, previous educational background including level of

literacy in their first language, and opportunity to access an intensive ESL program. There can be no prescribed time for this. For many students there will be a transition period where elements of both documents will apply.
'The ESL companion will have value for both ESL and mainstream teachers. Principally it is written for teachers working in a range of ESL programs in both primary and secondary settings. However, the document is also intended to inform mainstream teachers of the type of curriculum and learning outcomes that are appropriate for ESL learners. ESL course advice that supports the CSF and ESL annotations to the Directorate of School Education course advice will further assist mainstream teachers with ESL students in the classes. Teachers will therefore need to use the ESL companion according to their particular teaching context.' (p. 1).

The ESL course advice for primary students referred to here and so far published by the Department of Education consists of two volumes for use with Primary new arrivals: (i) *BL and B1 Course Advice* and (ii) *ESL Essentials - A1.*

The ESL companion uses the same basic structure of strands and modes as the English CSF. Thus the strands of the ESL companion are:

- Communication (this relates to the Texts strand of the English CSF, but with greater emphasis on communicative language use and the acquisition of English)
- Contextual understanding (as with the English CSF, this includes two categories of knowledge: the situational context and the sociocultural context)
- Linguistic structures and features (as with the English CSF, this refers to the ability to organise and link texts, and to the knowledge and use of grammar and vocabulary, both spoken and written)
- Strategies (related to the Strategies strand of the English CSF, this strand focuses on operating strategies, used for managing communication in English, and strategies used to acquire English)

As with the English CSF, all four strand is located within the three modes.

In contrast to the English CSF, the ESL companion uses the term 'stages' rather than 'levels' to describe English development. The ESL companion:

'...provides a set of overlapping, flexible stages of English development related to bands of schooling. With the exception of the BL and SL stages, the framework is based on an assumption that the students are literate in their first language and have educational experiences similar to the level that would be expected for their age group.' (p.2).

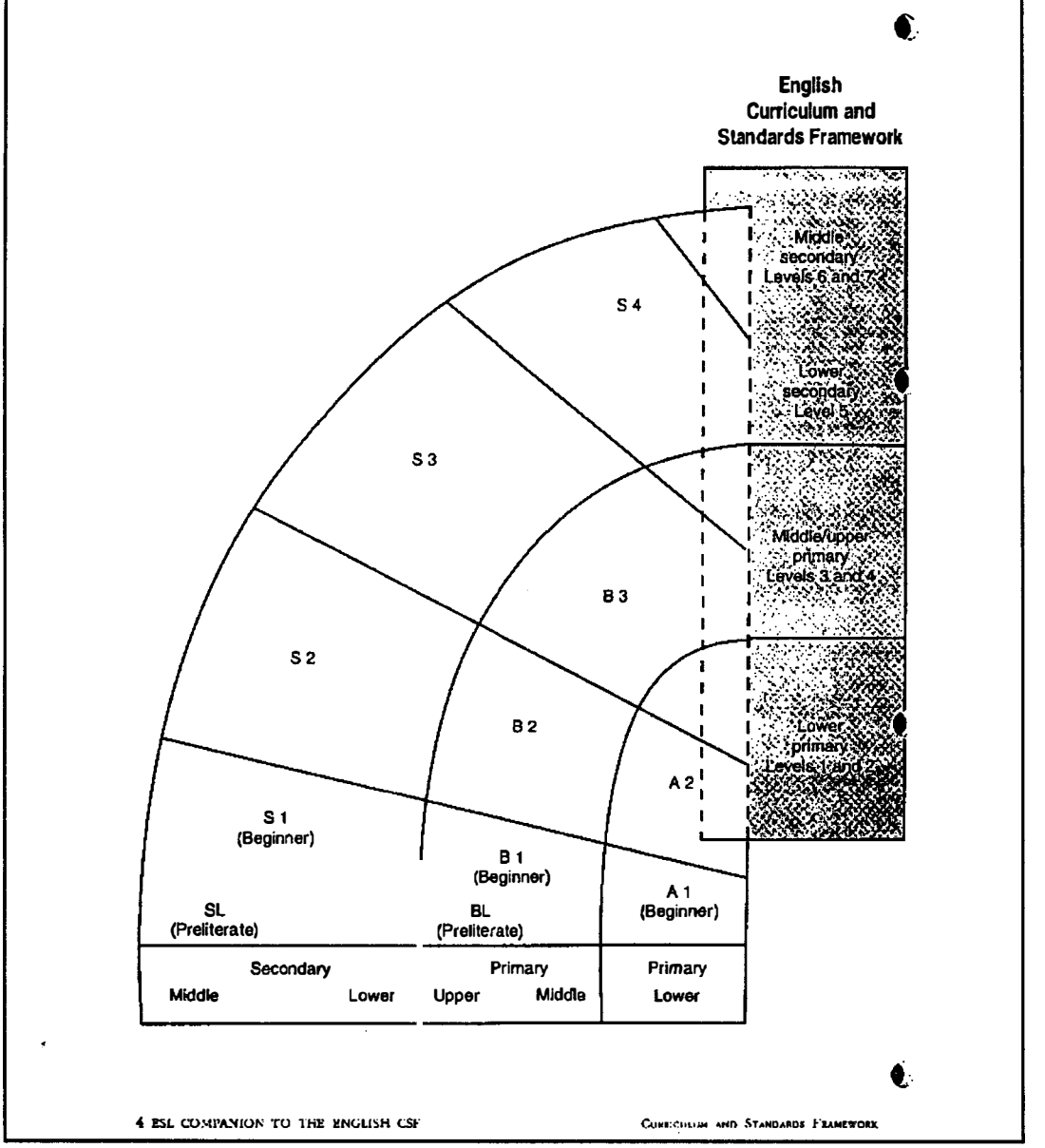
Unlike the English CSF, these broad stages of English development in the ESL companion are not clearly linked to particular years of schooling. The stages of the ESL companion for primary students are as follows:

- Lower Primary — Two stages: A1 and A2
- Middle/Upper Primary — Three stages: B1, B2 and B3

There is another stage, **BL**, for Middle/Upper Primary students with little or no literacy in their first language and at early stages of learning English.

Figure 7 (the 'stages' or 'rainbow' diagram) shows the stages of the ESL companion, and how these stages relate to the levels of the English CSF.

Figure 7: Stages of the ESL Companion to the English CSF



The relationship between the ESL companion and the English CSF is explained in the following way:

'An important element of (this) diagram is the period of overlap between the two frameworks. As ESL students move beyond the ESL companion, the outcomes of the English CSF are likely to become more and more appropriate in describing their language learning. However, it is likely that reference to the curriculum focuses and learning outcomes expressed in the ESL companion will continue to be relevant in the development of programs for students with an ESL background. The ESL companion does not map individual student pathways, so it is not possible to determine exactly when the English CSF will be appropriate for particular ESL students.' (p. 7).

The content of the ESL companion is organised in a similar way to that of the English CSF, with the difference noted above, so that for each 'stage' of each strand there is a two-page description. The first page describes the curriculum focus. The second page lists a set of learning outcomes describing what students will be able to do within each of the modes at the completion of that level. This

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

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

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

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

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

Victorian English Profiles Handbook.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Western Australian English Student Outcome Statements

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEVEL 1

Reading & Viewing

Texts	Contextual Understanding	Linguistic Structures and Features
The Student:		
1.1a Role plays being a competent reader and consistently interprets some familiar written symbols. 1.1b Constructs meanings from visual texts with familiar content, particularly designed to be viewed in segments	1.2 Makes connections between own knowledge and experience and the ideas, events and information in texts viewed and read aloud by teacher.	3 Demonstrates emerging awareness and use of symbols and conventions when making meaning from texts.
This will be evident when students, for example: • Engage in reading-like behaviour (hold book, turn pages and relate story or information as if reading the words). • Mimic teacher's role in a shared book session by pointing to and 'reading' the text of a familiar big book largely from memory. • Point to text on signs and provide a relevant meaning according to the context. • Recognise the meaning of familiar print (advertising logos, labels, classroom signs, street and traffic signs, names and labels on classroom equipment). • Begin to provide consistent messages from printed texts. • Recognise own name.	This will be evident when students, for example: • Recall and briefly describe an event in television programs whose segments are constructed with young children's interests and concentration spans in mind. • Comment on parts of television programs aimed at a general viewing audience. • Take part in class discussion about possible interpretations of a picture (stories that can be inferred from a newspaper photograph). • Discuss television programs viewed at home (express reasons for preferring certain programs; offer some reasons for a character's actions). • Discuss favourite aspects of films and videos and identify features that appeal to them (action segments, scary parts, particular characters). **Students in an education support setting will signal progress towards Level One when they, for example:** • Demonstrate reading behaviours, such as -holding book correct way up -turning single pages in order -tracking from left to right. • Maintain focus when looking at books, advertising material, magazines. • Listen to stories. • Request stories. • Listen, watch and enjoy a story when given a choice. • Show positive or appropriate response to pictures and text. • Indicate main idea of a picture. • Match words with pictures	This will be evident when students, for example: • Compare personal knowledge and experience with information in texts (make comments such as, 'That's like...' or 'When I did that I ...' or 'My silkworms didn't look like that...'). • Express personal views about a character's actions and speculate on their own behaviour in a similar situation ('If I were....I would have...'). • Reflect on their own experiences compared with those in texts viewed or heard read through talking, drawing, roleplay, craft (draw a picture showing when they felt the way a character did). • Compare the way familiar people live with those in visual and printed texts (how the families represented are like or unlike their own). • List and discuss new things learned or questions raised through viewing or listening to a text read aloud (new information gained through shared reading of an informational book). **Students in an education support setting will signal progress towards Level One when they, for example:** • Identify familiar features in pictorial texts. • Indicate connections between features in texts and own experience.

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

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

Western Australian First Steps Developmental Continua

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

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

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

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

Phase 1: Role Play Writing
Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.

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

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

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

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

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

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THE MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN CASE STUDIES

June and Stephanie at Oxford Street

Clare and Stephanie at Oxford Street

Sue at Hillsdale

Jenny at Hillsdale

June and Stephanie at Oxford Street Primary School

Tom Lumley

The School Context

Oxford Street is an inner city Catholic school, of about 90 students in four classes. The school is on the same premises as the church to which it is attached, and is housed in an old two-storey red brick building with a comfortable, lived-in feel to it. The long-established suburb in which it is located houses a population which is extremely diverse in terms of socio-economic status as well as the range of ethnic backgrounds represented, although it is on the whole relatively prosperous. The students mainly come from the local area, although more live in the numerous flats in the area (state - as well as privately-owned) than in houses. A few students come to school from distant suburbs, with their parents, who work locally.

The great majority of the students are of ESL background, although they were almost all born in Australia. The language backgrounds represented amongst the children's parents and carers (grandparents and other family members feature prominently in this role for the students in the school) include, in roughly descending numerical order: Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hakka, Italian, Greek, Hainanese, Hungarian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian and Sign Language. Many parents use more than one language, and some use up to five. Translations of some school material are provided in Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish. It is not uncommon for both parents to speak different first languages, and there are no more than two students at any year level whose parents are both native speakers of English.

The school clearly gives a lot of importance to supporting students in their language development, and this year decided to create four classes, and also to retain the specialist ESL teacher, despite the relatively small numbers of students. This allowed class sizes to be kept as small as possible, and team teaching to be provided. The motivation for this appears to be recognition of the language needs faced by the whole school population - the school seems to feel that this strategy is likely to allow maximum English development among the students, by permitting them to focus energy on those students who most obviously face difficulties with English.

The Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework is used by the school. The English Curriculum and Standards Framework for English has been in use for over a year, and the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework is in the process of being introduced. The ESL Scales were used before that, for a short while. At the moment the school places a strong emphasis on assessment - this was a main focus for 1996. The interest in assessment appears to have been a motivating factor in the teachers' decision to participate in this project.

The school adopts an integrated approach to teaching, with each topic lasting a considerable period, normally a term. Many of the Key Learning Areas of the Curriculum and Standards Framework are covered in each topic. For example, the Olympics (the theme of Term 3) covered at least the Key Learning Areas of

Studies of Society and the Environment, English, Health and PE, and Mathematics.

The Classroom Context

There are nominally 21 or 22 students in June's class, although with absences due to sickness, dental visits, or other reasons I rarely saw the class as full as this. June regrets the regular absence of several of the students, and also that a few of them sometimes lack sufficient sleep to allow them to concentrate properly. The children are aged between 5 and 7, in Grades Prep and One. Prep is the first year of school in Victoria, and children are generally 4 or 5 years old when they start this grade. The first languages of their parents include Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Khmer, Tagalog, Spanish and Romanian. The proficiency levels relevant for them are the first two levels represented in both the Curriculum and Standards Framework English and ESL Companion documents. There are no new arrivals. I first met these children in September, by which time they had spent nearly 8 months in the classroom.

For many activities the children sit in a semi-circle facing June, and also Stephanie, when they are co-teaching a lesson. There are also little clusters of tables at which the children sit when working in small groups, boys and girls together. On each table is a container with pencils, frequently supplemented with other implements, depending on the activity they are engaged in. Within easy reach are piles of books the children may refer to as they need to, including their own dictionaries and their daily workbooks.

Stephanie is a specialist ESL teacher and Curriculum co-ordinator who is employed 0.6 to team teach with the other teachers in the school (she works the remainder of the week in another school). She has been teaching for about 20 years, and obtained an ESL qualification (B.Ed. [ESL]) about 8 years ago. Because Stephanie's role involves close collaboration with the other teachers, as a team teacher as well as curriculum co-ordinator, I will include discussion of her approach to teaching and assessment as part of the case studies of both June and Clare (see next case study), the two mainstream junior primary teachers at Oxford Street. Stephanie co-teaches for a few hours each week with June.

June is a mainstream teacher of the Prep/Grade One group and has worked in this school for over 20 years. She obtained an ESL qualification (ESL post-graduate certificate) about ten years ago, although she has been working with ESL learners for much longer than that.

> *The ESL training I think was the best course thing that I ever did, in helping me to understand just how children learn, and I think that all children benefit from that kind of teaching.*

June's assumption is that all the students are from ESL backgrounds or would benefit from the kinds of teaching that are appropriate for ESL students. For her, the explicitness of teaching required for ESL students is likely to prove successful with all students. It gave her many new explicit strategies for teaching, which she employs all the time. Foremost amongst these seems to be the need for contextual support, and not making assumptions about children's language:

> *When some child doesn't tell me 'ambulance', which unfortunately it's like that with a few of them, it just makes me more aware that, yes, I need heaps of clues. You can't assume that because they walk down Oxford Street for four years of their life, they are going to tell you that that's a tram, and that is an ambulance, they are traffic lights, because there's so much going on, they can't differentiate between things because there's just such a really big gap.*

She emphasises here the need to be extremely explicit in presenting concepts of every kind, and constantly to check that the children understand what she is teaching. Most useful of all clues are pictures and drawings, but it's important to use pictures that relate exactly to what the children see around them:

> *Since I've set about using pictorial representation, I don't think a lesson goes by without heaps and heaps of pictorials attached, it's every time you write a word down, an action.*

However, the quality of the pictures she uses is also important. June talks of a picture of an ambulance she once tried to use, but which turned out to be useless as a teaching resource for her students because it had

> *visual clues so bad that they don't know what this is, even though I have it white, with red and blue things up there and even with the red cross, but they don't have crosses nowadays.*

She learnt from this that

> *I have to make sure that my visual clues are going to be spot on, because if the clues aren't any good, that's hopeless. The children have to be able to identify what they are. You really do have to be very precise.*

June clearly sees it as her primary duty to teach these children to be literate. She talks about how in the past a lot of ESL learners used not to be identified.

> *It was often that they were fine in oral English, but it was all the little articles, ticks all the way down for all the subjects, and then when they were in Grade 6, and they were expected to write those long passages, the mistakes started to appear, all the telltale signs.*

She is referring here to her experience with ESL students who coped well with all the tasks of junior and middle primary school. She observed that it was only in the final stages of upper primary school, with its increased academic demands, that it emerged that they found it difficult to write lengthy texts in accurate English. This experience has led her to pay much greater attention to accuracy in the earliest stages of writing.

> *That's why I concentrate on writing from the beginning. I'm just a little bit more aware of the signs. When they choose the wrong word, we sit down and talk about it. I just realise how much they need to have input, like articles, they just don't use them. So you know that they don't have that ease with the grammar.*

She mentions here, as an example, the issues of correct vocabulary and use of articles. However, as well as formal accuracy, June considers it necessary to use explicit teaching of a variety of different discourse structures:

> *That's why we chose the genre approach to teaching, too. If we are doing science, then we will teach them how to write in the report fashion.*

The decision to use a genre approach to teaching writing was largely the result of the encouragement and assistance of Stephanie.

> *Right, we're going to do a recount, they are actually being introduced to this ... and helping me, too. We've now been doing it for the last two years. We make sure that we've got big books (with relevant material).*

The classroom is covered in print - this is perhaps its strongest identifying feature. There are drawings with accompanying pieces of writing strung across the room in festoons; plastered to the walls; piled up neatly in bundles all over the place. There are shelves and displays full of books. All the children have a

variety of books of their own in which they are expected to write frequently, including:

- a personal Diary, in which the students write whatever they wish;
- a Dictionary, which they build up themselves as they want to learn the spellings of new words;
- a Daily Workbook in which they write and draw, and stick the results of teaching activities, throughout the term;
- and an Assessment Book taken home periodically as a demonstration of progress for parents.

Lists of words appear everywhere; objects are labelled; an alphabet is strung across the room at head height with a sheet of butcher's paper for each letter, and a list of words with associated letters and sounds beneath it. This display of their work and the written language used to describe it allows the students to see what they have produced themselves. Equally importantly, it can be used for constant reinforcement of what has been learnt earlier in the year, which can be instantly referred to. It also has another function: the parents are able to see what their children have produced, and to observe clearly that although the classes are multi-age ones, the material covered differs significantly from age to age, as the children become more mature. Literacy pervades every part of the day, with the exception of, perhaps, sport - although the Olympics was the topic for the whole school during term 3, and there is abundant evidence on all the walls, as well as in the children's books, of the role of literacy in learning about it.

When discussing reading, June again emphasises the need for constant contextual reinforcement, and the need to avoid 'barking at print':

> *I said I don't believe in Reading Recovery, unless of course, not everything is in place, there's so many things going on in the reading process, if you have meaningful print all the time to read, surely it's a matter of time. I cut up sentences so they can be put together again, I cut up letters so they can put them into words, always making sure that I have print that's meaningful, it takes a second to write the word, as well as just drawing it, so that gradually, they get used to seeing the thing with the print.*

This association of meaningful print with the world that the children live in and need to describe is constant in her teaching, and she clearly regards understanding of what they are doing as the fundamental business of learning. June is an active member of an association promoting the teaching of philosophy to children, and with it an inquiry approach to teaching and learning.

> *That whole teaching children philosophy association, and the inquiry approach, it just makes children in charge of their own learning, and once you've got that I think the world's their oyster. I believe in teaching children philosophy, and a lot of the ways of getting children to speak and respond comes from my love of that.*

June constantly encourages her students to learn to ask questions, and then to find answers to the questions. Language thus occupies a central position in everything she does with her class. For example, at the beginning of the Term 3 theme, the Olympic Games,

> *I asked the students what they knew about the Olympic Games, which I wrote down, like 'Cathy Freeman is a fast runner', and then I asked 'What do you want to know about the Olympic Games?' They'd say things like 'What does Olympic Games mean?' 'Does Cathy Freeman always win?' and I wrote all those down. And at the end of the term I then asked them what they had found out that they hadn't known before, or that they'd misunderstood, and every single child told me that, and what they had found out.*

June is very comfortable with the integrated approach to teaching used in the school, and considers it the most successful way of allowing children to build up their knowledge of English. This integrated approach gives a unifying theme to all the work that the students do in a whole term, although the content can be related to a number of the Key Learning Areas of the curriculum. Rather than moving from topic to topic, she is able continually to recycle both concepts and language, so that the children eventually have control of the language of a wide range of concepts related to the central topic, but which branch out from it in many directions. This gives the children confidence with each new stage of teaching, and she feels that this allows the students never to be confronted with material for which they do not have sufficient English to participate.

This recycling can be seen in June's regular recapping of the previous day's lessons. The strong focus on active language use is always apparent, and the revision will practise both the concepts and the language needed to describe them. This is illustrated by one in a series of maths lessons in which the children are comparing the weights of different objects. One day they practised using the pattern, *'... is lighter/heavier than me'*. In the following day's revision June began by eliciting this structure from four of the students. After this, the students revised the names of the objects they found, with June constructing a list on the board of the things that each child found that were lighter than him/herself. Each child in turn was asked to contribute an item. June then moves smoothly into the business of today, and elicits 'scales' as the instrument for comparing the weights of things. Consolidation of the written language is achieved by eliciting further classroom items that students had written down yesterday, requiring them to read from their lists. June describes why she uses this sort of approach:

> *I always try with anything that we've ever done, we sit down and we always recap and get somebody to give an explanation of what we did, and usually why, when, maybe how, so that's there's plenty of opportunities for children to keep verbalising. I've left 'heavier' for the moment, which we'll come back to later, and that's because it's important for students to have the opportunity to play and experiment with the balances so they can discover what is heavier and lighter before actually measuring with scales and using the language of kilograms and grams.*

June then elicits the words 'kilos' and 'kilograms' as the units we use to describe weight, and revises the difference between kilos and metres/kilometres. She explains this with the expressions 'how long' versus 'how tall'. She brings out five or six sets of weighing scales, and elicits the words 'balancing' and 'balanced', demonstrating the difference and checking that the children understand the difference. It is only after this extensive language work that June feels that the children are adequately prepared to move onto hands-on activities. They then spend some time in pairs working with the scales, manipulating them to establish how they work, and relating the language they have learnt to the activities and objects with which they are grappling.

Later in the morning the subject had moved to Place and Space, with an activity forming part of the preparation the students needed to make 2D and 3D representations of the school and its surroundings. June begins by displaying a large skeleton map of the school buildings and the surrounding area, which she has drawn on several sheets of butcher's paper stuck together. Again, every child gets a chance to speak as the class discuss this map: the places on it, who lives where, and what is found where. Every child is given a task to do towards completion of the plan. These tasks differ in complexity (eg younger, less confident class members might be asked to stick a section of foam rubber onto the plan, representing the footpath), but ensuring participation allows each student to feel and to observe that he/she has played an obvious part in the construction. June then asks questions to check the children's understanding of

the map, and their ability to describe it: *'Now, all move back, please. Who can see the artroom? Put your finger on it, Harold.'*

Following this group preparation the children take their workbooks and draw a map of the local area themselves, referring to the map they have discussed. They label the map, writing new words in their dictionaries if they need to. Finally the children come together to sit in a semi-circle again, with their maps in front of them, and there is general discussion of what they have drawn. In later days they will write about what they have drawn, moving from oral to written language. Their writing will vary according to what they are capable of, and might consist of single words, lists of words or sentences.

June introduces the alphabet to the students, at the rate of approximately one letter a week. Words are elicited from the students, firstly, that begin with the letter, and secondly, which include the sound in them. June comments how these are related wherever possible to familiar people and things in the classroom. For example, *'It was great having Ophelia in the class, because the children could see that 'ph' made the 'f' sound'*. These words are written on a sheet of butcher's paper as they are presented by the children, and then this sheet is hung on the line strung across the room.

The activity breaks which June regularly builds into her lessons also have a language component to them. In these short breaks all the children practise, with June modelling and naming each action, jumping, stamping, being tired, jogging, bending, standing up tall, walking, driving, flying, diving, screaming, laughing. This both keeps the children active and allows them to become familiar with the language required to describe these actions and attitudes. Other activities they love which integrate language, action and music or rhythm are choral singing (such as, *Five Fingers on Your Hand*) and choral reading from class sets of books while listening to tape recordings of Big Books. *More Spaghetti, I Say* was obviously a hot favourite with the whole class when I visited them.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

June considers that she has had a lot of in-service, much of it related to assessment: *'Over the years, it seems to have been going on for ages.'* Nevertheless, she feels that she needs to know more about assessment and reporting. The school had a curriculum day earlier this year, led by Stephanie in her role as ESL specialist and curriculum co-ordinator. Half of this day was devoted to ESL assessment, examining the relationship between the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion and other language assessment frameworks the teachers had used, including the Victorian English Profiles Handbook, the ESL Scales and the Curriculum and Standards Framework English document. In running this session, Stephanie was drawing on her experience with these various curriculum and assessment frameworks.

Types of assessment

For June, the line between teaching and assessment is not a clear one, with every teaching activity and piece of student work offering opportunities for assessment, and contributing to the ongoing task of teaching and learning. She talks of the following methods of obtaining information about her students' language development:

- informal observation, questioning and discussion
- collated samples, containing various sorts of written and pictorial information
- anecdotal notes and checklists

Familiarity with and memory of these various sources of information, each of them highly detailed, allows June to give little descriptions to characterise aspects

of the language development of the children, as with these Prep students (from families with Spanish, Cantonese and Khmer as first languages, respectively):

> *Well, Marisa doesn't really read. In her diary she's just writing letters.*
>
> *Jonathan is just writing letters.*
>
> *Damien today is actually tuning into writing sentences, so he's moved up*

Here she is commenting on their progress in writing, but is able to make comparable comments about a great many other aspects of language development, as current as these, from memory.

Her notion of development is tied to an expectation of how children tend to develop according to age.

> *Well I don't worry too much about (the fact that Marisa is not yet at the stage of writing words or sentences), no, because I think 'Well I, from where she's coming from she didn't even write anything to start with.' We just get little lines or colours and things but, well she was four, at four and a half, to me it's consistent and I'm pleased with her progress. Any less, I would be a bit concerned.*

We will now examine some of the ways in which June's comprehensive internal picture of her students is built up.

Informal Observation, Questioning and Discussion

As we have seen, in this classroom there is a lot of talking about concepts, with the children sitting in a circle, and each one required to contribute something, to show his or her understanding. Sometimes June and Stephanie co-teach the first part of the lesson, then separate the class into two groups. For example, the focus at the beginning of one lesson is on the different roles the children have as family members or friends or club members: they use the labels *'uncle'*, *'grandmother'*, *'niece'*, *'cousin'*, etc. The teachers ensure that every child participates, contributing something to the discussion. They can thus make a judgement about how well the student understands what is happening in the class, about his or her ability to use the oral language required to participate in the activity, and what level of follow-up support for this might be necessary. June does not necessarily write all these things down, but in comments made after this lesson she shows here how detailed observations she makes of students during teaching activities involving questioning and discussion can be both general (for the whole class):

> *I was delighted with that (their ability to answer accurately), because I don't know that I would have been able (at a similar age) to say whether I was a niece or a nephew or what, so for them to be able to identify that male, female role, I was delighted. They came up with all those, except for the members of the church community.*

and specific (for individual students):

> *People like Marisa, I was really delighted that she could identify that she has a cousin.*

We see here that she is pleasantly surprised with what the children can do. In another lesson, when they are talking about the roles of different members of the local community, the children offer *'classmates'* as an example of members of the local community. June comments how this kind of response directs her teaching:

> *I was expecting them to say police and shopkeepers, and I'll have to pick up on 'classmates', and talk about the attributes of classmates and members of the wider community.*

This is one example of how assessment is continuous in June's classroom, and her teaching is much influenced by it. If it becomes clear that part of the group have not grasped something, she will re-present it in a new way, until she is happy that they are coping satisfactorily. This means that she never gets through all the work she plans for each week. This occasionally perturbs her, but in the end she has confidence that it is more important for the children to become confident in what they do know and to know how to ask questions about it than to lack confidence in many things about which they know very little.

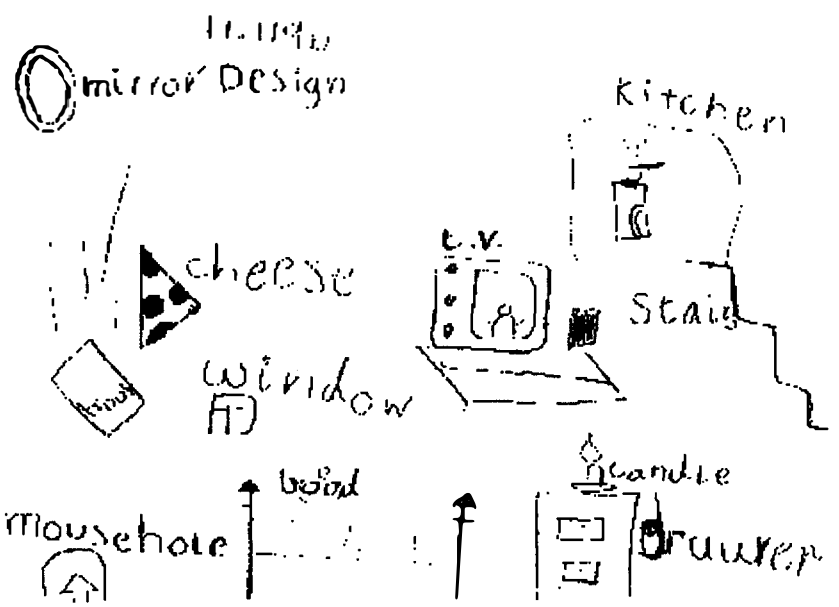
Collated Samples of Student Work

June's inquiry approach to teaching leads to unexpected moments, but these are often built into the teaching cycle, and form part of the subsequent assessment of development:

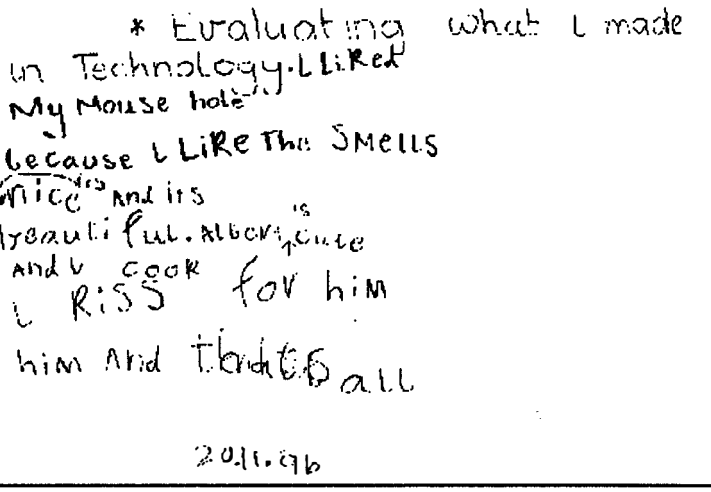
> *we went to the Gallery yesterday, and Damien saw a little door in the corner, a little wooden creature's door, about that high, and here was I talking about the Australian paintings, and he's found this little tiny door. So in the end we all went over, three or four at a time and the students just sat and stared at it, and then we went out to have lunch, and all they wanted to do was to come back and look at the door. And out of the whole class, without fail, every single person said the best thing was Mildred and Roy's door, and the eggs in the garden. Although Julian did say he liked the Australian paintings.*

June talked about how it may be unrealistic to ask children how they feel about something immediately after they've seen it, but hopes that nevertheless the experience of visiting the Gallery will have made an impression on them. The mousehole was incorporated into the teaching cycle, and became one part of the technology unit on construction that the class were engaged in. One stage of this teaching cycle was a written evaluation by the children of their work, which also gave June an opportunity to assess conceptual understanding and its expression in English in the samples of work they produced. Sample 1 was produced by Michael, a Prep student of Vietnamese background.

Sample 1: Mousehole picture



Sample 1a: Evaluation



She commented, when we looked back at this piece of work, produced some weeks earlier and preserved for this purpose in the child's daily workbook, how this could be used for assessing both oral and written language. She says that much can be learned about a student's progress, both from looking at the writing and asking the child to talk about the picture,

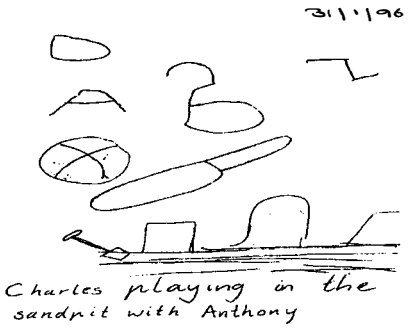
> *if you can come back a day later, a week later, and look at your work and still be able to identify what you wrote.*

Q *To identify what the drawings are or what the words are?*

A *Yes. They may not know what the words are, that's why I encourage them to draw pictures beside them. There's no doubt as to the progression as you go up in age but Julian, Julian wouldn't need pictures for clues because he's actually a fluent reader and writer.*

She shows here how her overall internal picture of each student's development will condition her expectations of actual performance in activities such as these, and how she will use them flexibly, according to her sense of this development.

Sample 2: Picture, 'Charles playing in the sandpit with Anthony'

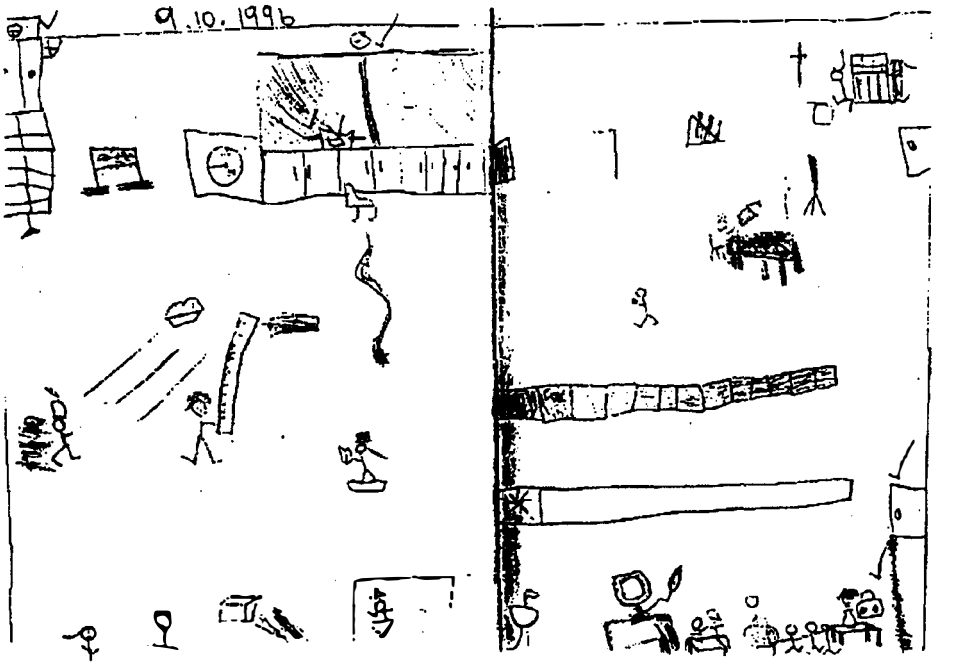


Drawings and the writing accompanying them are a major source of information for June about the English language development of her students. She asks all the children to do a drawing and write about it at the beginning of the year. If they are unable to write about it, she asks them to describe it to her, and she writes a description, as she did with Sample 2.

Referring to Sample 2, *'Look at this picture, drawn on the first day of the year'*, June will say about this drawing made by a Prep student, *'and now look what he can do in October'*. Letter formation, sophistication of drawing, degree of repetition, confidence (always confidence), amount of detail, spelling, length of sentences, ability to match words and pictures, ability to read back what has been written (weeks or months after it was written as well as the same day or the following day), are some of the ways in which she can describe each child's progress. Again, drawings and other materials such as these are all collated in the various books that the children keep, and provide a record which June constantly draws on to develop her comprehensive and ever-changing picture of each child's development.

Another example of how drawings are used for assessment purposes comes from the lesson described earlier on Place and Space. At the end of the lesson the children were required to describe the maps they had drawn of the school and its surroundings. Sample 3 is an example of a plan of the classroom, made by a Grade 1 boy during an earlier teaching cycle.

Sample 3: Drawing of classroom

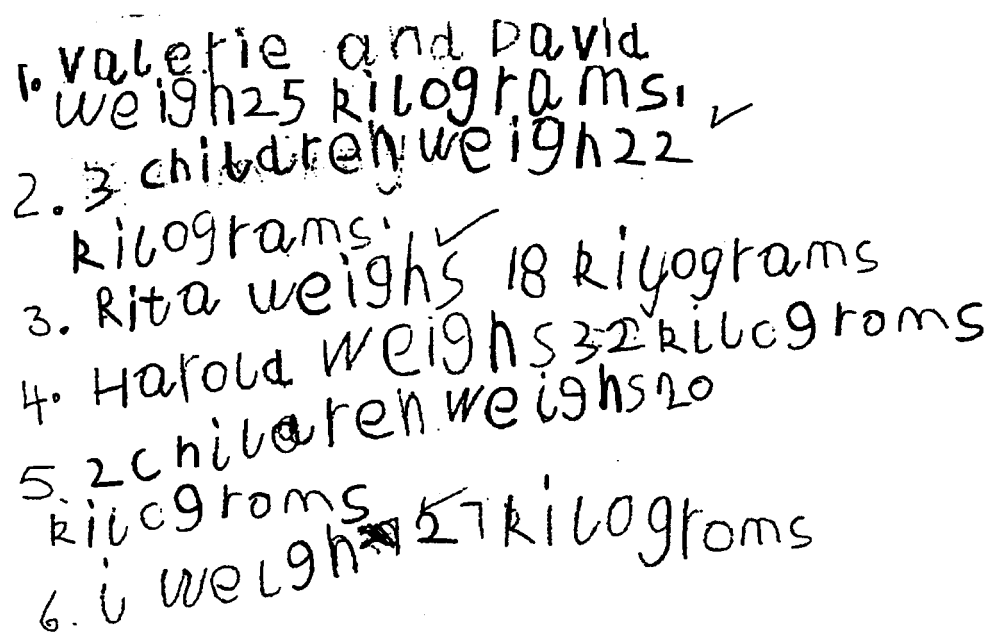


June is able to use this as an assessment activity by informally observing, and remembering, the complexity of the representations, the sophistication of the oral language with which each child is able to describe the map he/she has drawn, and the level of detail included in both the map and the oral and (where it is produced) written language accompanying it. This sort of informal assessment is typical of June's classroom.

As with the other drawings shown here, this plan is not taken away by June for a portfolio she keeps herself. Instead, the children's work is stuck into one of their various books and stored as part of the record of their work for that year. Typically, this will be the daily workbook, an ongoing record of many of the classroom activities the children have completed. These books are stacked in neat piles in various parts of the room, and may be consulted frequently by both the students and the teachers. June will often provide opportunities for children to complete unfinished work in later lessons, before they stick it in this book. There are other uses made of the children's work, though. Samples might be included in the assessment book sent home to parents (described below in the section on Reporting); alternatively, they might be displayed on the classroom walls; or words arising from the children's writing might be added to the child's personal dictionary, or added to the alphabet hung across the room. What is clear is that the work will not be ignored, relegated to history, and not again consulted. Rather, it will add to the teaching resources used by the whole class, and it is likely that regular reference will be made to the maps, and to the concepts and language arising from the activity of producing them.

Language development comes into every activity and every curriculum area. Another kind of sample that June would refer to in order to form her overall picture of each child's development is the various worksheets she designs for the children to complete in class. For example, in the series of lessons on weighing objects and people, June asked the children to write a number of sentences describing what they had found. This kind of activity enables June to know that the children have not only understood the concepts she is teaching in maths, but can write about them in English. Here we see a worksheet (Sample 4) completed by Julian, a Cantonese student in Grade 1.

Sample 4: Worksheet from maths lesson on weights



These worksheets, too, are collated in the students' daily workbooks, to be referred to as necessary in future months. These workbooks and the other books (including the diary, the maths book, the dictionary) represent a detailed record of almost every learning activity in which the children have participated during the year.

This large collection of pieces of work contributes constantly to June's comprehensive knowledge of each child. Whereas some teachers may feel it is necessary to have ESL assessment frameworks because of the added detail that they include, and they appreciate the additional material of this kind included in the course advice, June already considers the development of each child's language in much finer detail than any practical assessment framework could realistically expect to. She develops this picture by constant reference to the material the students have produced in their various books, all of which constitute evidence of achievement for her, as well as by referring to her own records. This array of evidence forms the basis for June's judgements. She will turn to these books or look at the walls around her when she wishes to consider some aspect of the students' learning, during planning or reporting.

Anecdotal Records and Checklists

June's astonishing range of records is accompanied by an equally astonishing memory for detailed achievements of each child. However, as well as having a fairly clear idea about the contents of each book used by each child, she supplements this by keeping regular anecdotal records of her own, which describe achievement of individual students on particular activities. This is particularly important when she needs to consider progress in oral language, for which it is difficult to collect samples.

Sample 5: June's Anecdotal Record, 'Cycles'

Subject: 'Cycles' Religion/Science/Maths/Health and P.E.

Students: Co-operative groups - or partnerships - in putting together a 'cycle' using pictures

Ophelia (Y1, Vietnamese) Harold (Y1, Chinese)	Rain cycle. Ophelia answered the question that chn. asked very well so did Harold. They understood their roles and the 'rain cycle'. Worked well together in turn-taking to produce their cycle. Asked questions of others.
Alan (Prep, Vietnamese) Anthony (Prep, Romanian) Janine (Y1, Vietnamese)	Moth cycle'. Alan is inclined to take over the group - well, partnership. Anthony understands very well the 'moth cycle' & corrected Alan when he made a mistake. (Absent for the putting together of the 'cycle'.)
general comments	All chn. worked well, responding to questions and posing questions. Most questions were 'Who put the picture of the ___ on?' 'Who did the writing?'

The activity in which the children engaged here (Sample 5) required them to adopt different kinds of active roles as language users, both as presenters and as audience members. Firstly, they had to present their own cycle, each taking a particular role in the presentation. Following this, still as presenters, they had to respond to audience questions. Later, as audience members, they had to ask questions of other students after listening to their presentations. This kind of record allows June to assess how well each child, or group of children, could participate in these different roles. It also gives her a sense of the structure and sophistication of the questions they asked. June has a clear sense of the kind of information that she wants to obtain and record in these observations. Here she

was anxious to observe how the children used questions. She comments about the anecdotal record,

> *that helps me I suppose, it helps me pinpoint, because sometimes you can go through a whole day without knowing whether somebody's actually said anything, and sometimes I look back and say, oh yes, they* ***did*** *do that, and I think that's the beauty, because I think you should always do that, see that children have asked questions and posed questions. So it helps me move away, because we've used those types of questions, to other types of questions. This year I was really going to use them a lot more, but because we had the review I didn't have the time to concentrate on being more specific in some areas of my observations.*

Her comment here about being more specific relates to a related kind of assessment that she uses, checklists. In a sense these constitute a more formal level of assessment. They are used for specified assessment activities which the teachers designs. June does her planning for English in conjunction with Stephanie, the ESL specialist teacher, and each assessment activity relates to a particular Key Learning Area, although language tends to be represented in all of the activities, sometimes more and sometimes less explicitly. Assessment during these activities generally involves the use of some sort of checklist, in which language and content are not separable.

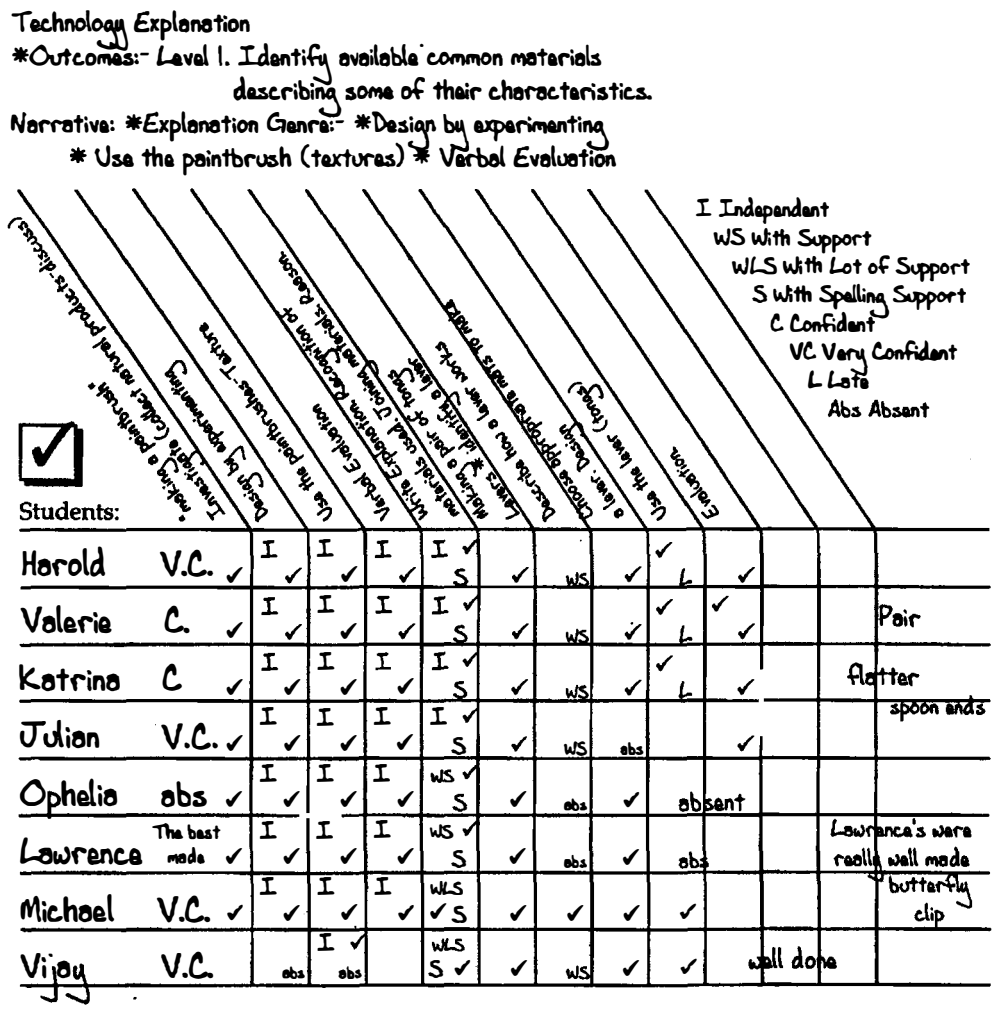
In the following example of a checklist (Sample 6), the activities are designed to assess students' ability to use the explanation genre in a unit on technology. The indicators listed on the checklist are developed by June, sometimes in conjunction with Stephanie. This is a single example out of a great many that June would typically use. We can see that this checklist includes indicators relating to the design, construction and use of the implements involved (firstly, a paintbrush and secondly, a lever or a pair of tongs), as well as to the language needed to describe the materials used and these stages. These language indicators are: a) a verbal (ie oral) evaluation of what they have done so far, b) a written explanation, including the materials used, the process of putting them together, and a reason, c) an (oral) description of how their lever works, and d) a second (oral) evaluation. June records the level of independence or confidence with which the children can perform the various tasks stipulated. She also records for the written explanation whether spelling support was needed by the children, as was the case for all of them. She also notes when the students were absent or left early, since this will affect their ability to complete activities successfully.

Different kinds of information are provided here, relating to aspects of language as well as to conceptual understanding and confidence. She comments about children's reactions to her completing the checklists during the activities,

> *The children ask what I'm writing, 'what does C mean', and I'll say 'it means confident', 'what does Ind mean', and I say 'it means you can read by yourself'. I say 'it's to help me' too.*

Consistent with her inquiry approach to teaching, June considers it important and useful to discuss with the students what she is doing when she assesses.

Sample 6: Checklist for Technology Explanation



Reporting & School Assessment Policy

The school is in the process of finalising its assessment and reporting policy. It has essentially two branches: assessment related to planning; and assessment for reporting to parents. There is no requirement within the Victorian Catholic school system to make system-wide reports about the progress of individual students.

Assessment related to planning arises from ongoing assessment by the teachers in class. The school is working towards collating that information on computer to develop a profile of each child's progress in language: reading, writing and oral interaction. Planned assessment will be discussed below in the section on the Relationship between Assessment and Teaching.

There are three components of assessment for reporting to parents. The first, a new development, introduced in 1996, is an Assessment Book for writing, provided to parents or care-givers four times a year, with information relating to

the particular genre being taught each term. This assessment will contain a commentary related to specified outcomes from the course advice accompanying the English Curriculum and Standards Framework (the course advice is seen as more detailed and therefore more useful than the Curriculum and Standards Framework English document itself). In time, the school aims to include assessments which relate, where appropriate, to the Curriculum and Standards English Framework and its ESL Companion. An example of the indicators which teachers at Oxford Street refer to for Grade 1 and 2 students is given in the case study, Clare and Stephanie, Sample 6. The second component in reporting is an annual parent/teacher interview, and the third is a written report on each student's progress which is given to parents.

The Assessment Book is used for children in each class to collect samples of work from assessed teaching activities that have been completed without the teacher's assistance. The samples are accompanied by an evaluation and comments from the class teacher, but errors in language (such as spelling) are not corrected. The aim is to send the book home with the child approximately once a term, thus providing a means of communicating directly to parents and care givers some idea of some of the things their children are able to do independently. The inside cover of this book includes a brief outline of what the Curriculum and Standards Framework Key Learning Areas are. The aim is to include five pieces of work for each student in the book each term. The teachers decide together the particular work that will be included.

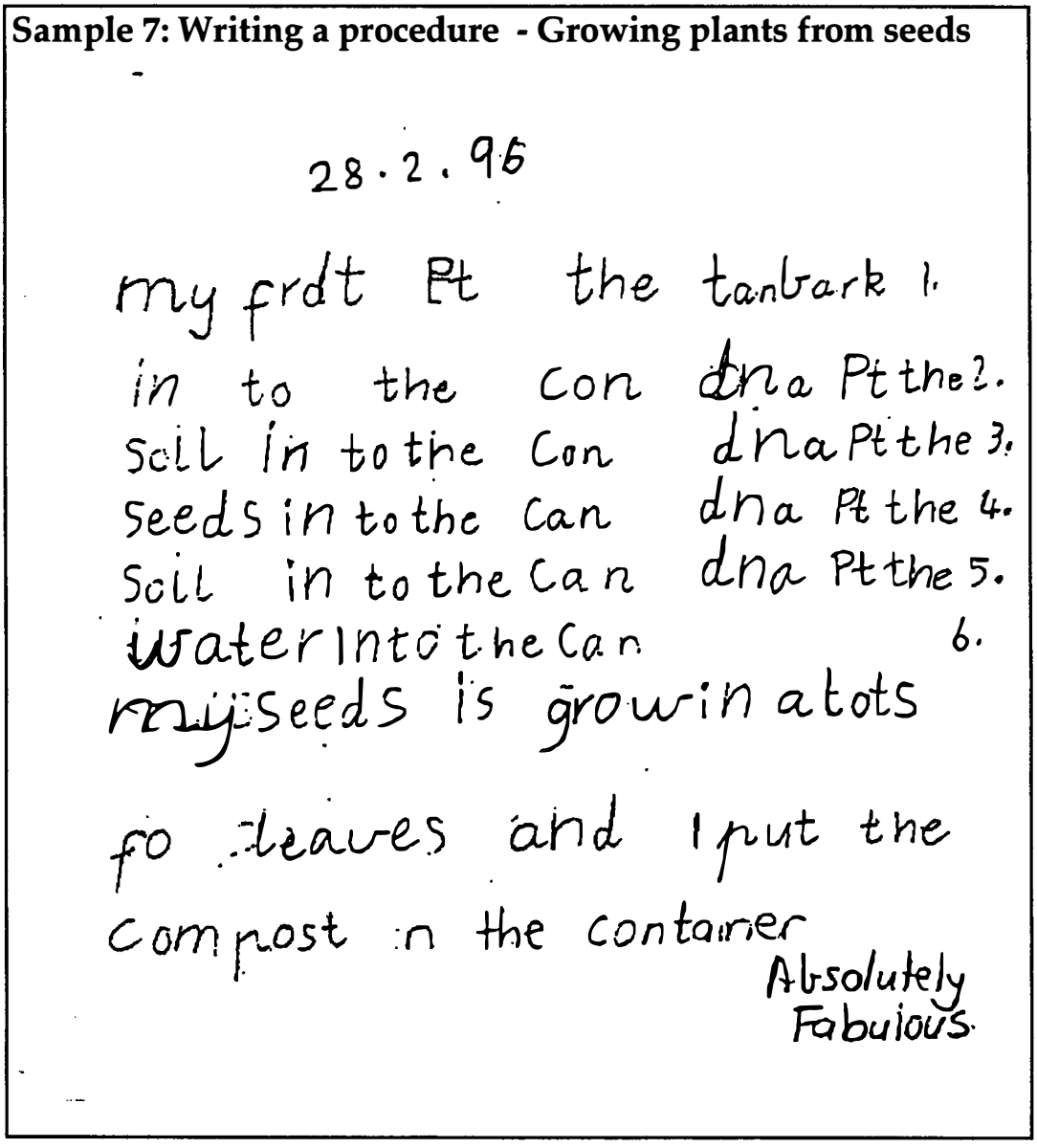
The material in the book thus serves the purposes of both assessment (from the teacher's point of view) and reporting (to the parents). Stephanie describes its purpose and its role within the assessment policy:

> *The assessment book is actually a public document, for the teachers, parents, children and even sometimes the community, so what goes in there, the children can choose and say, yeah, it is what they want to go in, but, you know, generally speaking, you'd do an activity and say to them 'Okay I think we'll put this one in our assessment books today.' And you put some of the descriptors and maybe self evaluation in here, parent comment and they're looking at having something, some of the skills, indicator type things translated (into other languages). But it's pretty visual, so I mean it's a good form of communication because the parents can actually see the work. They can talk to their children about it and the children can explain what they've done, so it's actually for our school population it's fairly appropriate.*

The assessment book aims to fulfil the functions, then, of informing parents about their children's progress, of involving the parents in their children's education, and potentially of making public statements about the kind of learning that occurs in the school. The school aims to translate some of the materials into the three languages most commonly used by the children's parents, in order to render it more accessible. There are insufficient funds to provide translations into more languages, and, with a recent reduction in the funds available for translation, the school finds it easier to translate sets of indicators once, and then continue to use them year after year, rather than attempt to translate more individual reports, which might vary from year to year.

I spoke to the teachers after its first excursion home, when this book had just been returned to school by the parents, and June had mixed feelings. Most of the parents had been either pleased with it, or had expressed no reaction. Sample 7 is taken from the Assessment Book for Katrina (Grade 1, Spanish-speaking background). June's comment, *Absolutely Fabulous*, appears at the bottom of the sample.

Sample 7: Writing a procedure - Growing plants from seeds


28.2.96

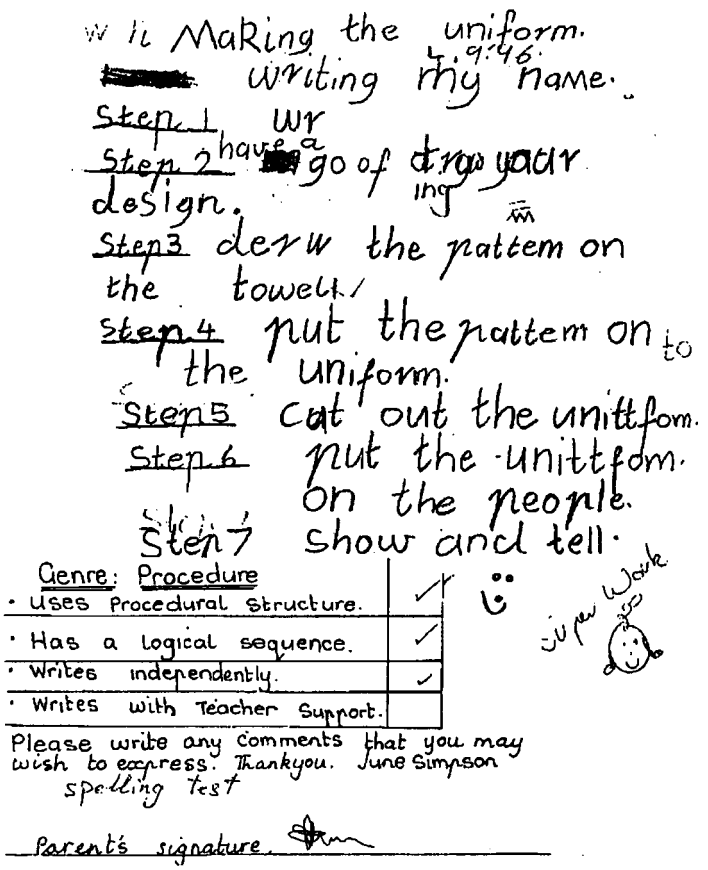
my frdt Pt the tanbark 1.
in to the Con dna Pt the 2.
Soil in to the Con dna Pt the 3.
Seeds in to the Can dna Pt the 4.
Soil in to the Can dna Pt the 5.
water into the Can 6.
my seeds is growin a tots
fo leaves and I put the
Compost in the container
Absolutely
Fabulous

Parents were invited to comment on the assessment books. Here is the comment written in the assessment book on behalf of Katrina's parents:

> *While I was looking through this book I found it very interesting and I can see that Katrina is learning a lot I am very impressed with the effort of the teachers and how they are teaching my child. I think this book is very excellent presented and highly set out. Thank you.*

Sample 8 is another example of a written procedure, this time describing how to make a uniform, which was included in the Assessment Book of a Grade 1 student, Valerie, from a Cantonese-speaking background.

Sample 8: Writing a procedure - Valerie



Making the uniform.
[redacted] writing my name.
Step 1 wr
Step 2 have a go of drawing your design.
Step3 draw the pattern on the towel.
Step 4 put the pattern on to the uniform.
Step5 cut out the unitform.
Step 6 put the unitform on the people.
Step 7 show and tell.

Genre: Procedure

• Uses Procedural Structure.	✓
• Has a logical sequence.	✓
• Writes independently.	✓
• Writes with Teacher Support.	

Please write any comments that you may wish to express. Thankyou. June Simpson
spelling test

Parent's signature [redacted]

Super Work

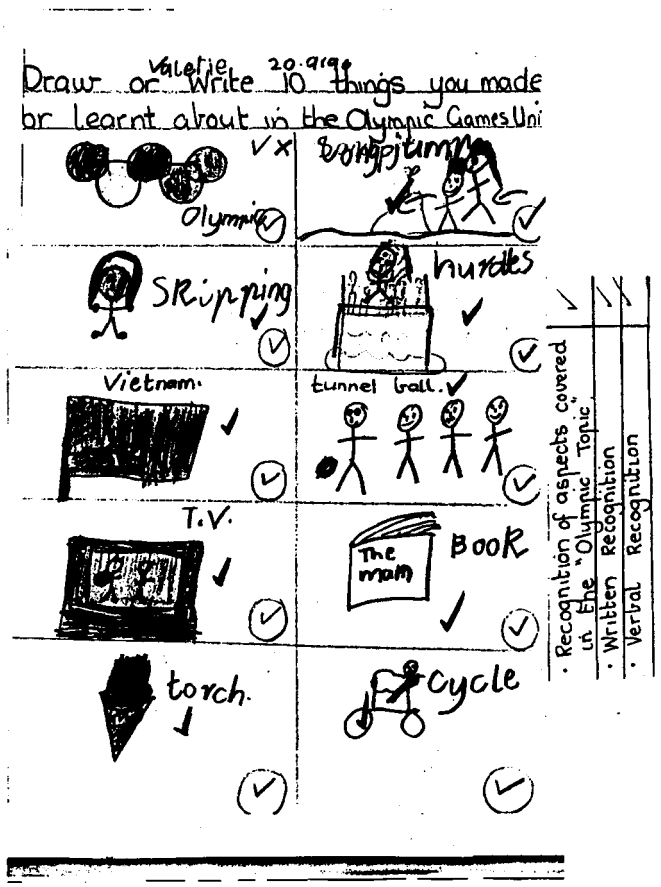
As this sample shows, however, her father expressed his concern that the spelling mistakes had not been corrected. His only comment was *spelling test* on one of the pages, next to his signature, as well as a few corrections to his daughter's spelling. June felt this had greatly disappointed Valerie, since she had been told that her parents would be excited and pleased to see the book. As June commented: *'she wasn't happy when she brought it back'*. Sample 8 shows the explicit public assessment that the teachers make of the children's progress in using the particular genre for this task, the procedure (the school's focus for term 3). The parent's response to the work is in marked contrast to June's comment, *'Super work'*, which appears to refer not to the formal accuracy of the language used, but to the child's success in meeting the assessment criteria selected for this task.

While June appears to be reasonably happy with the kinds of assessment information she gathers about her students, and has a clear picture of the progress of each one, she seems less happy about the process of reporting on the children's development. The problem just described is one example. June also talks of how difficult it is actually to construct an apparently simple assessment activity in exactly the way it is intended. Sample 9 is an example of the drawings the students produced to illustrate some of the things they had learnt about the Olympics. The teachers had decided to make an assessment of the children's ability to identify these things, firstly by drawing them and then in spoken and written language. After they had completed the drawings, as June explains,

> *With each one, we listened to the child talking about their drawings, and when the child was able to read the words they had written, then we marked 'written recognition', and if they could talk about the picture as well then we marked 'verbal recognition'.*

While Valerie had written captions for each of the pictures, showing that she could label them correctly in writing, some of the other children had only completed the drawings, and Stephanie and June had been left to supply the writing, even though they had originally intended not to alter the samples of work the children included in their Assessment Books.

Sample 9: Valerie's Olympic drawing



June describes the problem that this posed:

> *The trouble was, I had written 'draw or write', and if I'd wanted them to write I should have said, 'draw and write', or else I should have said just 'draw', but I gave them this choice. We don't want to write in the books, but we put it down this time so that we knew that they'd said it, had identified it. If we had written it the parents might have thought their child couldn't write it.*

They eventually solved this problem by making the instruction explicit in the notes that they attached to the samples.

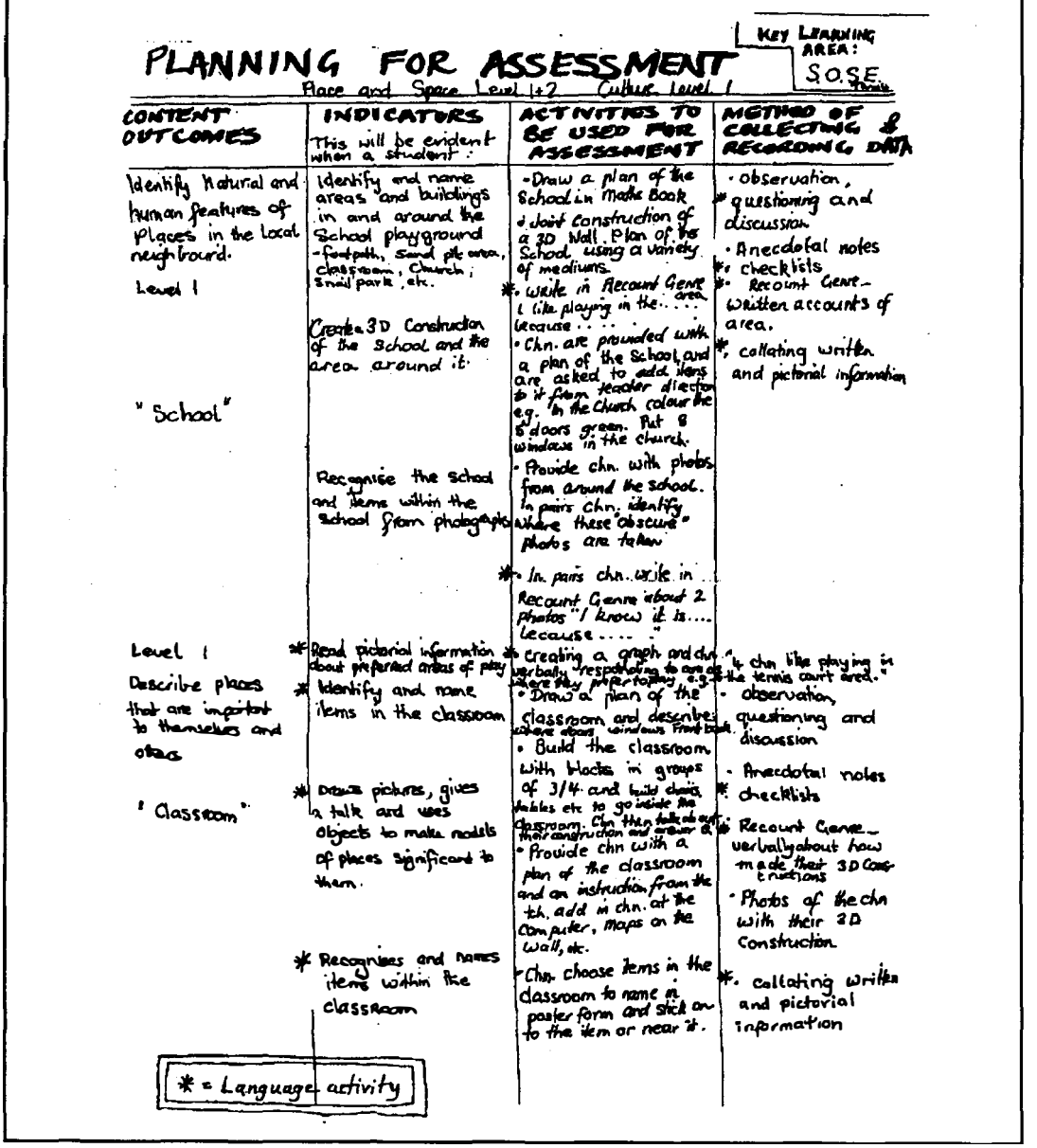
The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

The teachers at Oxford Street have fairly recently started using a standard sheet for carrying out this planning, which allows them to relate their teaching explicitly to learning outcomes specified in the Curriculum and Standards Framework Key Learning Areas. Sample 10 is an example of a completed sheet for one series of

activities. As is noted at the bottom of the sheet, teaching activities which are specifically focussed on language are marked with an asterisk. These include both writing and speaking activities of various kinds.

During the preparation of this planning sheet, an interesting debate arose between June and Stephanie about the general approach to assessment: how to assess, how to describe the assessments that they carry out, and how to relate the assessment to both teaching and reporting.

Sample 10: Planning for Assessment Sheet



PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT

KEY LEARNING AREA: S.O.S.E.

Place and Space Level 1+2 Culture Level 1

CONTENT OUTCOMES	INDICATORS This will be evident when a student:	ACTIVITIES TO BE USED FOR ASSESSMENT	METHOD OF COLLECTING & RECORDING DATA
Identify natural and human features of places in the local neighbourd. Level 1 "School"	Identify and name areas and buildings in and around the School playground - footpath, sand pit area, classroom, Church, Snail park, etc.	- Draw a plan of the School in Maths Book - Joint construction of a 3D Wall Plan of the School using a variety of mediums. * Write in Recount Genre I like playing in the ..... area because	- observation, * questioning and discussion - Anecdotal notes * checklists * Recount Genre - written accounts of area. * collating written and pictorial information
	Create a 3D Construction of the School and the area around it.	- Chn. are provided with a plan of the School and are asked to add items to it from teacher direction eg. 'In the Church colour the 8 doors green. Put 8 windows in the church.	
	Recognise the school and items within the School from photographs	- Provide chn. with photos from around the school. In pairs chn. identify where these "obscure" photos are taken	
		* In pairs chn. write in Recount Genre about 2 photos "I know it is.... because ...."	
Level 1 Describe places that are important to themselves and others. "Classroom"	* Read pictorial information about prepared areas of play * Identify and name items in the classroom	* Creating a graph and chn verbally responding to areas where they prefer to play e.g. "I chn like playing in the tennis court area." - Draw a plan of the classroom and describe where doors, windows, front book	- observation, questioning and discussion
	* Draws pictures, gives a talk and uses objects to make models of places significant to them.	- Build the classroom with blocks in groups of 3/4 and build chairs, tables etc to go inside the classroom. Chn then talk about their construction and answer q's	- Anecdotal notes * checklists
	* Recognises and names items within the classroom	- Provide chn with a plan of the classroom and an instruction from the teacher, add in chn. at the computer, maps on the wall, etc. - Chn. choose items in the classroom to name in poster form and stick on to the item or near it.	* Recount Genre - verbally about how made their 3D Constructions - Photos of the chn with their 3D Construction * collating written and pictorial information

* = Language activity

Stephanie's aim seems to be to develop a set of assessment practices that are more or less common for all the teachers in the school, and that allow an overview of the progress of each child according to the Curriculum and Standards Framework. She comments here that the school is not yet at this stage:

> *We're not profiling individually at the moment. Now we're using the Companion and the English Curriculum and Standards Framework. At the moment, I don't think we have an overall*

> *picture of all the children. Not on a continuing sort of thing, you can't look at it and see the development across a number of years.*

She appears keen to be able to use the outcome statements included in the Curriculum and Standards Framework as a framework for producing individual profiles of this kind:

> *We're just looking say, like this, if we're saying okay, at this stage, um, if you look at Anthony, for instance, he might be missing speaking, looking at that outcome, and then for some of these indicators you'd be using a different activity to say that he's achieving that outcome, A1. And then next year, or in term four he might have moved to A2. But at the moment we haven't got a set-up where we've got Anthony with a profile that shows that. June has it, in each term she has her assessment, they're more on class lists type things. So all the children's names go down here and if you want to look at Anthony, you can go across but I haven't got Anthony on this, which is what we hope for, that's where we're heading, that's what we're wanting to do.*

Stephanie considers there should be a system for ensuring coverage of each strand of language as described in the Framework, so that none is neglected. She acknowledges here that June manages to keep track of many facets of each child's development, although not in a format that she would find either uniform or particularly accessible. She would rather be able to go to a central record in which she could look for assessment information about any child and evidence for that child's development. The school has not yet determined what form that central record might take. Her view is not so much that the information is not gathered by the teachers in their own ways as that the diversity of record keeping makes it hard to get a clear sense of development for each child:

> *I mean it's the same sort of information, it's just you get more of a sense of that development (with a uniform system). It's easier to see. People have been assessing children on all of those sorts of things, but we haven't yet achieved a uniform format through the school and we haven't yet come to a decision about what that format will actually be.*

Stephanie is also concerned to make sure that the demands of assessment using the Curriculum and Standards Framework do not lead to an overwhelming amount of work for the teachers. She reminds us that

> *if you multiply the outcomes by the number of Key Learning Areas by the number of children in the room who are probably over a range of three levels, say we might be a Grade 3/4, but we have children at level 2, level 3 and level 4, then with that class of 22 children you'd be assessing many thousands of outcomes - it's an impossible task.*

She is aiming to ensure that assessment is explicitly built into the process of planning teaching and her strategy is to encourage the teachers to describe a limited number of activities, each of which provides an opportunity to make assessments related to specified learning outcomes in several Curriculum and Standards Framework Key Learning Areas.

> *Assessment is time consuming, so if you decide that there's three or four outcomes that you can be looking at over three different Key Learning Areas, say, Maths, English and Studies of Society and the Environment, and you've got one activity, you know you're not assessing all the time, you're using that one activity to focus on the three different areas, and it's also trying to get yourself into that frame of mind to do it as efficiently as you can.*

The need to gather information as efficiently as possible is foremost in her mind. As she comments, potently: *'I can't assess all the time, I've got to teach!'* She feels

that a single assessment activity can be used for assessing in more than one curriculum area, with the use of appropriately designed checklists:

> *If you (use an appropriate activity) you've got the Maths, the English and the Studies of Society and the Environment, and you make checklists so that in that one activity you're able to make judgements about that child's progress in those three areas, and you're not having to do three separate things.*

Stephanie distinguishes planning from assessment. Referring to the 'Planning for assessment' sheet (Sample 10), she says:

> *Yes, this is a planning format so the assessment information has to be transferred to something else, I mean there's no assessment information here, no individual judgements can be made for a particular child.*

For June, however, the distinction appears less clear-cut:

> *and at one stage, when this planning and assessment first came, (I found that), for me to get where I was heading, there were absolutely heaps of things that I was doing, and I wasn't allowed to go through all the steps that I had gone through, all the steps leading up, and I found that quite difficult, because I didn't feel it really showed what really went on.*
>
> Q *So you're saying that getting the more fine-grained information enables you to plan each stage of the teaching better?*
>
> A *Yes, I think so, because, well, for myself, when I do things then I can see the holes in them and the lack of response from the children, or I haven't explained that properly. There needs to be another step for me.*

For June, planning is not an activity that is done once and then executed. In the same way, assessment is detailed and intimately tied to what happens for the students in each teaching activity. We have seen in the instance of the Gallery visit and the subsequent incorporation of the Mousehole into the unit on Technology (see Sample 1) how her teaching program can include unexpected activities and digressions. Likewise, following her observations and making of anecdotal notes during lessons, the time for incorporation of what she has found out is in the next day's teaching, not at some future, undefined time, which might prove too elusive to be useful:

> *This is why I've learned with my diary entries, my own ones, it's better for me to do them after the day's finished, because the minute I write down what I want to achieve for that day something always seems to happen. So while I'm writing down what actually happened during the day I evaluate the types of activities and questions used and then on scrap paper I plan further activities and questions I need so I can build on from the day before's activities.*

June thus appears to feel it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of her teaching, not simply the children's learning outcomes, since these are intimately bound up with each other. Stephanie recognises the complexity and detail of what June achieves in her assessment, but seems to feel that the outcome statements provide a reasonable summary of what has gone on before:

> *I can see where that's coming from, I mean (in the Planning for Assessment Sheet) that activity is directly related to those indicators that lead towards those outcomes, and there's only a few indicators here, whereas if you look at all of those (other sources of information used by June), you've got very fine indicators leading towards the*

> *outcomes so it's just much more detailed. (Whereas if you use outcome statements) all that you're assessing is those indicators leading towards this outcome, if they can do the activity it doesn't matter what comes before, and the reason they can do it is because of everything that's come before.*

June continued to emphasise the unpredictability in teaching and learning, and the need to understand the stages of learning children go through in reaching specified outcomes. Referring to the use of outcome statements as indicators of learning, she commented:

> *I don't think you can find anything from that approach, though. If this activity is what they've done, how have they got there? Where I had a problem with it being so succinct is that it's obviously a foregone conclusion because you knew where you were heading, so there seemed no point in finding out.*

Stephanie appears to be aiming to develop assessment practices that are perhaps more modest in scope, but possibly, in her opinion, more realistic for busy teachers obliged to work with specified assessment frameworks (in this case the Curriculum and Standards Framework). She considers it necessary to separate the input (the process of teaching) from the output (learning outcomes):

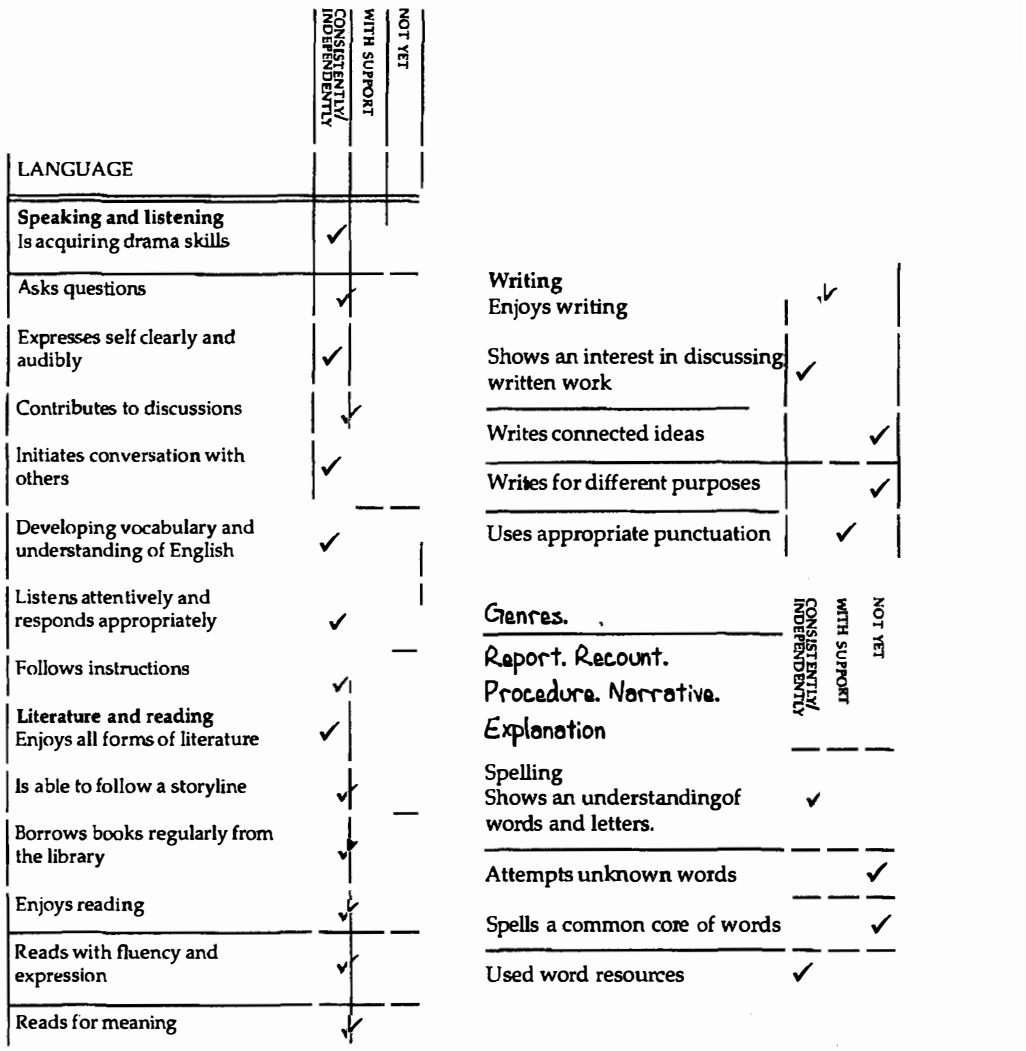
> *I guess that (with the Curriculum and Standards Framework indicators) you're assessing that given all of the input that's gone on, here's one small thing that indicates that "yes this child can do this", whereas here, you're saying, June, if that's their first experience with this activity, you're identifying whether they actually understand the context, but you're not actually assessing whether they can manage that whole (broader) area, and your assessment shows that, but for some people it's just too much, having to identify that fine a level of detail ... and you've got a clear direction, a lot of topics, but for some people it just takes them a long time to get it organised.*

Views on Assessment Frameworks

The outcomes described in the Curriculum and Standards Framework documents do not appear yet to play a central role in reporting for June. This sort of framework is less useful for her as a method of reporting than the much more comprehensive materials she possesses. When one child left the school in October to move interstate, June sent a bulky portfolio of material with her for her next teacher, to give her an idea of the kind of work she was capable of. In her opinion this spoke volumes more than any number on an assessment framework.

June also expressed dissatisfaction with the current format for the reports that go home to parents. Sample 11, an extract from an end-of-year report form for Lawrence, a Year 1 student from a Chinese/Vietnamese family, shows sections related to language development.

Sample 11: Extract from Report form



LANGUAGE	CONSISTENTLY/ INDEPENDENTLY	WITH SUPPORT	NOT YET
Speaking and listening Is acquiring drama skills	✓		
Asks questions	✓		
Expresses self clearly and audibly	✓		
Contributes to discussions	✓		
Initiates conversation with others	✓		
Developing vocabulary and understanding of English	✓		
Listens attentively and responds appropriately	✓		
Follows instructions	✓		
Literature and reading Enjoys all forms of literature	✓		
Is able to follow a storyline	✓		
Borrows books regularly from the library	✓		
Enjoys reading	✓		
Reads with fluency and expression	✓		
Reads for meaning	✓		

Writing	CONSISTENTLY/ INDEPENDENTLY	WITH SUPPORT	NOT YET
Enjoys writing	✓		
Shows an interest in discussing written work	✓		
Writes connected ideas			✓
Writes for different purposes			✓
Uses appropriate punctuation		✓	
Genres. Report. Recount. Procedure. Narrative. Explanation			
Spelling Shows an understandingof words and letters.	✓		
Attempts unknown words			✓
Spells a common core of words			✓
Used word resources	✓		

She commented on the difficulties of making very general decisions about students' progress in areas of learning. She found it difficult to use the three levels included on the form, claiming that there is too much variability within and between levels for these descriptions to reflect progress fairly for all the students, and discusses why the school is in the process of redesigning the form:

> *When you've got 'not yet', 'with support', 'consistently', it's too difficult to make a decision. Like for Julian, I would say, consistently for some things, except at times I've needed to really sit down, probably, and discuss something before he's gone off and done it, so he's had some sort of support. And yet, with Lawrence, I actually have no problem ticking 'with support', it's that next jump up, because he needs my support a lot, and yet if I had Julian in that box ('with support'), it's not a true reflection, because I know Julian's so much further ahead than that. I think we need a continuum. So we put ticks in the middle of the boxes, which we're not allowed to do. Parents might not actually understand the implications - they might just think you're a sloppy ticker. They might not understand your reasoning, why you put the tick where you did in the box. So that's why we're going to revise the form for next year.*

Stephanie sees another reason for reporting the results of assessment in relation to the Curriculum and Standards Framework. In her view, the use of a common framework such as this would allow teachers at different schools to obtain some sense of the progress of students when they move from one school to another.

> *Well we started working with the national profiles and statements first and we're becoming quite familiar with those and actually like them and Victoria decided to change and we thought, well, even though it's not a requirement of the Catholic Education Office, we felt that, you know, if the children do move around from school to school, we thought they would be better off if they've got a common language.*

The existing end-of-year report forms the school has been using perhaps reflect this diversity of attitudes in the origin of the language features they contain. The descriptors that were eventually included came from various sources, according to what the teachers felt was important, and were modified if they felt it necessary. The result is a document that tried to suit the school's needs, without being clearly tied to any particular assessment framework. June comments:

> *We were looking through the Curriculum and Standards Frameworks that we thought were appropriate to the inquiry approach. We looked at a whole range of documents. We couldn't have all of the (descriptors), but what we thought was really important. Where they weren't explicit enough they would revise them. 'Is acquiring drama skills', for example, isn't in the Curriculum and Standards Framework, but I thought that was really important. 'Asks questions', they have to know how to ask questions.*
>
> *Q And these three levels, (consistently/independently, 'with support, 'not yet) are they supposed to correspond to any of the Curriculum and Standards Framework levels or anything else?*
>
> *A Well, possibly not. We found in lots of cases, the descriptions were not (relevant).*

June identified other difficulties she had with interpreting individual descriptors. She is obviously uncomfortable with the practice of making absolute statements about children's abilities. She talks here about the difficulty of using the same statement to describe two students, Lawrence and Valerie, who, in her opinion, are at quite different stages of development in reading English:

> *And I mean the thing is, here, 'reads with fluency and expression', well that was difficult, because, it was whether he was reading something he'd made up (or not) and yet, Valerie was actually reading little booklet things where Lawrence certainly wasn't, and that's my dilemma about when I put a tick, that people don't know what's underneath it.*
>
> *Q So what do you base your decisions on, just your impression?*
>
> *A Yes. Well, where I believe he should be up to, by the end of grade Prep, well if he can read 'I can see a dog' or 'I can see Lawrence', at the very least. I guess I base my view on the expected range, which doesn't tell anybody. Maybe the expected range for that child is more to the point.*

So we can see the influence of long experience, and how June's strong sense of how children typically progress, or more accurately, her sense of what constitutes reasonable progress for each individual child, colours her view of language

development. She comments again on the need for statements about achievement to reflect more than rote learning and to be properly contextualised:

> *Or the parents say (their children) know the ABC, but if you show them letter W out of context, they don't know what it is.*

She is clearly concerned about the potential for reports not helping ESL learners:

> *And I think it is sometimes the ESL children, sometimes their parents have such amazing expectations. The whole process of how to report is a problem. Making sure that the parents are not putting stress on the children. I suppose they don't understand just how difficult it is for their children, what an immense task it is. Parents just want to see ticks in the 'good' box.*

She does see value in the general practice of assessment, and considers that it has an important diagnostic role: *'Well it should be helping us how to help the child. Identifying the child who's having difficulty.'* More specifically, June describes how she finds the Curriculum and Standards Framework useful. She seems to relate her teaching and assessment practices to it, rather than the other way around. She looks at the curriculum documents, and then decides how to describe her teaching in its terms. The value of the frameworks for her is clearly in planning her teaching:

> *It helps planning. When I'm sitting down. That's where Outcome statements have been useful - this is the outcome, and I sit there and think right well, if I know I'm going to have to assess, and you have to be accountable, I find it quite beneficial having those, how will I approach this? I write down the activities I'm going to use; it gives me a base. And then I'd find out, well maybe they haven't absolutely understood that, and then I'd slot in another type of activity.*

June accepts here the need to be accountable in her teaching, and that this can be determined through assessment. She still seems to retain a somewhat sceptical view, however, of the use of the kind of standardised, decontextualised descriptions of outcomes that any scale is composed of, and comments: *'I don't use them as outcomes.'* Nevertheless, she does not consider it difficult to place her students on the scales in the Curriculum and Standards Framework because she already has such extensive information about each child. Furthermore, June did comment that use of the English scales with the ESL students would not allow children's development to be recognised. The additional descriptions in the ESL Companion help greatly in this, and she says that she clearly and easily distinguishes between the children for whom the English levels are appropriate, and those for whom the A and B stages are appropriate.

It might be fair to characterise June's approach as one of continual assessment, where pedagogy is the whole focus. If she were not making a multitude of miniature assessments of the progress of each child she would be unable to plan effectively. This progress, however, is related not to any framework described in the terms of documents such as the Curriculum and Standards Framework or the ESL Scales, but to a very detailed if unspecifiable construct of English language development that exists in her own head. This appears to be consistent with her view of reporting - as something necessary but somehow less than satisfactory, because it inescapably presents a much simplified and decontextualised picture of the whole process of teaching and learning.

Stephanie, on the other hand, appears to accept the need for assessment more from the perspective of its ability to report on progress for audiences outside the classroom. A framework using a generalisable language, whether the ESL Scales, the English Curriculum and Standards Framework or the Curriculum and ESL Companion to this Framework, has a clear role to play in allowing teachers and parents in different situations as well as schools to obtain a notion of each

child's progress according to that framework. Of course, assessment is intimately tied to teaching, but Stephanie wants to limit the effort it requires, in order to deal with it in a responsible way. The assessment framework suggests what a teacher should assess, and what can systematically be built into the planning cycle in a way that will satisfy the multiple demands for assessment information that teachers face.

Clare and Stephanie at Oxford Street Primary School

Tom Lumley

The School Context

Refer to the previous Case Study June and Stephanie at Oxford Street for a discussion of the school context.

The Classroom Context

This case study discusses the assessment and teaching practice of both Clare, the class teacher for Grades 1 and 2, and Stephanie, the ESL specialist teacher and curriculum co-ordinator, who works closely with her.

There are 22 children, of Grades 1 and 2, in the class, ranging in age from 5 to 8. Almost all of them have at least one parent for whom English is a second language, and many of them never use English at home. There is a wide range of language backgrounds, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka, Vietnamese, Khmer, Tagalog, Japanese, Polish, Spanish and Hungarian.

The classroom itself is on the first floor of the old brick school building. It is a comfortable environment, although somewhat chilly in winter. The walls display plentiful work produced by the children, and this is supplemented by posters and pictures with related material, and an easel, on which the teachers place Big Books and butcher's paper, sits in front of the long blackboard. The children either sit in rows on the floor or in groups at small tables, when they are writing, drawing or using other tools of learning. The children always greeted me in polite chorus when I came into the classroom, as well as individually by my name out in the schoolyard during breaks or after school.

The school adopts an integrated approach to teaching, in which they focus on a theme each term, and relate it in different ways to several of the Key Learning Areas of the curriculum. Thus in Term 3, the theme was the Olympics, and in Term 4 Culture. Culture is firstly related to the Key Learning Area of Studies of Society and the Environment, although obviously such a broad theme can be applied to other Key Learning Areas as well, without difficulty. The specific content focus is Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. In English, Clare and Stephanie also make one genre their focus for the term. In Term 3 it was the procedure, and in Term 4 the narrative. This focus on genre runs throughout their teaching. In the first lesson I observed the class were preparing to chop up fruit as part of learning how to write about a procedure, in this case the making of fruit salad. This was the end of a sequence of lessons on foods, in which the children learned the vocabulary to describe a wide range of foods, many of which they had only been able to name in the languages their parents used. The foods were all given a place in the Food Pyramid, and thus formed part of the Key Learning Area of Health and PE, which was the umbrella for the school's topic in Term 3, the Olympic Games.

In their teaching, Clare and Stephanie aim to continually build on work done earlier in the year. For example, in Term 1 the class did some work on the recount genre, including the orientation stage. In Term 4 they present a lesson aiming to introduce and make a joint construction of a narrative. In this lesson

they focus particularly on tenses, on conjunctions denoting time, and on the features of an orientation, Who? What? When? and Where? They consider these features to be important for all children, but perhaps especially so for the ESL children in the class. Clare begins by introducing the notion of a timeline, by showing four hand-drawn pictures: a baby, a small boy, a father (*'and then he's grow up'*, as Rosie, a Grade 2 Philippine student, offers), and an old man. They elicit possible titles for the recount: *'Through your life'*, *'This is a life'*, *'The life of a boy'*, eventually settling for *'Growing up'*. For the orientation they elicit: *'Who?'* The name Joshua is selected. *'When?' 'From a baby to an old man.' 'Where?'* David (a Grade 2 boy with Cantonese-speaking parents) is encouraged to decide where the action happens, from looking at the pictures: At home/At kinder/In the flats/In his garden/At his home.

The structure of a recount is then elicited. David asks: *'What does orientation mean?'* Clare explains: *'Finding out where you are before you begin.'* They elicit more of the structure of the recount, writing it on the board, then asking for comment. In line with their focus on tenses, *'the boy that's growing up'* is changed to *'the boy that grew up'*. For Step 3, the sequence of events, Dan offers: *'Because his life was so long, we just put the main events'*. The teachers elicit *'in the right order'* and relate this to the sequence of events.

After the students have worked together in pairs to write a title and orientation of their own, the class jointly constructs a sequence of events, which Clare writes on the board:

> *'One day there was a little baby called Joshua. He couldn't do anything, so he stayed in his cot. Joshua was a happy baby.*
>
> *'Then a few years passed and he became a toddler. He really liked playing with cars. He was quite clumsy.*
>
> *'When he was a grown up he had a little daughter. He lived in the flats. He really loved his daughter. Joshua bought a doll for his daughter, Mary.*
>
> *'After a very, very long time he became an old man. He fed his cat with milk. He watered his garden. Then he became sick and then he died at Easter. Everyone prayed.'*

Again, because of the focus on tense in this lesson, the underlined words were highlighted and briefly discussed. Follow-up lessons will divide the class into two groups, with Clare and Stephanie working separately and more intensively with students on characteristics of the narrative genre, and the use of tense, with different activities.

The way this lesson fits into the term's teaching is set out in the planning sheet (Sample 1) for English for the term prepared by Clare with Stephanie. The planning sheet is presented in Sample 1 in a form adapted from ESL Essentials: Junior Primary, AL and A Beginner Stages (Directorate of School Education, 1992), the Victorian course advice based on the ESL Framework of Stages (McKay & Scarino, 1991) and the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (Scarino, Vale, McKay & Clark, 1988). Sample 1 is divided into four sections, 1A to 1D. Sample 1A gives basic information identifying the students, the topic and when the teaching is to take place. It also lists communicative goals and objectives of the teaching program. Sample 1B shows the language that will be the focus of the teaching, divided into key functions, as well as likely notions, structures and vocabulary. Sample 1C lists, first, the topic objectives and probable resources, and then a sequence of teaching activities and supporting exercises. These are coded to show whether they involve individual, pair, group

or whole class work. In addition, the symbol (A) indicates that this activity will be used for assessment. Sample 1D continues this cycle of activities and exercises for the rest of the term. It can be seen that this later part of the term has a larger proportion of assessment activities.

Sample 1A: Planning Sheet, Term 4

2

A STAGES

LITERACY & BEGINNER
Student Group: 1/2 Mainstream

Time Allocation: Term 4 1996
Week 1–10

ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS
KLA: SOSE–Time, Continuity & Change, CULTURE
GENRE: Narrative
Topic: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

COMMUNICATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

☑ **INTERPERSONAL**

Establish and maintain relationships and discuss topics of interest. (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- interact in the classroom with other students
- interact in the classroom with teachers and other adults
- talk about/understand when others talk about **self**
- talk about/understand when others talk about family and friends,
- talk about/understand when others talk about possessions
- express and understand simple opinions and points of view?
- talk about/understand when others talk about feelings
- talk about/understand when others talk about a past event
- participate in games
-
-

Interact socially with others: solve problems, make decisions and arrangements. (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- make/do things in play with others
- make arrangements and decisions
- invite others, accept, apologise and respond
- maintain friendships and working relationships
- express wants and needs
- obtain goods and services
-
-

☒ **INFORMATIONAL**

Obtain spoken or written information, and use it.
(Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- obtain information from seeing: pictures, signs, charts, etc
- obtain information from listening: songs, teacher, other students etc.
- understand and follow instructions
- obtain information from a shared experience
- describe characteristics of people, things.
-

Give spoken or written information (Speaking Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- giving simple spoken information in the classroom situation, to teachers or other students
- give simple instructions
- complete simple worksheets
- give simple information in a written form: picture, label, etc
- give information about a shared experience
-
-

○ **AESTHETIC**

Respond personally to a creative stimulus (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- listen to/view a story, play, song, poem etc. and give a response
- express simple views about a creative experience
- express simple views about a story, song, etc
-
-

Be involved in personal expression. (Speaking, Writing)
Objectives: to be given the opportunity to:
- learn about, express themselves through different art materials draw, paint, model etc
- participate in stories, songs, rhymes drama etc.
- experiment with words and sounds
- tell simple stories
- write improvise on simple stories, poems, drama etc
-

SUBJECT AREAS
(Maths) (SOSE)
Science
Physical Education
Art
Music (RE)
Personal Development
TECHNOLOGY

Sample 1B: Planning Sheet,Term 4 (continued)

LIKELY FUNCTIONS

Purpose

Maintaining Communication
- ✓ attracting attention
- ✓ expressing lack of comprehension
- asking:
- ✓ for repetition or rephrasing
- ✓ how to say something in English
- ✓ how to spell a word
- ✓ for explanation/clarification
- •
- •

Exchanging Information
- ✓ identifying
- ✓ personal experience
- permission
- necessity and need
- ✓ likes, dislikes, preferences
- ✓ wishes
- ✓ opinions
- reporting
- ✓ predicting
- ✓ justifying
- ✓ recounting

(involving both initiating and reacting)

Socialising
- ✓ identifying; self, personal details
- using different modes of: address, greeting, introducing, thanking
- ✓ dealing with interpersonal conflict
- •
- •

Expressing Attitudes
- ✓ intarest/disinterest
- friendship
- regret/apology
- ✓ admiration
- ✓ approval/disapproval
- likes/dislikes
- •

Getting things done
- ✓ requesting
- persuading
- ✓ suggesting
- demanding/commanding

LIKELY NOTIONS

- possession
- negation/affirmation
- estimation
- •
- •

Time
- days of the week, months
- •
- •

Quantity
- numbers
- •
- •

(involving both initiating and reacting)

Space
- •
- •

Characteristics
- taste
- sound
- smell
- touch
- •
- •

Evaluation
- price
- truth/falsehood
- correctness/incorrectness

LIKELY STRUCTURES/EXPONENTS

This is my...
It was... When my mother...
My father was...
Now we are... Then I...
They were/had...
Some people... Most... A few...
In the past/olden days...
Long ago... When my mother was...
They used to... Many years ago...
Linking words of time, next, first, soon, then, and, later, so, once.
Structure for narrative
Orientation -who
-where
-when
-what
Complication Resolution

LIKELY VOCABULARY

Lexical sets for Time
before, next, after, yesterday, last year, long ago, in the past, present, future, now, then, finally, had.
Description
colours, fair, dark, bright, hot, cold, war, busy, quite, crowded, safe, unsafe, big, small, tall, huge, large, two story, fast, slow, powered.

Sample 1C: Planning Sheet, Term 4 (continued)

TOPIC OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Identify the different stages in our lives
- Draw timeline to depict passing of time.
- Describe characteristics, actions that show different stages.
- Classify characteristics of people in our family, community
- Identify the changes in clothing over time.
- Compare our clothers to our parents time at this age.
- Identify the cultural differences, location
- Describe the change in transport over time
- Identify different foods that we have our parents did not.

RESOURCES

Victorian Frameworks SOSE 1988
Pictures of Past from Resource (Lib)
Multicultural Stories
Legends from Other Lands
Multicultural Activity Book
Houses from Other Lands
Phillip House, walk around area

ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORTING EXERCISES

- Model a time line of my life from birth to now. Discuss with students (G, T) ✓ ✗
- Children make their own timeline (1). Also make a book with four stages in their life, birth/toddler/kinder/now (Grade 1) ✓ ✗
- Sequence of pictures in man's life: birth to old age. Write an orientation on this: who, when, where, why. (1) A
- Model narrative text using story "The Story of Imelda who was Very Small" Identify narrative structure - review writing of this from previous experience ✗ ✓
- Develop a questionnaire for parents on lifestyle - home, country, place of living, education, environment, food, towns, transport. Brainstorm the headings with students ✗ ✓
- Collate the information gathered on charts, draw some conclusions from this. Some people..., Most..., A few... (Check understanding of concepts) ✗ ✓
- Use Past and Present pictures to discuss Then and Now concepts - establish understandings. Use students identification of objects to explain purpose where possible (e.g. horse and cart, washboard). In the past they used a horse and cart to carry things, now we use trucks and trains. ✓ ✗ (C) (SUNG)
- Students classify pictures into Past and Present. Describe what they are used for and name them (P) (C) ✓ ✗
- Discuss a picture from the Past (Goldfields) Joint construction of Orientation - who-characters, where-setting, when-time, what-event (C) (P) (1) Ø ✓ ✗

  Write after discussion you own orientation use model language (cloze) eg. A long time ago in distant land lived...
- Listen to stories from other lands "The Golden Slipper" Purpose to identify Past Present concepts/ comparison and to identify Narrative structure. PTO...

ORGANISATIONAL APPROACHES
I — Individual, P — Pair, G — Group, C — Class

Sample 1D: Planning Sheet, Term 4 (continued)

Ⓐ= Assessment Activity

* Activities and Supporting Exercises - Continued

- Joint deconstruction of story into structure (Plan for Orientation)
  O ✔ X (G)Ⓐ WHAT (girl in trouble, unhappy.) WHO -characters. WHERE -setting. WHEN - time (long ago)
- Joint construction/re-tell of story focus on descriptive language - The beautiful, young girl was sad and unhappy.
  After writing go back and highlight descriptive words (Put on charts) O ✔ XⒶ
- Write your own orientation Plan of the story - Students do this individually (I)Ⓐ
- Students write their own orientation using descriptive language (I)ⒶX
- Students write their narrative story modelled on Vietnamese Chinese legend.
- Compare older day and modern picture orally - using structure. In the older/pioneering/ early Australia they had/used to/ now we... In modern times we...
- Cloze passage making comparisons using oral structures
- Read more legends from other lands.
- Use words in Orientation, Complication, Resolution, to make oral storyⒶ
- Do plan of story.
- Write own narrativeⒶ

Notes on Assessment activity
Ⓐ- Recycle of Recount knowledge. Students were able to review work done on recount in Term 1 and Describe Orientation - who, what, where, when
Observation - record in book

Assessing the Children's Achievements

The teachers

Clare has been teaching for about 6 years, and while involved in this project was undertaking an ESL in the Mainstream course offered by the Catholic Education Office. Her only experience of professional development in assessment has been during this, her first year at Oxford Street. In 1995 she had some training in using some of the other Curriculum and Standards Framework materials. She comments here how her experience with ESL children has contributed to her general approach to teaching:

> *When I finished teacher training I went straight into an ESL school. My teaching, I suppose, has always been geared to ESL children. So my mind doesn't really differentiate now, it's how I would teach anyway and a lot of the work we do now just seems to suit all the children. It's ideal for ESL children but it also is ideal for any learning because it's providing that language structure and depending on who they are some children are more developed than others, but once they have that structure they can go within that to their standard. I don't feel like I'm teaching language differently to what I would do if I was in a classroom that wasn't mainly ESL.*

For Clare, teaching she has found appropriate for ESL students will suit all primary students just as well. Clare finds the integrated approach to planning and teaching used at Oxford Street works very well, and she contrasts it with the teaching approach in the school where she used to teach: *'where I was last year, I'd*

work on one topic for two or three weeks then you'd be onto something else.' By comparison, at Oxford Street, *'you can see a progression of learning over the term and so you can really build up on things which help the kids.'*

Stephanie is the school's specialist ESL teacher and curriculum co-ordinator, who works 3 days a week in this school. She has been teaching for about 20 years, and obtained an ESL qualification (B.Ed. in ESL) about 8 years ago. In her role as curriculum co-ordinator she takes responsibility for providing in-service in assessment as well as taking part in the planning for the ESL-oriented teaching of all the teachers. She is familiar with the English Profiles Handbook, the NLLIA ESL Bandscales, the ESL Scales, the English Curriculum Standards Framework and the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework.

The planning sheet (Sample 1A-1D), taken from ESL Essentials, is seen as very helpful by both teachers, and quite compatible with the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework. The kind of teaching for language that is appropriate for the ESL students works equally well with all students, as Clare noted above. Stephanie comments that there are some differences that they need to pay explicit attention to in their teaching:

> *Well they* (ESL students) *don't use some structures, syntactically and structurally. We have to encourage a lot of structure, and that's built into our teaching and reading and writing and that sort of thing, we deliberately model those sort of structures.*

Accordingly, Stephanie sees a relationship between students' development in English and their background: *'the sort of pick up probably is related to their ESL background'*. However, in a class not entirely composed of ESL students, she does not feel that this is the only factor to be considered. As she says, *'any other child with an Anglo-Australian background could have the same sorts of difficulty, if they in their speaking and listening, in terms of social language, fit very nicely into the mainstream English.'*

Planned Assessment - Checklists

The assessment of English language development of their students is closely tied to planning, for Clare and Stephanie. In their planning sheet (Sample 1), we see that a number of activities are explicitly identified as assessment activities. This planned assessment is really the key to their general approach to assessment, and relies upon a combination of observation and making anecdotal records, leading to the completion of checklists:

Sample 2: Checklist for Assessment of Narrative

NARRATIVE - JUNIOR
X Not yet
➔ Gaining confidence
✔ Independently

Orally only: highlight

	Develops word banks on topic words			
Writing	Uses features of proof reading guide			
skills	Commences writing without assistance			
	Uses descriptive language			
General	Discusses why stories are written			
	Re-tells in sequence from pictures			
	Re-tells in sequence from writing			
	Writes a title			
Text	Orientates reader using some details of setting			
	Includes essentials of time			
Organisation	Writes/draws a sequence of events			
etc.	...			

Clare describes how they approach the task of planning their assessments, based on what they aim to teach:

> *this term we are doing narrative so we would be looking at sentence and structure and there might be an ongoing type of assessment. I'd look at an idea of logical order, to tell a story. So they would be the skills that I might be looking for and I would have a check list.*

Clare makes it clear here that they focus on predetermined areas of language use in their assessments, and ensure that these are covered by developing and using checklists. Sample 2 is an extract of a checklist that Clare and Stephanie use with junior primary students learning to use narrative.

In the lesson described above (the narrative), we saw that it was the use of the past tense and the time markers that they chose to focus on. It is interesting to note that although they plan carefully, they maintain a flexible attitude to their teaching, and they may alter in some ways the focus of what they teach, as the result of informal assessment of students' language, and needs they feel they should address. Clare notes:

> *Looking at today's lesson, for example, I knew they were having problems with understanding the concept of 'past' so I tried to think of something that was still following my overall plan for the Studies of Society and the Environment, but was taking into account everything that I thought needed to be covered which is really compatible.*

Planned Assessment - Anecdotal Records

Their planning links checklists such as these to observation of classroom activities, during which the teachers take notes, or anecdotal records. For example, one particularly creative stage in the Narrative teaching cycle required the students, in groups of three or four, to present to the class a narrative they had written themselves in the form of a little play, complete with stage props, a narrator and additional characters. This stage of the teaching cycle was designated by Clare and Stephanie as a planned assessment activity, and they both made notes during the children's performances, each focusing on different students.

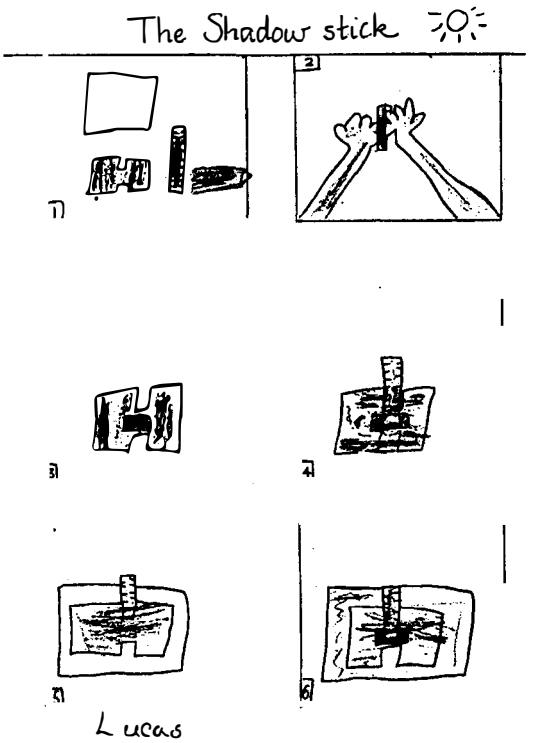
Sample 3: Anecdotal Record: Oral narrative

Gabrielle /Dan /Dominic/Alex:
Gabrielle following format of narratives
- use of temporal conjunctions: a little while later
able to ask chn. questions related to Orientation/complications
Dominic - able to answer questions related to complication/resolution
Anna/David/Anne-Marie: use of vocab - connected with Narrative setting, e.g. Ancient Castle
Anna: showed understanding of Resolution;
able to ask question - ➜ Julie responded correctly
Anne-Marie/David reluctant to ask questions
Valerie/Jason/Carl/Fiona:
Jason narrated
Written mainly by Carl and Fiona
Good interpretation of fairytale form.
Rushed resolution - needed to be re-told.
Fiona asked the class "When did it happen?"
Whole group working together. - able to ask questions of audience
Anna able to answer who?

During planning, they nominated students for observation about whose progress they were concerned, or who had perhaps not been observed recently. After observing the performances they compared their notes, in order to compose as full a picture as possible of the children's progress, and to allow them to complete part of the checklist above. They would of course require a number of observations and assessment activities in order to make statements about all of the features included in the check list for all of the children. Sample 3 is an extract from the notes Clare made during the lesson. She includes notes here on both the performance by the students making the presentation, and on the questions they asked members of the audience afterwards. Most groups contained students from both Grades 1 and 2; the only two children from monolingual English families are Gabrielle and Carl.

Sample 3 indicates how the teachers might collect information about the oral language of their students. They also use planned assessment activities to keep track of written development. Earlier in the year during a unit entitled 'The Shadow Stick' in the Key Learning Area Technology, the teachers made an assessment of students' language use in the recount genre. As Clare explains, firstly *'we made shadow sticks using plasticine and rulers, and then we made drawings of what we had constructed'*. The shadow stick constructions were group activities but each child made his or her own drawing of the shadow stick. Sample 4 was produced by Lucas, a Grade 2 boy with a Cantonese family background. The drawings show the six stages in construction of the shadow stick, which was to be set up on a desk in the sun. The objects used by the students, drawn in the first picture, are a piece of paper, a block of plasticine, a ruler and a pencil.

Sample 4: 'The Shadow Stick' (Drawing)



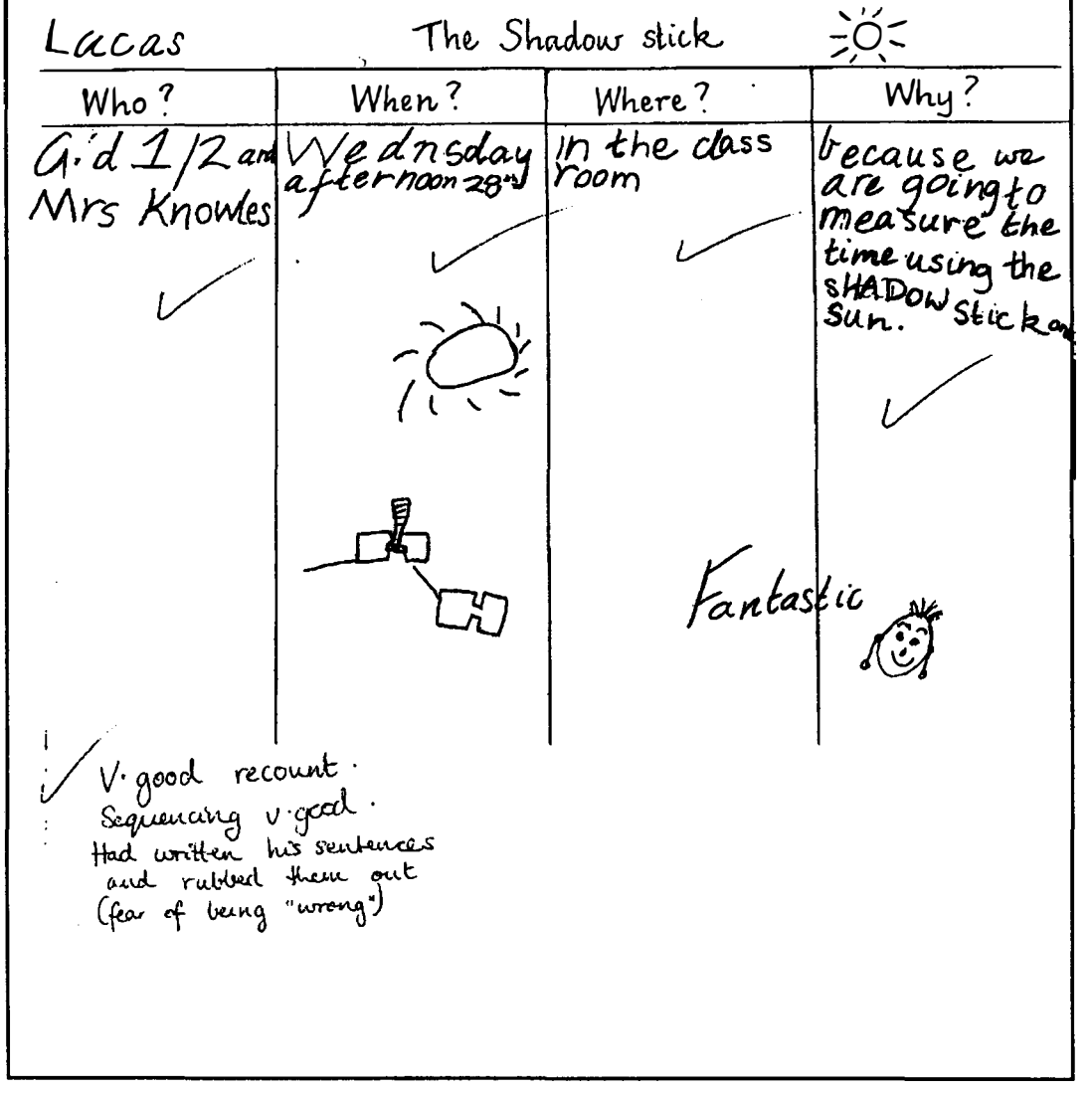
Following the construction activity and the drawing, the class discussed the language needed to write about what happened. The first stage of this was preparing to write the orientation, as Clare explains:

> *So we've taken them down and watched what happened. They had to sequence the steps (involved in constructing the shadow stick). They had to put them into a sequence and this is a breakdown of the*

> *orientation; a plan for the orientation, that's what we had to do there first. So they wrote this* (Sample 5). *And they had to explain why we've done all this, so when I did this I was expecting to look at actual specific skills as well as content. So I suppose some of these would come under what would be in the Science Curriculum and Standards Framework but a lot of them would be English Curriculum and Standards Framework as well.*

Sample 5 shows Lucas' plan for the orientation, with information recorded under each of the headings, Who? When? Where? and Why?, as well as Stephanie's comment (Mrs Knowles) written below.

Sample 5 - 'The Shadow Stick' (Plan for Orientation)



Although this was an activity that formed part of the Technology Key Learning Area, the contribution of language is clear, and inseparable, as Clare points out:

> *Often the language, the vocabulary, structures and language skills you want the children to develop, are generated from the topic, for example, focusing on the explanation genre in a technology-focused topic and the associated vocabulary, like 'so that', or 'because'.*

The assessment remarks that Clare wrote on the work above relate explicitly to language skills, specifically to the recount genre. This kind of assessment allows her to consider both content and language development. The comment here forms part of her anecdotal record for this student. It was added after she had

collected the work and added it to the student's portfolio of work that she keeps to assist her in reporting at the end of each term and the year.

Clare talks about the need for assessment of both oral and written language. We have seen examples of relatively formal assessment activities, involving first speaking as a group activity, and then writing. Clare feels she must obtain information about the progress of individual students in different ways. She talks here about Alex, a Grade 2 student. Although he has relatively poorly developed writing skills, it is difficult to know how much this is related to his ESL background (his family have lived here for many years, and English is often used at home) and how much to signs he shows of learning difficulties:

> *If I did that (collected written samples) with Alex I'd have no idea of what he was capable of so sometimes I do, just sit in a circle and I get them to read out to me (what we've done) and I'll write anecdotal records and maybe transfer that information later on.*

Whereas collecting samples is easy with written language, observation during classroom activities is necessary in the assessment of oral language. This information again contributes to Clare's anecdotal records for the students. She explains further, discussing a lesson when the students were required to talk about the orientation for a recount:

> *Some of them can cope orally with recount but not with the writing. Alex is an example of that. So today, for example, I thought 'I'll get him on task' because I thought he probably can do this (provide an orientation) orally. He's quite good at maths and stories. Because he's really relied on that oracy work, so for this he could get 'always', 'always', 'always' in the oracy section but not with writing, he'd be getting 'not yet' so I don't know, it's a different focus for different lessons. When we did this I only had the Grade Ones. Alex is a Grade One, I only had them retell this orally. I didn't have them write it, whereas the Grade Twos I did. So I focus on different areas depending on my expectations at the time. It's a matter of when you expect things to be grasped.*

We see here that Clare adjusts her expectations of how the children will cope with different tasks according to their level of maturity and her overall impression of how they are developing, remaining aware of differences in oral and written and language development. We see that sometimes she and Stephanie divide the class into Grade-age groups for teaching activities involving assessment. She clearly feels it is essential to record signs of success as well as be aware of needs that children have for further development.

Informal Observation

A further kind of assessment based on observation is simply sitting with the children and listening to them read. This is a less formal kind of assessment, which contributes to the teachers' general impression of students' progress. Clare has little difficulty in characterising the language development of her students, and discusses at length David, a Grade 2 child from a Cantonese-speaking family. She prefaces this description with a comment about features that she feels are most noticeable amongst ESL children in the class:

> *They often write about their Mum, he or she, they confuse them sometimes. A good example of this is David, whereas he's able to read, his reading's quite good, but his oral and his written language are still quite far behind. He's able to read now and when he's reading usually he's getting the general meaning but it makes me wonder if he is really reading for meaning or just reciting the words. He just doesn't have the structures there in his oral language. I think he has the ability, but if he talks to you, if you ask him questions, he doesn't say it so that you can understand. He can*

> *convey the meaning but it's in this broken sort of English and (it's the same with) his writing, too.*

In describing David's reading, she refers to a lesson that day in which the children had contributed to a class construction of columns of data about their families, which was written up on the blackboard, saying that reading familiar material poses no problem for him:

> *He can read things like we did today* (columns of data the children had constructed in a table about their families). *Yes, he'd be able to read that, he'd be able to read anything we wrote in class. It's largely because he's heard it, but then when he will read back his own writing to me even when it doesn't make sense he'll still read it, word for word and yet he must see that the meaning has been lost somewhere, but he has I think probably had experience at home where he's learned to read like this.*

This lesson did not include planned assessment, but Clare was obviously observing carefully, and this observation contributes to her overall picture of each child. She can explain in detail her impression of what David is capable of, and provides reasons for this, relating it to his experiences at home. She elaborates further about his writing, again explaining the repetitive nature of his writing by referring to his experience as a younger child with older siblings who have contributed to his sense of what he is expected to do at school:

> *His diary writing is a good example. He keeps using the same words he's familiar with, repeating them in different ways, very repetitive and at the moment his writing sequence, it's a story, like what he did on the weekend but he hasn't worked out what's necessary and what isn't. I've tried to work on that by writing questions to him about his writing, I do that with all of them, but I write him a response after he's written his diary. I write a response and ask questions and I try to specifically address things that he's mentioned that have some sort of importance because a lot of it is just repetitive, but it's not really working yet. He's got an older brother and sister in Grade 5 and 6 and I think somewhere along he's said to himself that 'more is better' and I think he thinks it's right, that one of the aims of schoolwork is to write a lot. So sometimes I've said to him 'you've said that there, you don't need to say it again'.*

This is an extract from a session where David is reading an entry from his diary with Clare, which clearly demonstrates what she has described:

> *David* *We go there and we go to the car. Um what's this? Carpark. And we go to the doctor and, and we need this, we go up and we stopping for food to eat there and we like go to McDonalds, I go to eat there, now I eat and we go to the car and go to, what's this?*
>
> *Clare* *You circled it. You put a circle around it this time. When we're not sure about it we circle the word but we have a go anyway don't we? I wonder what it could have been. Trying to work out. 'Go to the car and to?' Not sure. Shall we keep reading? We might be able to work it out.*
>
> *David* *We go there and we go to the computer. We like to play the computer and we go to the shopping centre. We like to go there and we buy all the (unclear). I'm going to the car. We saw a shopping centre and we go there. We're going to go to the shops to look at and we love go to the shop to look at. We don't like it and we go to, What's that?*

Using Assessment Frameworks

The school's assessment policy (outlined in the previous case study, June and Stephanie), requires teachers to assess students' progress in a specified genre each term. The information required for such reporting is gathered from detailed checklists such as we saw in Sample 2. Each of these checklists provides information about the student's progress in a particular genre. In Term 3 the genre that the school focused upon was Procedures. One set of outcomes that Clare and Stephanie identified from the English Curriculum and Standards Framework and its ESL Companion as a focus for their students during this term are shown at the top of Sample 6.

Sample 6: Outcomes and Indicators used for Assessing Procedures

- **Outcomes**

- **Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion A2 (Lower Primary), Listening and Speaking (Communication):**
  'Communicates and understands contextualised English and expresses simple messages in predictable social and learning situations'

- **Curriculum and Standards Framework English Level 2 (for Grade 2), Speaking and Listening (Texts):**
  'interacts in more confident and extended ways in structuresd and spontaneous school situations'

- **Focus Indicators/Skills leading to outcomes:**
  A2 Receptive: Follows short sequence of instructions/classroom process/game,eg hopping
  Level 2: Retells in logical sequence rules/procedure for a game using steps.
  A2 Receptive: Orders information - pictures from oral procedure.
  Level 2: Presents procedure to small group so they can play the game - attention to accuracy and relevance of instructions in sequence.
  A2 Communication: Interacts and negotiates rules of a familiar game - describes a series of events/steps in a game in sequence.

Within these broad learning outcomes, the lower part of Sample 6 shows how specific detail is added, in the form of focus indicators which the teachers will observe as evidence of attainment of outcomes (the wording used represents minor paraphrasing of the descriptions found in the Curriculum and Standards Framework documents).

Sample 7: Assessment Record, Term 1

Name: David S.

WRITING	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Commences writing without assistance	✓			
Clear handwriting		[illegible]		
Sounds out words as an aid to spelling		✓		
Legible writing with recognisable words		some		
Words put together in sentence format		✓		
Words written in a logical order to make a sentence that can be read				
Upper/Lower case letters used conventionally				
Written sentences that can be understood by an adult			✓	
Writes about feelings, judgement or direct experience		✓		
Uses ideas, themes and structure from books in writing			✓	
Uses everyday words in appropriate written context		✓		
Punctuation used conventionally			some	
Story can be read, understood, and retold by classmates				
A smooth connection of ideas				not yet
Beginning, middle and end in narrative writing				✓
Writes with ease on most matters of personal experience		✓		

TERM 2: David often repeats himself unnecessarily in his writing - writing the same thing over and over in an effort to write "a lot". His writing follows a type of direction, but is "padded out". He attempts to sound out words, often making a "whole word guess" using the initial letter. His writing is sometimes cramped and difficult to follow, lacking punctuation. Uses familiar words in his writing. Repeating these throughout.

READING	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Takes risks when reading		✓		
Reads books with simple rep. language		✓		
Uses pictures for clues		✓		
Asks for help			✓	
Reads familiar words and symbols		✓		
Predicts words		✓		
Uses context for predicting unfamiliar words		✓		
Reads aloud showing understanding of punctuation		✓		
Retells, discusses and expresses opinions on literature				✓
Recalls events and characters from text				✓
Concentrates on reading for lengthy periods		✓		
States main idea in a passage				
Self corrects - using knowledge of language structure and/or sound/symbol relationships		[illegible]		
Predicts new words - sound-symbol relationship (sounds out)				✓
Predicts words • can read on / context clues -• using knowledge of language structure		✓		
Uses vocab and sentence structure from reading materials in written work and conversation				✓
Follows written instructions				✓
Reads silently for extended periods		✓		
Reads to others with few inappropriate pauses		✓		

Needs encouragement to "have a go". Uses finger to read words in the sentences. Reads on when he has made an error which doesn't make sense. Needs to be encouraged to self-correct. Reads fluently. Tends to rush.

The checklists provide information about these genres, satisfying the school's assessment requirements, and allowing for reporting to parents (as will be discussed below). However, for own purposes, Clare uses a single form (Sample 7) of her own devising, which allows her to keep track of students' overall language development throughout the year, in terms 1 to 4. The assessment in Sample 7 is for David.

The principal source for the descriptors this form contains is the English Profiles Handbook (Ministry of Education and Training, 1991), which uses Bands to describe nine levels of development in Reading, Writing and Spoken Language for all students:

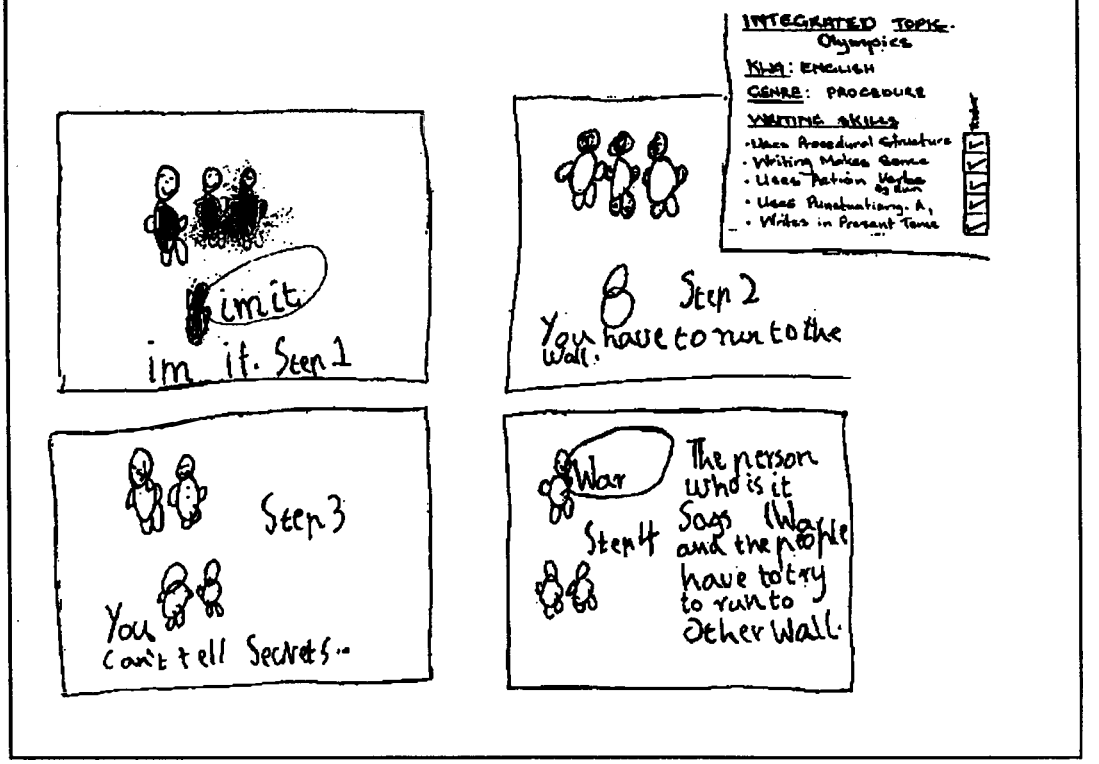
> *I still use the (Victorian English) Profiles, the old ones, the English. Well I took out the things that were relevant and I worked on the Bands I thought were relevant. I took out ones that I thought the Grade Ones and Twos were going to fall between. And each term I check, and I like to work this way because then I can see how I'm going.*

Clare comments here that the indicators of progress that she included in her Assessment Record were ones she had selected from the English Profiles Handbook, at the levels ('Bands' as they are termed in that document) she considered relevant to her Grade One and Two students. Clare uses this Assessment Record as a written record of the student's progress to which she can refer at any time during the year.

Reporting to Parents

The other major audience for reporting at Oxford Street is the parents. While I was at the school, the assessment policy was in the process of being revised. Stephanie commented how they are working on revising the ways in which they report to parents: *'We're revamping our reports as well so. It is a lot of work, (but) I suppose it'll get done.'*

Sample 8: Procedure (Game)



As part of the new assessment policy a number of pieces of work by each student (between five and eight each term is the goal, although this form of reporting was only introduced in the school in 1996) are put into an Assessment Book which the children take home to show their parents and care givers. These pieces aim to show language development, represent the genre that the students are studying that term, and are also related to levels of the Curriculum and Standards Framework English.

Samples are chosen for inclusion in the Assessment Book partly because they demonstrate a child's progress within a particular genre, which the teachers have already related to the Curriculum and Standards Framework outcomes. Another criterion for inclusion is that the work was successful in some way, and has the potential to stimulate the parents' interest in their children's language achievements. The decision about what to included may be partly planned beforehand, but may be made during a lesson. Stephanie explains:

> *so like the activity today with Clare, she may paste in their procedure that they write, and then she'll have on that a little list of the skills for the parents to see what the children have achieved. And then she may have a self assessment where the children say how they think they went on that task, and they'll fill that in. And then there's room for parents to comment.*

Sample 8 is an example of a piece of work from an assessment activity that was included in the Assessment Book. In this activity the children had to write the procedure for playing a familiar game, 'War', with accompanying drawings to illustrate the stages of the game.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

The relationship is clear between this work (Sample 8) and the focus indicators from the English Curriculum and Standards Framework and the ESL Companion, as presented in Sample 6. Clare and Stephanie thus ensure that they can assess their students according to the descriptions in the Curriculum and Standards Framework, which the school is using for all the Key Learning Areas of the curriculum. They achieve this through careful planning, as we saw in their Planning Sheet (Sample 1). As curriculum documents the Curriculum and Standards Framework documents certainly play a role in planning. As Clare notes: *'well when I do planning with Stephanie, we take that (the English Curriculum and Standards Framework) along, see if there's anything that we need to focus on'.*

We have seen that the outcomes contained in the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion as well as the Curriculum and Standards Framework English are used to plan assessment activities, and suggest indicators that can be considered in the assessment. Clare talks about her general expectations of her ESL students in relation to levels described in the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion:

> *Yes, I think you have to also take other things into consideration but at the same time I don't feel like I should lower my expectations for an ESL background child and so I would hope that they would be able to cope with these things, maybe at a different level. I don't want to dismiss this, that this is all too difficult for them, and they'll never be able to cope with that because I really think the higher your expectations of them, as long as you give them some sort of adequate background knowledge of things, the more they will achieve. This is why I focus so much on making sure they understand concepts before we begin so that they're never going to be at a loss because I think in the long run they're going to be competing with everybody else, but I think you can take into consideration they're ESL.*

We see here that Clare considers on the one hand it is necessary to acknowledge in assessment practices the background of ESL children, but it is also essential, whatever framework is used for assessment, that her expectations remain as high for them as for all of her students. The solution for her is in gearing her teaching to making sure that everything the children are to learn is as accessible as possible.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

We saw earlier that the Assessment Record Clare uses (Sample 7) during the year draws mainly on descriptors from the English Profiles Handbook. She acknowledges that much of what is included in them recurs in the Curriculum and Standards Framework, which the school is now using:

> *A lot of those (descriptions from the English Profiles Handbook) are covered in the Curriculum and Standards Framework but because I was familiar with the English Profiles Handbook I tended to use it again because I knew it was covering the things that I'm looking for.*

Her familiarity with the descriptions in the earlier framework appears to have been the principal motivation for continuing to use this format. It might seem surprising that the English Profiles Handbook still have a place in the assessment practices of teachers. Clare is quite frank about the inadequacies of that framework for ESL children:

> *the school that I was at (I was at another ESL school then) found that it was a problem because a lot of things are not taken into account in the English Profiles Handbook. Huge leaps that ESL children are making which might seem like nothing to a mainstream child were not addressed. Well in reading, the Bands were starting at something post-what the ESL children were at. I had a new arrival there. She would have got none of these. But then I could have said all the things she could do which wouldn't come into it. And Kazuo, the Japanese boy here, he's not a new arrival, but I'd need something for him. I definitely needed that. Because otherwise I could tell you things (aboutthe newly arrived girl's achievement) but as far as documenting it goes, it would look as if she hadn't achieved in that time. Well she was on this form, this was at the beginning of the year but it was just 'with support', 'with support', and 'not complete'. I mean, she was very quick at picking up things but I can't compare her to what the others were doing.*

Clare describes here how the English Profiles Handbook failed to recognise the progress that ESL children make in English, because they have as a starting point an assumption that each child has a background of five years of exposure to English at home. She comments that such an assessment framework cannot describe progress for students with little experience of English, even though her experience as a teacher would allow her to say very much more about their English language development.

Stephanie discusses how the same problem persists in the English Curriculum and Standards Framework for many ESL children, and how a framework explicitly designed for them is required.

> *Socially their English is fine. It's just the academic, you know, school, the language of the classroom, you constantly have to build up the structure at school and questioning and things like that, but and that's where you go back to this sort of thing (the ESL Companion). That's not in the straight English, the English Curriculum and Standards Framework. You know they assume that children have all those skills, so you might have to place the child in Level Two, say if they're Grade Three or Four in terms of listening*

> *and speaking, yet you know there's a whole lot of things that they can do with social language that may not be presenting in classroom language. They have a whole lot of skills and they shouldn't be there you know, because they're somewhere in between. They're only there in one component of their language development.*

She refers here to the differential development ESL children may display in using English in varying contexts.

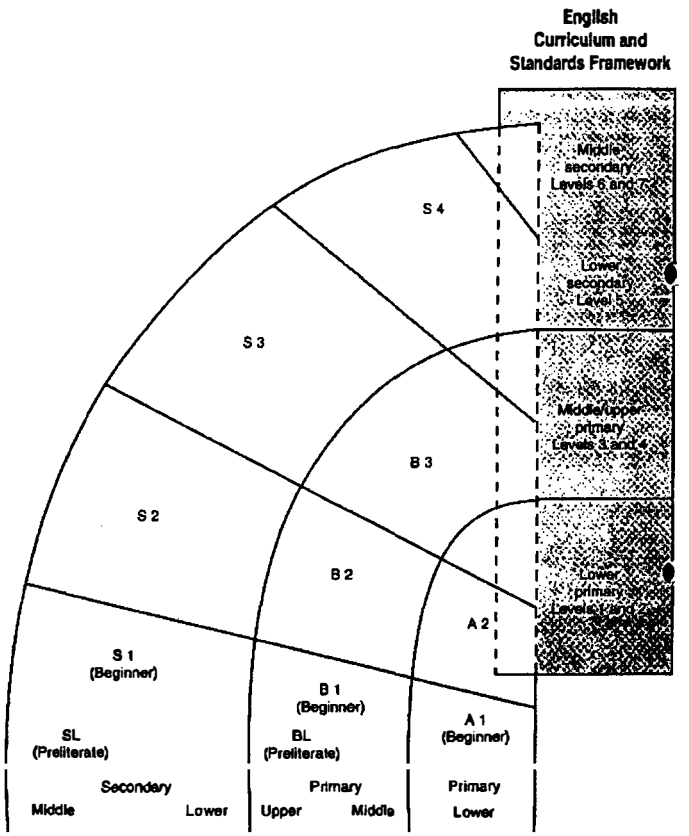
One of Stephanie's roles at Oxford Street is to assist the other teachers in becoming familiar with the new assessment frameworks. She talks again of how both the mainstream English and the ESL Companion are necessary for the school's population:

> *We're trying to (use the ESL Companion). We were using the English, the Curriculum and Standards Framework. The ESL Companion came out later and what I'm trying to do now is actually incorporate it, so not move people totally onto the ESL Companion because that's not appropriate. There's children in our school, and even though they're ESL, there's quite a number of them who, if you read the outcome in the English, they fit very nicely, regardless of their background. I mean we have children that are already, you know, in, say, our lower primary, in that A2 area. We have many of them moving into that overlap area, the overlap between needing that extra support and moving into the mainstream. And we've got children who are in that but, you know, if you read the outcomes for the English, they fit very nicely in there.*

She makes the point here that she would not consider the ESL Companion appropriate for all ESL children, since the development of some of them can be described very successfully with the mainstream English framework. She thus refers to three categories of students: children for whom the mainstream English framework is appropriate, children for whom an ESL framework is necessary, and a third category, who are somewhere between the two. It is her experience as an ESL teacher that allows her to make these distinctions, which might otherwise not be clear. This middle area is explicitly recognised in the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework, in a diagram describing its relationship to the mainstream English framework (Sample 9).

> *Our children are crossing a whole range, which all ESL students do. They're all over the place so what we have to have is something that's going to indicate where they are with each.*

Sample 9: Stages of the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework



Stephanie talks about the plethora of frameworks that have been thrust into the arena of teaching and assessment in recent years, and summarises her attitude to dealing with this issue:

> *People became familiar with the English Curriculum and Standards Framework initially. And even though I thought 'Well, you know, there's a lot of children are not going to sit in there they're going to sit in the ESL Companion' I think it's important for people to become familiar with the documents and what's in them, and then if you bring in something else then they can accurately relate it. So we did, we worked quite a bit on the English Curriculum and Standards Framework and people saw what was in those and related that to (Victorian) English Profiles and things like that.*

Stephanie here demonstrates a patient and pragmatic attitude to the documents, and seems to consider it is worth taking the trouble to work with teachers on a framework in its early stages of implementation, as that provides a base for moving onto later modifications such as the ESL Companion. She may be slightly unconvinced of the need for multiple versions of frameworks that at heart contain rather similar material.

> *But I think these (the ESL Scales), overall, these seem to be a little bit fuller and more detailed and I mean why do they bother changing! I mean the whole nation should all be using these (the ESL Scales) and*

> *we'd all be a lot better off. That's a personal opinion. Not the school's.*

Her preference for the ESL Scales seems to be related to a perception that the descriptions are more fully developed in some way than those in the ESL Companion. She restates this view:

> *Even within the advanced scales, compared to the ESL Companion, I don't know, there just seems to be a bit more. I don't know whether it's more user friendly or whether it's more specific , I'm not sure. But the course advice that's coming out with this from Victoria is fantastic.*

She puts forward here the view that the frameworks alone are insufficient, and require the extra material included in the course advice. She is clearly satisfied, however, with the ESL support materials that Victoria does produce.

When asked about her experience with the NLLIA ESL Bandscales, and whether she had tried to use them at Oxford Street, Stephanie explained:

> *And then we looked at this (the NLLIA ESL Bandscales publication). I mean all the resources were around but I don't think anyone would have used it at all. I would guarantee that none of them did, and I just would refer to in relation to specific children. I sort of thought oh yes, well they're probably here, but I didn't really use it to that extent. I guess I was overseas when the NLLIA materials came out and I think we only got that last year. It's a bit daunting really, such a big book, and also the format. When I took it home I thought, 'There's some really fantastic things in this but how am I going to use this in the school?' If you're in a Language Centre , I mean, like new arrivals teachers, they just pick it up and go with it, because all their children fit into those early bands, whereas our kids are much much more mixed.*

An important point emerges here, that materials need to be presented in an accessible way. However worthy they might be, if they are not published in a suitable format, then they are unlikely to be taken up by most teachers. In her view, the bulk and presentation of the publication containing the ESL Bandscales made it hard for most teachers to approach. In addition, there is a suggestion here that professional development is needed to teachers in using complex materials, so that they can take advantage of the *'fantastic things'* and receive suggestions about how to use them in their own situations. In Stephnanie's view, whereas teachers in intensive language centres might find them instantly useable for all their students, other teachers are likely to require assistance and practice with using the ESL Bandscales.

Stephanie has a final reminder of the inevitable subjectivity and potential for variability inherent in using any assessment framework, and any scale, whatever its merits:

> *I mean it's always going to be a subjective judgement, and my assessment of that child is going to be different (from someone else's), I mean they might go into Grade 4 and the teacher might say 'this kid's brilliant, they should be on level five', or 'the child's hopeless, they should be on level two', you might put them on level three, and you're never going to get over that.*

Her own preferred approach to reducing this variability is to ensure that there is some commonality in the kinds of tasks used by teachers, not just within her own school but elsewhere in schools, too. She sees this best dealt with at the planning stage, with specified assessment activities built into planning. Such an approach is consistent with an outcomes-based approach to assessment, as represented in the ESL Scales and the Curriculum and Standards Framework, and in her opinion

either would work equally well. She is satisfied with the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion, despite her apparent preference for the ESL Scales. For Stephanie, an ESL-specific curriculum and assessment framework is essential to complement any mainstream framework, but to use it requires experience and practice.

Clare seems also to agree with the general approach presented in both the English Curriculum Standards Framework its ESL Companion, and appreciates the greater certainty and common purpose that they aim to allow teachers to achieve in both their teaching programs and their assessment practices. It is here that the Curriculum and Standards Framework seems to have particular impact, for her. Clare sees the value of Curriculum and Standards Framework as resting in its potential to offer a common approach to teaching and curriculum, which she considers to be in the best interests of all children.

> *Well, I actually like the Curriculum and Standards Framework document because I think there was a need but nobody really knew in which direction (to go). I feel I have more of a direction now. When I left college, the approach, which is still being used, but it's more directed now, I think, was whole language and process writing and all of that, and I like doing it too but I found, especially in that big school I was in, that people were doing all sorts of things. You had people doing only phonic approaches, and you had people doing things at the other extreme. And then you had this sort of in between and I think that the Curriculum and Standards Framework document is good for that. Not that it really gives you an idea of the way things should be taught but at least you realise there's a common sort of goal. I don't know, I just feel that maybe that's what we need because you feel like you're working towards something and everybody has the same goal. And there's a concern too with children once they get to secondary school, with the Curriculum and Standards Framework you know that they've been covering the same sort of things as children everywhere else.*

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Sue at Hillsdale English Language Centre

Tom Lumley

The School Context

Hillsdale English Language Centre is situated in a long-established suburb on the fringe of the inner suburbs, attached to a primary school whose name and premises it shares. While the school was built in the 1960s, the streets around are lined with Victorian and Edwardian terrace houses, in various stages of repair or renovation, interspersed with more recent buildings. The suburb has a fairly broad mix of socio-economic backgrounds, although would not be considered prosperous. The Centre has about 40 students, in three classes. It draws its clientele partly from Hillsdale, including the nearby Housing Commission flats, but also from adjoining suburbs, and a noticeable proportion of students arrive by public transport. The Centre also runs four 'outposts' for smaller numbers of students in schools in other suburbs in the same region.

Students typically come directly to the school after their arrival in Australia, but sometimes have to wait until a place becomes available, in which case they spend up to six months in other schools (including Hillsdale Primary School). While I was there most students were from Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Zaire; smaller numbers of students came from other countries including Vietnam, China, Turkey, Russia and Sri Lanka. After their time at the Language Centre students move to mainstream classes in Hillsdale Primary School or other primary schools, or go on to secondary schools.

Most students with prior experience of school and literacy stay in the Centre for 2-3 terms. However, pre-literate students generally require more time than this, and may stay 12 months or sometimes more. The proportion of pre-literate students has increased considerably in recent years. Class sizes have also increased, with around 14 students in each. This may sound small, when compared to average class sizes twice that in many primary schools, but the composition of the classes in this Centre is far from average. In common with most ESL students, they have little or no prior knowledge of English. In addition, a high proportion of them have had no experience of education, nor exposure to literacy and the ordinary activities and expectations of a literate, Western society. However, perhaps more significantly, a very high proportion (over 75%) of the students are refugees, who have spent an average of five years in refugee camps (where in many cases they were born). This means that they bring with them the trauma of war, and an entirely different experience of life from that shared by the great majority of primary school students in Australian schools. They are bursting with life and energy; they often demonstrate happiness and infectious joy in quantities hard to reconcile with the harshness and brutality they have endured in their short lives; but they may also find it a struggle of massive proportions to adapt to an affluent urban society where the conditions of war are not a part of daily life. This profoundly affects the atmosphere in the school.

Handling these students, building up their trust, introducing them to a new society, and beginning to equip them with the tools they will need for success here, requires many skills, not least among them adaptability. Ideally the School was able to make one class each for Junior, Middle and Upper Primary students. However, because students were frequently arriving (taken strictly in order from a waiting list) and leaving, classes were often reorganised each term. Thus a fairly straightforward arrangement of classes nominally according to age (Prep-

Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 5-6) in Term 3 was replaced in Term 4 by a more unusual configuration of Prep-Grade 6 (new arrivals, mostly pre-literate students), Grades 2-5, and Grades 5-6. Prep is the term used in Victoria for the first year of school, when the children are aged between 4 and 6. The term 'early years of schooling' takes on a set of different interpretations under these circumstances.

The Classroom Context

The students

In Term 4 there are about 14 students in Grades 2 to 5 in Sue's class, between 8 and 11 years old, with the bulk of them in Grades 3 and 5 (in Term 3, the class composition was somewhat different, with a different balance of students, in Grades 3 to 5). Their first languages include Somali, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Singhalese, Russian, Arabic and French. They share a large room with Carol, the Upper Primary teacher, loosely divided by furniture including some desks with (among other things) the Centre's three computers on them. The computers are much sought after as a means of entertainment, and each child in the Language Centre has an allotted time to spend using it. Sue comments: *'it's much easier now with three (rather than one); the students can take it in turns'.*

A large window fills much of one wall, overlooking a wide grassy stretch of land, some inside and some beyond the bounds of the school grounds. On the walls of the corridors leading to the classroom are posters displaying the work of both Language Centre and mainstream Primary School students. Within the classroom, there are more examples of the students' work, as well as a poster of all the students, including their names, ages, countries of origin and the languages they speak. These are supplemented by maps and other posters showing other objects such as animals and plants, to which the teachers regularly refer. There is evidence of practical activities in which the students are engaged or stimulus materials for teaching, perhaps trays of containers growing beans, or vases of flowers.

Although the students are nominally placed in either Sue's or Carol's class, in practice the composition of the class varies frequently. Sometimes the two upper classes are combined into a single group, with Sue and Carol team teaching. At other times the pre-literate students from both classes are taught by one teacher, while the other teacher teaches the remainder of the students. Variations in the teaching programme, such as swimming, or preparation for the school concert, sometimes meant that all the students in the Centre are combined in one group. Other combinations occur as necessary.

The aides

The school has two bilingual aides, one Vietnamese, Amy, and one Somalian, Ibrahim. As well as assisting communication between the school and students' families, in class the aides tend to work with the students on reading activities, and they regularly sit in one corner of the room, spending a short time with each student in turn. Sue comments how valuable they are:

> *we have them at certain (fixed) times. Sometimes we get them to do readers or sometimes we might get them to work with individual children, like when we have process writing. Especially when the students are very new, it's very handy.*

Teaching

Because Sue and Carol do a lot of team teaching, combining and dividing the students in the middle and upper grades in different ways according to specific teaching goals, they plan their teaching programme together. They use themes (including subsidiary or complementary themes to cover additional parts of the curriculum) which generally last one to three weeks each (see Sample 1).

Sample 1: Programme for Middle and Upper Language Centre, Terms 3 and 4

Teachers: Sue and Carol

Term 3

Week ending	Theme	Excursions/other
1 (20/7)	Holidays (Personal information)	
2 (27/7)	Olympics (Body Parts)	
3 (3/8)	Olympics (Actions)	Curriculum Day (Thursday)
4 (10/8)	Olympics	Scienceworks; Mini Olympics
5 (17/8)	Houses/buildings (Food)	Restaurant for athletes
6 (24/8)	Houses/buildings (Science: electricity)	Bookweek
7 (31/8)	Houses/buildings	
8 (7/9)	Fairy stories	
9 (14/9)	Fairy stories	
10 (21/9)	Fairy stories	Anakie (bus trip)

****

Teachers: Sue and Carol

Term 4

Week ending	Theme	Excursions/other
1 (12/10)	Holidays	
2 (19/10)	Plants	Plant beans
	Swimming	Mon-Thurs; Curriculum Day, Fri
3 (26/10)	Plants (Swimming - water safety)	Swimming, Mon-Thurs
4 (2/11)	Plants	Swimming, Mon-Thurs
5 (9/11)	Farm Animals / Food Pyramid	Melbourne Cup, 5/11
6 (16/11)	Farm Animals / Food Pyramid	Collingwood Children's Farm
7 (23/110	Farm Animals / Food Pyramid	
8 (30/11)	Beach	Concert practice
9 (7/12)	Beach	Concert, 4/12
10 (14/12)	Beach	Beach excursion: Torquay
11 (21/12)	Celebrations, Christmas	End of term, Fri 20/12

Sue describes certain basic routines that she tries to follow, but comments that these are often changed, for various reasons. She tends to start the day's teaching, after greetings, collecting home reading books, a roll call and the school's administrative requirements, with a series of songs, often using Big Books, or chants. These will often be related to the content of the day. For example, at the start of a maths lesson they might sing or chant *5 Little Monsters, Ten in a Bed*, or *The Bugs Go Marching 2 by 2*. This is generally followed by a short period of diary writing, where the students write in a fairly unstructured manner. Throughout the lesson, children go in turn to sit and read with one of the aides, sitting in one corner of the room, behind a screen. As we saw in Sample 1,

Sue has a theme for each week. Teaching for this involves introducing and developing concepts, supported by Big Books and other texts, and provides opportunities for the students to speak, read, write and draw. Each day usually includes about an hour of maths, while in the afternoons the class might do work in science or art, or sometimes continue work on a topic or project commenced earlier that day or on a previous day. Library visits, process writing and music are all activities that take place in the afternoons.

There is frequent recycling of language from earlier weeks, so that in one lesson towards the end of Term 3, the children played *Sue says*, practising the vocabulary for body parts that they had learnt earlier in the term. This led to a jovial dispute about who was in and who was out of the game. The theme for this week is Fairy stories. Sue commenced this part of the lesson with a Big Book, *The 3 Billy Goats Gruff*. The children had seen a video of this story the previous day, and the story was told several times, using sequences of drawings. Sue explains the task for the lesson: the students are to read the story together, then act it out in groups, and finally write the story of the *Billy Goats Gruff*. The class read the story in chorus, with Sue pointing to the words as they read. She explains certain vocabulary items in the story, including *'gobble'*, *'spear'*, *'horn'*, *'eyeball'* and *'poke'*. After the allocation of roles (another opportunity for vigorous negotiation) in groups, the children act out the story, with one standing on the table, and others climbing underneath it, and each one saying his or her lines. This is clearly a very enjoyable activity for the students. Sue writes a selection of words on the board, with spelling supplied by the students; one boy offers most of the letters. The class is then divided into three groups, with each writing a section of the story, on sheets of butcher's paper. One group use their first language to discuss their plan for the writing activity. When they are finished, the stories are displayed on the blackboard, and the writers read them to the class. Sue closes the lesson by playing a recording of a rap-style jazz chant of the story, with the children sitting around on the floor, enjoying the rhythm. She pauses the tape at various stages to allow the students to practise some of the dialogue, with choral repetition of some parts, especially the tongue twisters.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Sue's background

Sue has been teaching for about 15 years, in New Zealand and Britain as well as Australia; she obtained a TESL qualification (Graduate Diploma TESOL) in Victoria some years ago. She has worked in this Centre for three years, currently fulltime, although much of her time before this year has been supporting 'outposts' of the Centre, where Language Centre programs are delivered in mainstream schools in the same region. She comments: *'it was the first opportunity I got to use my qualifications as such, and I really enjoy it here, it's good'*.

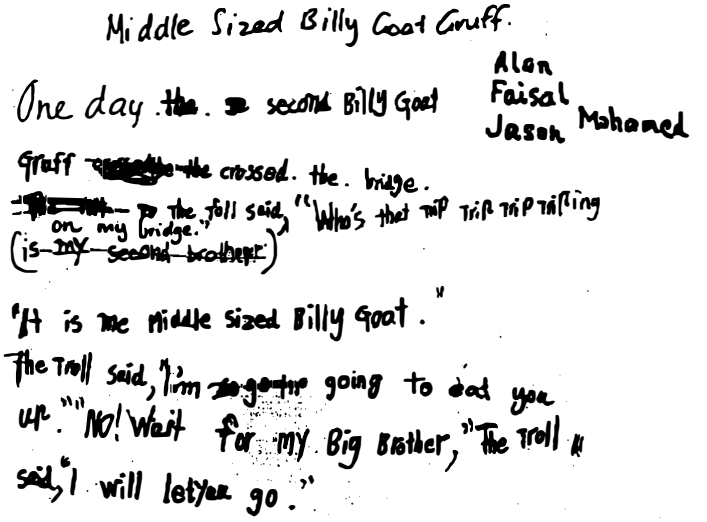
Sue has had a limited amount of professional development in the use of ESL assessment frameworks. The Upper Primary teacher and curriculum co-ordinator, Carol, attended a conference for ESL teachers organised to coincide with the release of the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework in March 1996, and she has begun to work with the other teachers in the Language Centre to assist them in becoming familiar with that document. The school had a curriculum day earlier in 1996 devoted to ESL assessment using the ESL Scales and the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion and examining the relationship between them.

Informal observation

Sue comments about how she assesses her students, and keeps track of their progress, *'Most of it is in my head'*. This is perhaps an understatement of the formality and complexity of procedures which are used in the school, and it is

necessary to examine her practice in more detail to understand how Sue is able to hold a strong impression of the development of each child in her head.

Sample 2a: Billy Goats Gruff



Middle Sized Billy Goat Gruff.

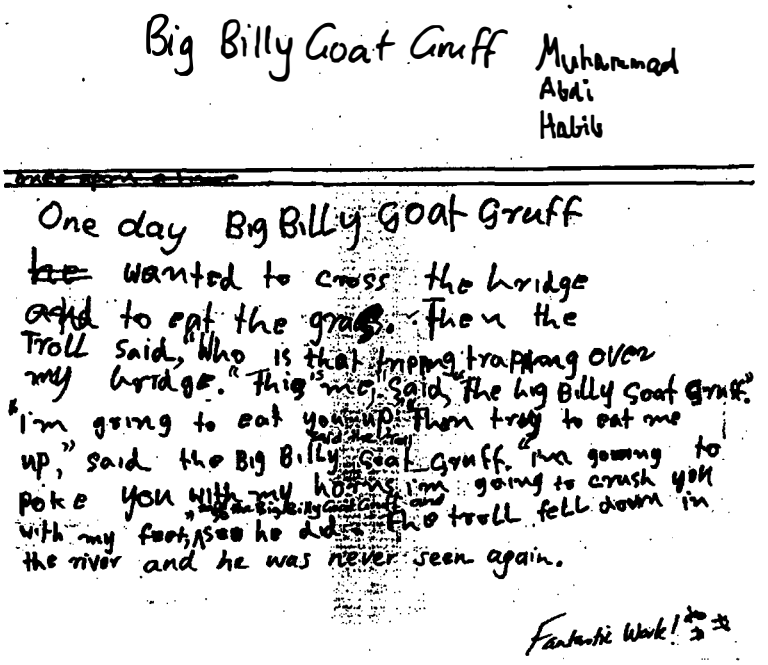
Alan
Faisal
Jason
Mahamed

One day the second Billy Goat Gruff crossed the bridge.
on my bridge."
The troll said, "Who's that trip trip trip tripping
(is my second brother)"

"It is me middle sized Billy Goat."

The Troll said, "I'm going to eat you up." "No! Wait for my Big Brother," The Troll said, "I will let you go."

Sample 2b: Billy Goats Gruff



Big Billy Goat Gruff

Muhammad
Abdi
Habib

One day Big Billy Goat Gruff wanted to cross the bridge and to eat the grass. Then the Troll said, "Who is that tripping trapping over my bridge." "This is me," said the big Billy Goat Gruff. "I'm going to eat you up." Then troll try to eat me up," said the Big Billy Goat Gruff. "I'm gonna to poke you with my horns, I'm going to crush you with my feet, see he did." The troll fell down in the river and he was never seen again.

Fantastic Work!

Informal observation is an important source of information for Sue about her students' progress. For example, in the lesson described earlier about the *Billy Goats Gruff*, the pieces of writing in Sample 2 were completed by two of the groups.

Sue commented later in the day on some of these students, referring to her observations from the lesson:

> *Alan* (11 years old, Grade 5, Cantonese speaker). *Yeah, he's a pre-lit. He's from Vietnam, he's been here since the beginning of the year and he had no English. He lives with his mother, she doesn't have any education or whatever and it's taken him a long time. But he still often sits at the back of the group or he fiddles around or he lies round. He's had 3 terms now, and I've kept him a bit longer as*

> *well, because of his written work, and when he started he was doing the writing (today) with Jason, Jason and him, it was quite a good experience for him.*

Sue shows here that this kind of observation during class is central to her impression of how well a student can cope with school. Alan is clearly showing progress, but has only recently started to write. She is pleased with his participation in today's writing activity. She then explains why she used this activity.

> *The first time we did that group writing was last week with our poems, (which are now) on the wall, that I showed you the other day.*

Sue refers here to a poster outside the classroom on which was displayed a series of poems written by the class, describing the sounds that are to be heard in each room in the house. She is proud of their ability to produce this kind of material, and decided to capitalise on its success.

> *Then I thought, oh well, we'll try something similar 'cos we did writing last week on the Three Little Pigs and I got them to write the whole story. But it's a bit long winded. So I thought I'll do the introduction and give them each one of the characters so they're basically using the same vocabulary and I think that's kind of worked out.*

Sample 2 shows that the groups were capable of producing texts of this length quite successfully. Sue goes on to describe how this sort of group writing, using repetitive language, works well as a teaching activity to boost the students' confidence, and also gives her a sense of what they are capable of doing when working as part of a group, rather than as individuals. She talks about how the previous week's activity, with the *Three Little Pigs*, was successful with Habib (an 11 year old student in Grade 5, from a Somali family) and Muhammad (a Grade 3 student, 8 years old, also from Somalia). They were in the group that produced the sample of writing about the *Big Billy Goats Gruff* above.

> *But the other one (the Three Little Pigs) was still quite good because Habib, when he did the Three Little Pigs , it was the first time he'd written. It gives them something that they can write at length about something that they know because it is repetitive vocabulary, and they know the words and things, so he felt quite good about that. But the first time they did the same sort of things but just different words patterns so that was, and then you see well Muhammad, he's got really little English and for him to join in with them it was quite good. If it was an individual task he would have had to be sitting in with myself or an aide or something. He's not up to writing anything himself yet.*

Sue sees as an important stage of development the sign that a student who is unable to write alone can participate with the others in a writing activity, and it is by watching the students engaged in learning that she is able to observe such signs.

As mentioned above, the children regularly go and sit with the aides for a short while during the lessons, in order to read with them. Sue consults with aides about the reading progress of the students, but likes to *'check their assessments'*: she regards assessment as her own responsibility. Another kind of informal observation she uses is to sit with them herself to hear students read.

Sometimes her observations relate to students' behaviour, which includes aspects of communication that may be hard to capture in assessment scales. She talks here about Jason, a 10 year old Vietnamese student in Grade 5, who had been at the Language Centre for about six months:

> *With Jason I'd say 'Put your reader in the bag', and then I'd say now 'Take it home' and I'd be pointing and signalling and he'd pretend it's on his back. And if he wanted something he'd come and pull my sleeve but not in a way that you'd get upset about, but he always wants to make sure that he knows what he's doing, so he'll always come and make sure or ask.*

She comments how it was initially difficult for him in the Language Centre, as the only Vietnamese student: *'But I felt really sorry for him at the beginning cos other than Amy, she was the only one that could speak to him.'* She goes on to remark how

> *he likes to be perfect, too, and this is what's holding him back a little bit with his speech. He's just starting to talk.*

Sue finds it easy to give brief pictures of her students, based on her constant observations:

> *now Haifa* (a Somalian student, 9 years old) *has very good oral language, she had time with an outpost, she came here in December last year with Carol in the middle group, and she's been with me all year. Haifa's a bit, well she's pre-lit. She should be doing better than she is. I mean, she's got terrific, you know orally she's very good, but she, even this morning gave me the word 'horns' I think for the goat, but she doesn't want to try.*
>
> *Muhammad, he's just able to copy a bit from the blackboard, his drawings are fairly primitive. He's just starting to do drawings so, reading. I've just got, just today he knows the names of the alphabet and a few sounds. So I mean he's just starting to talk.*

Anecdotal Record

Sometimes Sue makes notes of these observations in an anecdotal record book during class, as in Samples 3 and 4. Sample 3 is for Virak, a Grade 4 student who is 9 years old and who arrived very recently.

Sample 3: Anecdotal Record for Virak

Started 7/10/96 in Language Centre, from Sri Lanka
9/10 Legotechnics - made a car with Legotechnics with Aide
v. well settled - reads some English
wrote several sentences about zoo visit in school holiday
v. keen - worked well
24/10 Grass person story
- no problems
- good idea of requirement
- used set structures
- neat illustrations
29/10 able to say why plants in cupboard are yellow: no light/sunshine
- left-handed
- uses 'and' to join sentences
- independent writing
November
farm story picture: wrote 'There have (are) pig hens
- v.g. at art work
- concentrated independently on animal project
- knows plant vocabulary
(also additional notes on behavioural problems)

We can see that these records are made fairly frequently, and while observing a variety of activities. The first record, made on Virak's third day at the Language Centre, referred to several different activities. The later activities were writing a story based on the 'person' they had grown with grass seeds in a nylon stocking on a cotton wool 'head' stuck in the top of a milk carton, talking and writing

about how their beans had grown in little pots and why some of them had produced yellow growth, and writing a story about farm animals. Sue is able to see that Virak has a rather more advanced level of writing than most of the other students in the class. She later comments on his ability to produce beautiful drawings, calling him *'my little artist'*. Although newly arrived in Australia, he has some background in English.

Sample 4 is for Aisha, an 11 years old student in Grade 5, almost the oldest in the class, who is in her second term in the Language Centre.

Sample 4: Anecdotal Record for Aisha

5/8/96
Simple drawing of Olympics
gymnastic weightlifting tennis rings
16/8
just starting to copy words from whiteboard
has not mastered lines yet. v. good spacing & neat.
- appears sulky and upset at times
doesn't get on all that well with other chn - new group - mainly boys so
perhaps difficult - espec. if Ibrahim is absent
needs to learn correct behaviour/talk for school. Needs to ask Ibrahim to
talk to her next week.
4/9
Aisha is trying hard with her work.
copies from whiteboard
- appears to have a better relationship with other girls although Haifa says she still uses 'bad' words in Somali
9/10
Legotechnics - Ibrahim helped her to build something
16/10
Process writing - wrote 2-3 sentences with Ibrahim's help
24/10
Reading Hairy Harry story with T - starting to recognise words, getting the idea of where the words go in place

This record includes notes about how Aisha's temperament and the gender balance in the classroom seem to lead to some initial problems with her work, and how this improves in time. Sue is also able to record how Aisha is beginning to start reading and how in her writing she has developed from simply copying to writing sentences with assistance.

Although she does manage to make some sort of anecdotal record about once a week for each student, Sue comments that she would like to complete them more frequently, but finds she does not have time, which she finds rather frustrating.

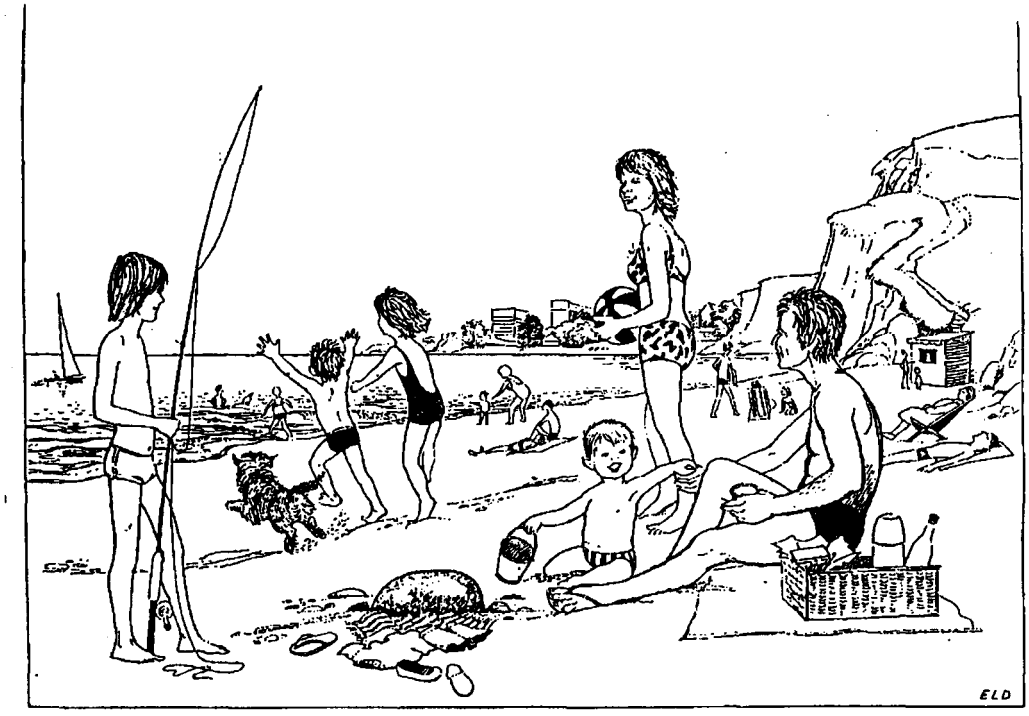
> *I find a difficulty with those, I don't know whether it's the way I am in the classroom or what, I feel I'm head down tails up most of the time, and the children are fairly demanding, so to actually sit in a lesson and have time to actually write something is quite difficult, because there's always someone who needs some sort of help or other, unless it's a time that they're all busily doing something and maybe you can walk around and write something then, or else I write after class.*

Collecting Samples

As the time for reporting and making decisions about whether students will remain in the Language Centre or move to a mainstream school, Sue does collect samples of writing produced individually by all the students, in order to help her in this decision-making process. These form by no means the only basis for these decisions, as we have seen, but they do help her to confirm some of her judgements. Sample 5 shows some of the written texts produced by students

towards the end of Term 4 to assist Sue in end-of-year reports and decisions. The students were to go on an excursion to the beach the following day, and there had been much discussion of the language needed to talk about the beach. Sue used a cartoon drawing of a beach scene as a stimulus for writing. The writing samples are produced by Alan, Virak, Haifa and Muhammad, all of whom have been discussed in earlier samples and comments.

Sample 5A: Picture and drawing: At the Beach



Sample 5B: At the Beach

Alan

The ~~Beach~~ The Beach Little boy is in trouble
man saved, the is ran the gull
is fly the Beach have deck
chair a rowing boat a swim suit a
canoe a waves a cliff, rope a net.

At the Beach

Yirak

at the Beach there many many fish
and many many ~~people~~ ~~Bella~~ ~~Be~~ we like paddlin
at ~~the~~ the Beach ~~Be~~ and we like jumpi
g into waves we need to brind hat,
sunscreen short's and ball Tomorrow
we will go to Torqua Beach we # like
to go to the Beach

Haifa

The ~~Boy~~ is ~~talking~~ To He ~~father~~
The

The people swimming in the water.
The Boy is ~~swimming~~ in the water.
The Boy FISH

Muhammad

Assessment Form

The anecdotal records mentioned above feed into the Assessment Form, which is taken from the Victorian Course Advice, *ESL Essentials*, based on *the ESL Framework of Stages*, which is in turn based on the *Australian Language Levels Guidelines*. The Assessment Form is a more formal level of record-keeping than the anecdotal records, and is used by Sue as the basis for reporting. The Assessment Form provides a place to consolidate all the records that the teachers keep.

Sample 6 provides some of the extracts that Sue wrote in the Assessment Form for Indra, the youngest student in the class, 8 years old and in Grade 2. These comments come from the section of the form entitled 'Communication Goals and Objectives - Informational'.

Sample 6: Extract from Assessment Form

Name: Indra	First language: Somali	Age: 7 years 9 mths	Date of arrival: 9/10/95
Assessment Goals	Date: 18/7/96	Date: 9/9/96	Date: 25/10/96
INFORMATIONAL **3. Obtain Spoken or written information, and use it. (LS,RW)** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* Obtaining information from listening or seeing; ✔✔ following instructions? ✔	She can follow simple instructions related to work sheet activities well.	She can discuss the events in a story, respond to a picture chart, eg about Spring	
4. Give spoken or written information (S,W) *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* Giving information in a written form, eg worksheets, pictures; ✔ giving information in a spoken form	Complete sentences accurately		She is beginning to give information in a spoken form, eg How to make a Hairy Harry; How to grow a bean seed.

This form moves with the student and is filled in by the class teacher at the time. We see here, therefore, that in Term 3 the comments were provided by Jenny (see next case study) and in Term 4 by Sue.

Using the Assessment Frameworks

There are three assessment frameworks that have been of relevance to teachers at Hillsdale: the English Profiles Handbook Handbook, the ESL Scales and the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum & Standards Framework. The ESL Scales have played the most prominent role of the three in this school recently, since they are explicitly used in the process of deciding when students should make the move to a mainstream school. However, Carol, the curriculum co-ordinator in the Language Centre, has been encouraging the other teachers to work with the ESL Companion document this year, since its introduction earlier in the year. When asked whether she had spent much time working with the Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL Companion document, Sue responded that they were still somewhat new: *'Yes, well we're just trying to come to grips with them.'* She

comments that the Language Centre teachers *'have had a curriculum day with it and we are starting to figure out where the students are between the two frameworks'.*

The teachers have begun to work together, then, on considering the relationship between the ESL Scales, with which they have become reasonably familiar, and the ESL Companion document, which they realise they will eventually be required to use for their assessment and reporting to the Department of Education. Sue showed me the following diagram (Sample 7) representing this relationship, which the teachers are using as their working model during this period of transition:

Sample 7: Comparison of levels, ESL Companion/ESL Scales

Students	**ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework**	**ESL Scales**
Lower Primary	A1 / A2 Beginner	Level 1
Middle/ Upper Primary	BL (Pre-lit)	B1 B2
	B1 (Beginner)	B3
Lower Primary	A2	Level 2
Middle/ Upper Primary	B2	Level 3
	B3	Level 4

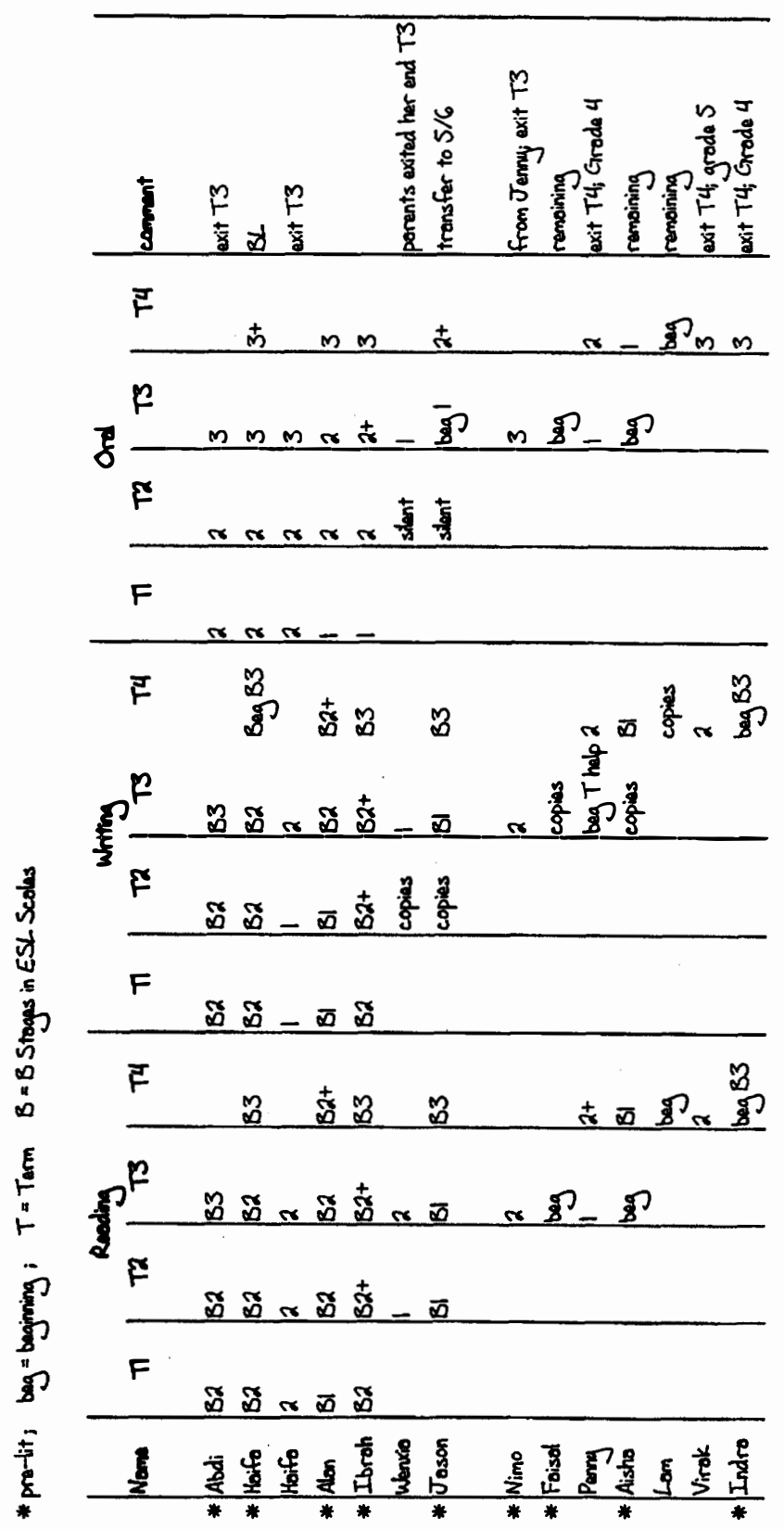
This table is helpful to her in seeing rates and signs of progress, and does contribute to the important decision-making process at the end of each term, and especially at the end of the year. For her, the crucial assessment decision for her students is when they should leave the Language Centre. While for some students it may be relatively straightforward, at other times this decision is complicated by factors not always related to English language development.

Sue has recently devised a form for recording the overall progress of her students throughout the school year, putting onto it the assessment she makes at the end of each term for each student according to the levels described in the ESL Scales. When she first showed it to me it was a rough draft, but she comments how she later made it more presentable:

> *I re-wrote that scrappy little paper I showed you the other day, at the weekend. I did that afterwards, and I showed this to Jenny and Carol and we thought that it could be worthwhile because we have to keep a record of where they're at when they leave and this is an overall thing for us.*

She was able to record on this sheet the term in which the students entered the school, the levels they were assessed at according to the ESL Scales at the end of each term, sometimes with additional comments, such as *'beginning'*, where the student appeared to show signs of development at more than one level, the level they were at when they left the Language Centre, and her recommendations for next year (Sample 8).

Sample 8: Tracking students on ESL Scales, Terms 1 - 4



Reporting & Assessment Policy

Sue's practices in assessing her students are guided by the Language Centre Assessment Policy, which has been through a series of drafts, the most recent of which is presented in Sample 9. This Assessment Policy is complemented by a **Reporting Policy,** still under development, and also divided into the sections of purpose, broad guidelines and evaluation.

There is also a document which list procedures and recommendations for ensuring that assessment and reporting information is obtained for each child. There are essentially four stages of communication between the school and the students' families:

1. An Enrolment Interview, conducted by the school administration with the parents. This focuses on students' prior learning and language experiences.

2. An Initial Interview, conducted by the class teacher early in the student's first term with the student and parents, with an interpreter if required (as is typically the case). This interview provides the teachers with important information about the child's background, including general behaviour at home, family circumstances, experience of education, and anything that might impinge on learning (for example, their reactions to any difficult circumstances or experiences they might have witnessed).

3. A Progress Interview, held after 2-3 terms between the class teacher and the parents, again with an interpreter if necessary. This is designed to discuss the student's progress, and any concerns the school or parents might have. There is also discussion of when the student is likely to be ready to move to a mainstream school, allowing the parents to select a school for their child and make necessary arrangements.

4. The aides contact the parents to inform them that the child will be leaving (generally as expected following the discussions in the Progress Interview), and confirm details and arrangements as necessary.

Sample 9: Language Centre Assessment Policy (Draft)

PURPOSE

To evaluate students' language development

To evaluate students' ability to participate in mainstream schooling

To evaluate programs for future planning

To provide oral and written feedback about students' progress to parents, teachers and students.

BROAD GUIDELINES

There should be:

Ongoing recording of the student's language, educational, emotional and social development;

A school environment that promotes positive attitudes towards learning.

A program that encourages each child to reach achievable goals.

Information provided about the effectiveness of goals and learning activities.

Information provided about students' progress in developing and achieving skills and understandings.

Ongoing evaluation of learning programs.

An initial assessment conducted containing accurate information about previous schooling, educational background, literacy and numeracy in L1.

Cumulative, sequential files kept containing samples of students' work.

Checklists and anecdotal records kept.

Encouragement of students to participate in setting their own goals and assessing their own achievements.

EVALUATION will be by:

Teachers monitoring in classes.

Timetabled curriculum meetings.

Exit reports and interviews with feeder schools and parents.

Feedback from parents.

Students' confidence.

Exit teachers' feedback by a formal survey.

Reference to current reporting and assessment documents and tools.

The school also uses a **Parent Opinion Survey,** containing five questions (Sample 10), which is completed in collaboration between the bilingual aids, school staff and parents, when the student leaves the language centre. The questions focus on the level of parent satisfaction with the education and care of their children while at the Language Centre.

Sample 10: Parent Opinion Survey

Dear Parent,

We would appreciate your thoughts on how Hillsdale English Language Centre has prepared your child(ren) for mainstream school.

Could you please assist us with future planning and comment on the following questions.

1. Do you think HELC provided an adequate introduction to the Australian education system? How?
2. Were you happy with the information provided on your child's progress?
3. Were HELC staff available when you needed to talk to them?
4. What are you comments generally on how your child(ren) were cared for while at HELC?
5. Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve our program?

Thanking you

Coordinator

A comprehensive Exit Report, about 10 pages in length, is passed onto the mainstream school when a child leaves the Language Centre. This report is sent to the feeder school to which the child will go, with a covering note explaining that an conduct exit interview can be conducted on request by the mainstream school. The report contains information under a long list of headings, including social and emotional behaviour, general level of oral English ability, reading, writing, mathematics, physical education, art, music and science/technology.

There are also checklists for themes and topics of work covered, plus separate checklists for mathematics and language.

Sample 11 A ,B & C shows part of the exit report for Haifa

Sample 11A : Extract from Exit Report (Haifa)

Name: Haifa Age at 1/1/96: 8yrs 1mth Nationality: Somalian

Language spoken at home: Somalian Date of arrival at HELC: 1/2/1996

Prior schooling: None - Outpost at Ryde before HELC: 1/2/1996

General comments: Haifa is developing well, but needs teacher direction to remain on task, and praise.
Recommendations: Grade 4 in 1997

Social and Emotional Behaviour
Willingness to communicate in English: Good to Fair

Comments:
Haifa has taken rather a long time to settle to school culture. She has shown typical pre-literate characteristics. She has settled down in 4th term and is more determined to finish her writing from the whiteboard. I feel she is ready to be challenged by the mainstream.

Comments:
Haifa can communicate in routine situations, understanding controlled English supported by its immediate context using learnt formulas, well rehearsed patterns and short, simple utterances.

Reading
Haifa is developing her understanding of sound/symbol relationships. She is attempting to read new words in context. She joins in with reading familiar texts. She is developing her sight vocabulary & uses memory of familiar texts to 'read'. She is developing her interest in books and reading.

Writing
Note: The mechanics of handwriting and writing as a means of expression are regularly practised and integrated with other areas of the program.
Haifa is developing her handwriting style and is copying accurately from the whiteboard. She is beginning to write sentences on her own. She is using charts & words lists to find and spell unknown words.

Sample 11B: Extract from Exit Report (Haifa)

Themes/Topics/Units of Work Covered

Comment			Comment		
√	Personal		√	Road Safety	Traffic School
	Identification		√	Bike Safety	
√	Me, my family		√	The beach/marine life	Torquay Beach
√	School/Classroom		√	Transport	
√	Actions	Olympics	√	Weather, seasons	
√	The body	Sports Work:	√	Australia	
		Scienceworks	√	The World/our countries, etc.	
√	Clothes		√	People who help us	Fireman visit
√	Shopping		√	Plants/growing seeds	
√	Food: fruit/vegetable		√	Energy	Electrical
	healthy/unhealthy	local shops	√	Planets and space	Planetarium
√	Housing/building	Electricity	√	Colours	
√	Celebrations	Xmas & other countries	√	Concepts	
√	Animals:	Melbourne Zoo			
	Australian, zoo, pets, wild farm	Collingwood Farm			

Language checklist; Exercise and Activity Levels	Comments
Independent/confident	requires teacher direction
Active involvement	yes
Completes tasks	yes
Follows instructions	yes
Language understanding	developing
Recording of information	developing
Problem solving	beginning
Group work	yes
Speaking/listening	yes
Reading/writing	developing

Language Ability (According to ESL Scales)

Language structures and features	Level
Listening & Speaking	3
Reading	B2
Writing	B2

Description:
Demonstrates awareness of aspects of spoken English necessary for communicating at school

Discourse strategies	Level
Listening & Speaking	3
Reading	B2
Writing	B2

Description:
Gains and shares meaning from symbols, writing & simple texts read aloud

Learning Strategies	Level
Listening & Speaking	3
Reading	B2
Writing	B2

Description:
Haifa uses some basic structures to convey information in writing. She models own 'reading' on shared reading of others

Language and Cultural Understanding	Level
Listening & Speaking	3
Reading	B2
Writing	B2

Description:
Haifa is aware that print encodes meaning & that written texts have structure

Sample 11C: Extract from Exit Report (Haifa)

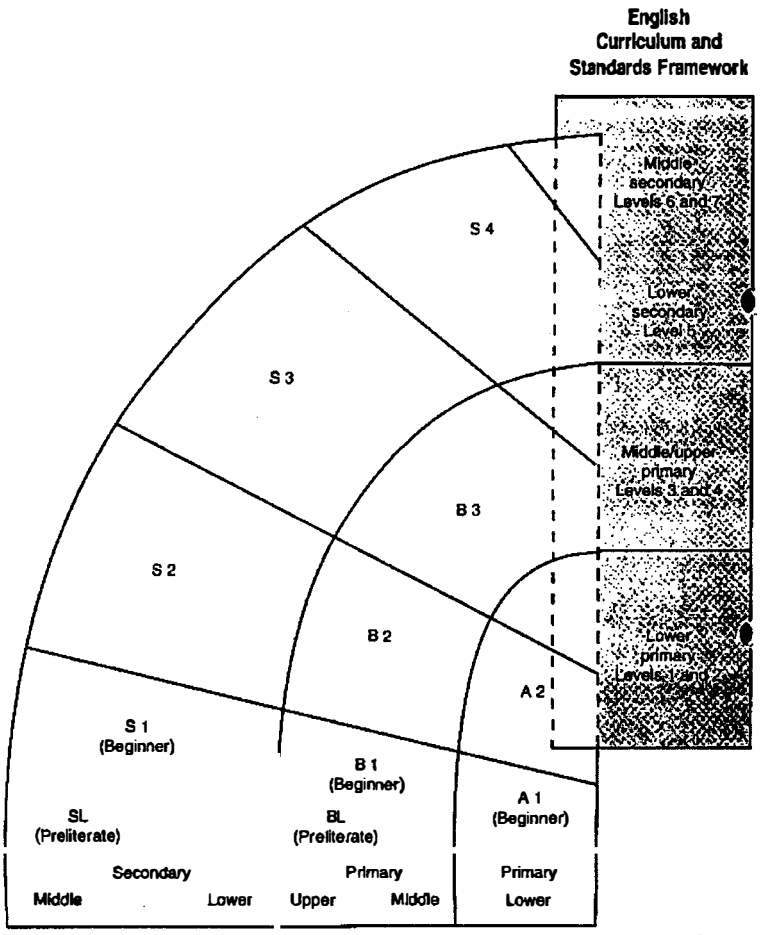
Guidelines for Decisions
Students should be able to master 75% + outcomes for each level to be deemed ready to exit. Recommendations should be forwarded to leadership team for discussion.

Pre literate students 5/6					
Oral - Level	3	Writing - Level	B2	Reading -	Level B3
Literate 5/6					
Oral - Level	3	Writing - Level	3	Reading -	Level 3
Pre literate 3/4					
Oral - Level	2	Writing - Level	B2	Reading -	Level B2
Literate 3/4					
Oral - Level	3	Oral - Level	2	Reading -	Level 2
Pre - literate Prep 1-2					
Oral - Level	2	Writing - Level	B2	Reading -	Level B2
Literate 1/2					
Oral - Level	3	Oral - Level	2	Reading -	Level 2

These documents collectively suggest a strong awareness of the need to be accountable to parents and to teachers in the mainstream schools where the children will eventually go, as well as to be responsive to Department of Education requirements in the areas of assessment and reporting, and to the views of parents.

The last part of this extract shows the levels, according to the ESL Scales, that the Language Centre has determined are appropriate for students exiting at various ages. It can be seen that there are different recommendations for pre-literate students and students with experience of literacy. Students are to have mastered at least 75% of the outcome statements contained in the relevant level of the ESL Scales in order to be deemed ready to exit. This report is accompanied by a copy of page 4 of the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework - the 'rainbow' diagram, showing the relationship between the ESL Companion and the mainstream English Curriculum and Standards Framework levels (see Sample 12), with the student's level circled on it. This diagram shows the next teacher how this child's English language is developing in relation to the expectations of the mainstream, and is designed to alert the mainstream school to the fact that this ESL child might need extra support.

Sample 12: Stages of the ESL Companion to the English CSF



If students are not leaving the Language Centre, then they receive a Progress Report, an example of which is shown in Sample 13. This progress report is filed by the school for use by in future terms if the student changes class. As can be seen, this contains a much less comprehensive report than is passed onto mainstream teachers, and focuses on providing summary statements about language development. The assessment according to the assessment frameworks is not included, although, as we have seen (Sample 8), Sue does keep a record of this herself.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Assessment practice is intimately tied to the central issue in this school: preparing students for success in mainstream classes. This is the goal, and Sue is constantly aware of both the goal, and the decision-making process which precedes the transfer of the student to mainstream classes. Consistent with this policy, for Sue, the most important purpose of assessment appeared to be the stated purpose included above in the Language Centre Assessment Policy (Sample 9):

'To evaluate students' ability to participate in mainstream schooling'

Sample 13: Progress report (Muhammad)

General
Muhammad has settled well into the Language Centre & school. His confidence is growing daily and he tries hard with all his work.

Spoken Language
Muhammad is beginning to express himself in English and is developing. He still requires help from other students to translate for him

Listening
Muhammad still needs to be reminded when it is 'listening' time. He is beginning to focus more on the teacher & other children when they are talking.

Writing
Muhammad has made very good progress with his handwriting. In the beginning he was unable to copy from the whiteboard, but now he can write quite clearly on lines. He is beginning to write simple structured sentences with teacher help.

Reading
Muhammad is using his knowledge of the alphabet and the sounds of letters to try to read words. He is developing his knowledge of the basic sight words.

Overall Comment
Muhammad needs to continue at the Language Centre in 1997.

Sue is acutely aware of the fact that she has charge of the students in the school for a limited period, and that she has the principal responsibility not only for preparing students for participation in mainstream schools, but also for choosing the optimum moment for this transfer. She comments:

> *we've got to figure out where the children go, and whether they're able to cope with mainstream classrooms.*

She constantly referred in discussions to the process of making the irrevocable decision concerning when each student should leave the Language Centre. This decision clearly required profound thought, and she discussed how she spent considerable time weighing up the advantages of keeping the student another term, or deciding that it was time to move on. One of the aspects of this which she seems to find hard is not knowing whether she made the right decision or not, and the way she would judge this if it were possible would be by seeing, in hindsight, whether or not the child had coped successfully in the mainstream school. She gives an example of one girl over whose future she agonised:

> *so you lose track of the children, so you agonise over decisions, like I had a girl from Thailand last year, and she only had one term here, and the decision was to either go to Newtown English Language Centre or to the mainstream school, and in the end the parents decided to send her to the mainstream school. I don't know how she coped, I presume she did, but how well, you never know, anyway.*

In the end, in that case the decision was made by the parents, but Sue always contributes to the decision-making process. She then talked of two sisters who have been in the school for about a year, and who are now about to move to a mainstream school. With Haifa (Grade 3, just 9 years old), the issue is the rate of progress the girl is now showing, with Sue concerned that she needs greater challenge in her schooling:

> *probably this term I've come down fairly hard on Haifa because of knowing that she was going to go but I feel that she hasn't really made any terrific progress (this term) so sometimes I think that there comes a time when a change is as good as a holiday, you know.*

With her sister Atha, Sue talked about how she had to work hard to persuade her to go to Grade 5 rather than Grade 6, where her friends from the Language Centre would be:

> *The family intend to shift anyway but at the moment they'll be coming here probably to the end of the year and I said 'You've got to think about next year. If you go into Grade 6 you'll be going into High School and you'll be expected to do so much more reading and writing' and I said 'I don't want you to be lost when you go into High School'.*

The other purposes of assessment outlined in the school's assessment policy clearly occupied a supporting role to this main function.

The Centre has a clear policy to guide teachers in making their decisions, which requires students to have mastered more than 75% of the outcomes for the level at which they are deemed ready to exit (see the last part of Sample 11).

Views on Assessment Frameworks

Sue appears to accept that assessment and reporting are necessary, but she apparently feels a bit frustrated by the time and effort it consumes. She is guided by her sense of what she should be doing, tempered by what is possible in the constraints of time. She comments, *'it's just so time consuming, all this. Sometimes I've, sometimes I wonder, is there an easier way.'* She expresses a preference for the ESL Scales over the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework document, because she feels it offers more guidance:

> *You see that's the ESL Scales have got more pointers for each level so if you're looking at level 1 there's a lot more pointers in there than if you look at here (the ESL Companion).*

and for pragmatic reasons:

> *And this quite a silly book this is (the ESL Companion). They're supposed to give us a folder, but you've got a huge great folder and you've got 10 documents and you want to use one, it's pretty hopeless. It would be a lot easier with one document.*

She is happy to continue using the ESL Scales, at least in part:

> *Well, they are useful because you can look down. I was talking to Carol the other day, because she's done more work on that, she's curriculum coordinator now and she's done extra courses and whatever, and she's just more aware of it all. But she was saying that we might really keep the B scales because for the pre-lits it gives a bit more stuff that you can look at, like you get B1 beginning reader and whatever, there's more pointers and things that you can use. And then you can go up to the B2 whereas in here (the ESL Companion), you know, there's a bit less. ... see now we've got the new B1 and BL ... (course advice coming out, which should help)*

It is clear that the teachers at Hillsdale ELC are still developing procedures for assessment with which they feel comfortable, and are likely to continue to refer to the ESL Scales as well as the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework, in order to make sure they have the most appropriate material to use with their students. They find the extra detail included in the ESL Scales helpful.

We have seen in this case study that Sue is able to describe the students' development in considerable detail, as the result of her continuous observations of their classroom performance. When she comments that she retains all the information in her head, then it is hard not to believe her. However, it also seems to be helpful to Sue that there is an explicit framework with accompanying descriptors to assist her in confirming both ongoing and final decisions about students' progress. She will be glad when the production of new or revised frameworks for assessing ESL stops, and some consolidation in the form of

additional guidance such as course advice, takes its place. She feels that assessment takes up more time than it should, and is eager for ways to be found to reduce this burden.

Jenny at Hillsdale English Language Centre

Tom Lumley

The School Context

Jenny is an ESL teacher with a multi-age group at Hillsdale English Language Centre attached to a primary school. See previous Case Study Sue at Hillsdale for a description of the school context.

The Classroom Context

In Term 3, Jenny was teaching a multi-age group, Prep - Grade 2, comprising all the youngest students in the Language Centre, including those with experience of school and literacy as well as pre-literate students. Prep is the first year of school in Victoria, and children are 4 to 6 years old when they enter this grade. Jenny's class was completely rearranged from Term 3 to Term 4. At the beginning of Term 4, partly because many of the students had left the Language Centre to go to mainstream schools, and partly to deal with the behavioural problems that had arisen with the arrival of a new group of war-traumatised students, this became a class essentially for pre-literate students, Prep- Grade 6, aged between 5 and 11. On one day in the fourth term when I was there, the nine children gave their ages: two 5-year olds, three 6-year-olds, and one child each aged 7, 8, 10 and 11. About half the class was from a single Ethiopian family.

The African students dominated in both term 3 and term 4, although there were small numbers of students from Middle Eastern countries. Jenny emphasised the oral tradition from which the African students had come as a major influence upon their language development, stressing that they tended to be strong at speaking, while *'the idea of a sentence seems foreign to the students'*.

They also showed variable understanding of the expectations for behaviour in a classroom. Within a minute of first entering a classroom in this school I found myself in the midst of a brief fight that had erupted in a split second between two very young boys, and still remember the ferocity of feeling in the eyes of the sister of one of the boys, who had arrived at the school only days before, and to whom a classroom appeared to be simply one more stage for playing out the natural struggle for survival. Another child of Prep age (6 years old), Harun, who had also arrived very recently, took little part in the lesson, sometimes blocking his ears, or testing the scissors as if to see what they were good for, or lying on the floor or moving around the classroom while the others were sitting. Jenny talked of the massive culture gap between his original home in rural Somalia and this classroom in Hillsdale. He did not appear unhappy, and may have understood some of what was said to him, since he smiled at speech (although, as she pointed out, he smiled a lot at many things). The task of assessing the language development of children like this is clearly not a straightforward matter, and it is necessary to look with great care and attention for signs of progress all the time, as we shall see.

Because of the large proportion of African students in this class, the Somalian aide, Ibrahim, spent much time in the class, reading with the students, translating concepts and providing explanations where necessary, especially during the first weeks after the children started school.

When I visited the school the following term children were dramatically calmer than on my earlier visit, all sitting on the line on the floor drawn for that purpose, including the girl who had been somewhat aggressive on that occasion. Harun was playing, and Jenny commented afterwards about his behaviour: *'he's very shy - he doesn't even speak in his own language.'*. Ibrahim was in the room, translating and explaining things as necessary. Jenny was asking questions like, *'Are you here at school today?'* and modelling the answer, *'Yes'*. She completed the roll call, then asked, *'How many children?'* and modelled the answer again, *'Nine'*, writing this on the board.

This was followed by a cooking lesson. Jenny says that cooking is popular with children, because it involves actions, using real implements, and there is the prospect of food at the end. On this occasion they cooked a chocolate cake. While the cake was cooking the children cleaned up the kitchen, then made drawings and completed activity sheets, colouring in and labelling pictures of a cake and the cooking utensils. The kinds of language activities that Jenny finds the most useful to work with initially, apart from those involving actions such as cooking, are those inviting students to express pleasure, and likes/ dislikes, or to react to pictures.

There is also a strong focus on giving the children the basic language required to talk about themselves. Thus, on another occasion, the topic for the week was 'Giving Personal Information', and the aim of the lesson was for the students to be able to answer the questions, *'What colour is your hair/are your eyes?'*

Jenny commenced this lesson with typical routines, starting as always with the day's date and weather. This involved her eliciting or modelling, and building up on the board, with the students practising aloud sentences like: *'Today is Thursday 17th October. Today is a sunny day.'* From then they moved onto another common routine, with the students practising in chorus the numbers 1 to 5. Singing forms another part of the start to the day. Jenny comments how the children enjoy the songs, and the regular repetition of an expanding range of songs allows them to build up confidence in producing English sounds in a safe, unmonitored environment. She recycles songs which soon become familiar to the students, such as *5 Little Monkeys*, and for this lesson introduced a new song, 'Heads and Shoulders, Knees and Toes', accompanied by gestures. After this Jenny might read a Big Book with the students. On this day she chose *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See* ? allowing practice and consolidation of the familiar vocabulary for colours and animals. With the instruction, *'Put your hand up if you know the colour'*, children are invited to come to the front and point to the picture of each animal. They need frequent reminders to put up their hand in school, rather than just call out. The children are generally fairly successful in identifying colours and animals, although some of them less so.

Gradually moving closer to her target language for the lesson, Jenny introduces a reading activity focusing on eyes and eye colour. She puts a book up on the easel and reads it aloud, about an owl with big yellow eyes, who uses it to wink, to look and to sleep. This is followed by another Big Book about seeing, with a boy who needs his eye for riding his bike, chasing his friends, watching TV and looking at a rainbow. The logical progression here is to the students' own eyes and eye colour, and mirrors are passed around for children to establish their own eye colour. Drawings of eyes are put up on the board, coloured brown, blue, dark brown (or black - there is vigorous discussion about the correct labelling of this category) and green. Words on cards are matched to each eye colour. Jenny models, in writing and orally, the sentences *'What colour eyes do you have?'* and *'I have ..... eyes'* and each class member practises them. The children then practise writing, copying and completing the model *'I have ..... eyes'* as well as cutting and pasting the eyes and sentences onto a chart, then drawing a picture of their face, showing hair and eye colour. In the final stages of the lesson, the

children construct spectacles from pipecleaners, and practise counting the eyes on the charts they produced.

This lesson exhibits the usual disturbances and interruptions. Individual children go in turns to spend a little time reading with Ibrahim. One student appears rather late, because he was doing some maths work in the mainstream class where he will eventually move. It is swimming this week, and periodically a few students leave from the class to go off to the swimming pool. Harun mostly pays very little attention to the lesson, stretching himself out on the floor, moving around the room, running out of the room (to be retrieved by the trainee teacher, Julia, who is also present that day), refusing to do the writing activity, pulling things out of boxes and drawers (to be picked up by another student). The making and showing off of the spectacle frames is a very popular activity, and finally grabs his full attention.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Jenny obtained her ESL qualification (a Graduate Diploma in Multicultural Studies) about 10 years ago, and has been teaching ESL for about eight years, most of that time in Catholic and mainstream primary schools before coming to the Language Centre about three years ago.

Anecdotal Language Records

Oral language

Jenny's main method of ongoing assessment appears to be informal anecdotal language records made in the classroom, during teaching.

> *I use anecdotal records mostly - otherwise it's hard to remember ... they're just rough notes probably, and I've started this system so that I can see how often I actually notice the child. So I put the date here. Check list with the date and whatever it is: process writing, oral language, reading, handwriting, and I'm keeping those kinds of things in this book at the moment. Probably about once a fortnight ... I'm thinking that ideally you should be able to do more, that should be the base limit, kind of, like it shouldn't be lower than that. Some comment once a fortnight.*

She attempts to be systematic, then, and considers that these records should ideally be made at least once a fortnight, in order to allow both a proper sense of the way each child is developing in language and a means of referring to written comments rather than relying on memory, when a more formal statement has to be made.

Sample 1: Anecdotal Language Record (Oral)

17/10/96; Yasmin

Oral - Yasmin felt confident to put her hand up and answer the question, 'Can you point to the duck?' She did this correctly and then answered the question, 'What colour is the duck?', saying, 'Yellow'.

10/10; Yasmin

Oral - she responded by giving the Turkish word for "egg", etc.

She answers with simple words.

As she comments, the anecdotal record she uses most often, which she refers to as her language record, contains information about development in writing, reading and oral language . Following the lesson described above, Jenny commented that she found her *'intensive record keeping'* time-consuming and that she had insufficient time to observe the students. Nevertheless, Jenny found time to make several diary entries for her students in her anecdotal language record, including the first entry in Sample 1, for Yasmin, a Turkish Prep student, 5 years old.

Later in that day's lesson Yasmin wrote a sentence to accompany the picture she had drawn of her face, with the assistance of Julia, the student teacher. Jenny also made a note on the writing that it was done with this assistance, before collecting the writing to add to the student's file of work. It is clear that Jenny tries to find opportunities to record comments regularly: the previous entry for this student was the week before, as Sample 1 shows. As can be seen, Jenny notes that these records related to oral language.

At this stage this Prep child appeared unable or unwilling to speak in English. Jenny finds it necessary to record this kind of behaviour, in order to know that she is, firstly, producing language, secondly, showing understanding of what is happening in the class, and thirdly, able to communicate about it. For her it provides a useful contrast with what she writes the following week.

Reading

Jenny refers also to her reading record, kept in another part of the same book where she keeps her other anecdotal language records.

Sample 2: Reading Record

Name: Kemal Previous schooling Reading Record

19/11/96 "Measles" - He can read this book quite fluently. He can recognise some individual words, eg 'eat', 'measles', 'that'. (Notes by Jenny)

27/11/96 Excellent reading of "Painting" and "Feet". He understood & read every word. (Notes by Ibrahim)

28/11/96 "Lazy Mary" - He can recognise isolated words, eg 'What's this word?' He answered 'up'. (Notes by Jenny)

Name: Yasmin Prep Reading Record

27/11/96 Not bad - a great attempt but was scared to say in case of being wrong. She knew the words.

'Skills - Reading'

- 1. Traces under words as he/she reads
- 2. Point to the word that says 'feet'
- 3. New words - can child tell you the name of then first two letters then guess the word?
- 4. New word - can the child sound out the letters?
- 5. Can the student retell the story in his or her own words in English or if in L1, can he or she do it in their first language?

In the reading record both the teacher and the aide add comments about one-to-one reading with the students. For example Ibrahim, the aide, comes regularly to read library books with the students and to listen to them reading (using such strategies as helping them to read a story by identifying words from their initial letter), and will then sometimes make a note of the reading behaviours. Jenny checks these by hearing the children read herself (eg, Big Books) periodically, in order to verify the aide's observations. Sample 2 shows extracts from her reading record for Kemal, a 7 year old Turkish student in Grade 2, and Yasmin.

The list of reading skills at the bottom of Sample 2 suggests strategies the teacher or the aide can use to assist in making reading records. This list is attached to the

book in which these records are collected. Jenny comments on these strategies as part of her approach to teaching reading:

> *I guess our reading tends to be, we'll read some Big Books or ask them to point to some words, sometimes we do more formal things like sequence a sentence from a book. There'll be things that are related to these strategies, that they should be achieving because I actually find they can't really read more complex texts, only the very very basic story box books. Especially those simple orange books like 'Yes Ma'am' and even then they'll make mistakes. They really seem to be learning by mime, learning by memory and then you can go back and maybe point out a few words and ask 'what does this begin with?', 'what letter does that begin with?'. It seems you have to go very slowly at this stage.*

She recognises that it is not a fast process, and that pre-literate children need a tremendous amount of preparation before they can read even basic texts.

Writing

Another activity that yields materials for the anecdotal language records is process writing. Jenny comments that this is a regular activity, although some of the students are not yet at the stage of writing:

> *I'm doing process writing, on Tuesday mornings and usually Friday after lunch so I'm doing two sessions. At the moment I have to structure it a fair bit because I've got a lot of new ones who just go to the table and draw.*

The writing is based on the current topic. Her approach is to introduce the topic, for example shopping, perhaps by reading a Big Book with the whole class. Then she will move to a discussion of personal experiences, perhaps by introducing a picture of a child shopping with its mother, and talking about the children going shopping themselves. After that she will present a skeleton sentence (*'I go shopping with ...'*), which the children are encouraged to copy and complete. Jenny comments that she is likely to find in this sort of activity that the Prep students just write single letters, while other children at different stages will write words or complete sentences. She also makes anecdotal notes for writing in the same language record as that used for oral language.

Sample 3 shows an extract from the records Jenny made for Leila, an 8 year old Ethiopian student whose first language is Oromo. This record includes background information obtained from an interview that Sue (see the previous case) conducted with the family. Leila was born in a refugee camp, where she lived for about four years. She then lived in a small town for a few years, before traumatic circumstances led her to join her father in Australia; it is suggested that these circumstances may contribute to behavioural difficulties she initially exhibits. This extract shows how the anecdotal language record may contain various kinds of observations relevant to learning and language development. The first entry was made very soon after her arrival at the Language Centre.

Sample 3: Anecdotal Language Record (Leila)

Leila — Language Records

29/8/96 Lang - oral - Leila responded appropriately "I like" or "I liked very very much" the different cereals.

29/8/96 Her manner is still very aggressive.

29/8/96 She copies the words and pictures from the white board but she doesn't know what they say or how to read them in English.

2/9/96 She can write her own first name on her work.

3/9/96 Process Writ. She drew some beautiful pictures and copied lots of sentences from the white board which she can't read yet.

18/9/96 - Picture about the Fairy Park. Her picture is very colourful. Teacher: "Who is this?" She can't say the English words. She looks at what other chn. do and she tries to do another picture similar to this one.

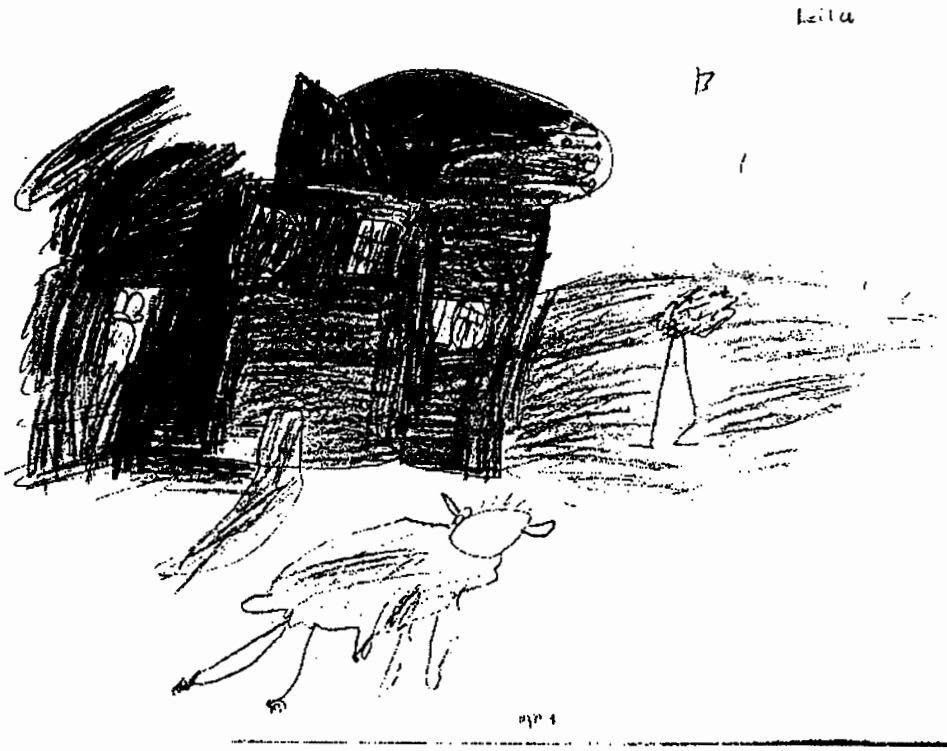
10/10/96. She is singing the ABC. She is using phrases for her responses.
She is being very affectionate, cuddling the teacher, Carol.

12/11/96. The farm. She can say some of the farm animals. She made a beautiful book - excellent colouring. (tidy/colourful). "I saw ____"

14/11. Talking about her picture of the farm animal. "This is the farmer. He has 1 leg." Teacher: "No, how many legs?" Leila: "hands", "2 feet."
She is tending to use phrases.
Very confident girl.

When students draw pictures, which is a common activity associated with writing, then Jenny will make some record on the picture of what they have done: this might be a description of the picture produced by the student, transcribed by the teacher, or it might include a comment on the content, with some sort of assessment (for example, of any writing the student might have produced to accompany the picture). These records will be collected in a portfolio of writing-related materials for each student. The following pages, taken from students' portfolios, show examples of pictures drawn by students, and the kind of comments Jenny will add to them. Leila produced Sample 4 after the language had been modelled in a Big Book, containing the sentences, *'I am at the farm. I like the sheep. I feed the sheep.'*, together with a series of pictures. Jenny can refer to the writing Leila produced later in the year, but she had to record here that Leila dictated the sentences (apart from the first, copied words) to the teacher, as an indication that she was not yet at the stage of writing independently.

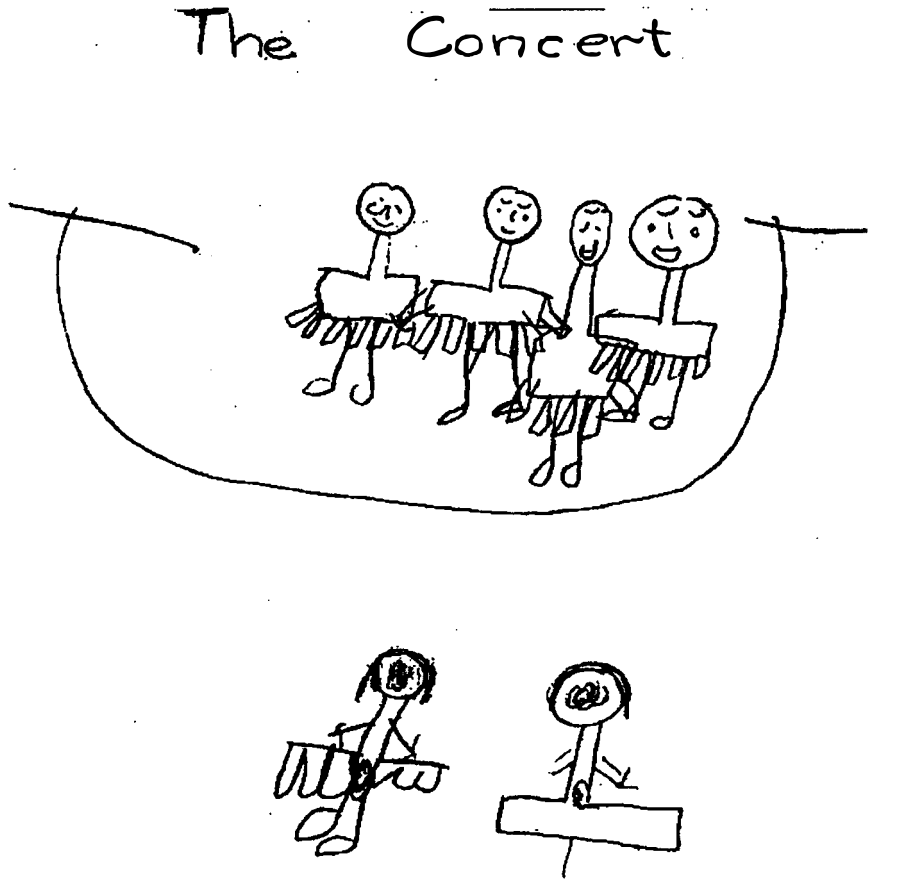
Sample 4: Drawing by Leila



I am on the farm. I am touching the horse. The house has three windows and one door. There are two trees. The roof is red. The sheep says 'baa baa.'

Leila dictated these sentences to the teacher

Sample 5: The Concert - Kemal



Sample 5 was produced on the day following the school concert at the end of the year, by Kemal. All the students in the Language Centre had collaborated in putting on a performance of the Beatles song, 'Octopus's Garden', with costumes and other props. They had spent much time in practising it, and it represented a high point in the term for all the students. The classroom rang with refrains from it for some period before and after the concert. Kemal describes his role in the

performance in the picture and accompanying writing, using a modelled beginning and dictated words following it, as Jenny notes in the sample.

Informal Observation

Jenny contributes to her overall picture of how her students are progressing simply by informally observing how they participate in lessons, without making a written record. The following description is typical of the kind of activity she might use. Jenny displays a picture of a body on the easel, and sticks flash cards on it to label its parts: shoulder, chest, hand, neck, head, arm, leg, stomach, foot. She then lays flash cards with pictures of the same body parts face down on the floor. The children then get the opportunity to practise reading the words for the body parts on the easel, thereby demonstrating their ability to recognise these words in spoken and written form.

Jenny asks: *'Kemal, get me the word for 'foot', and bring it to me.'* He does. *'Leila, get me the word for 'leg', and bring it to me.'* She does. And so it continues around the class. Harun taps his arm when asked to find the word, demonstrating that he understands the spoken word, but cannot read it.

Jenny then introduces a game, 'Pairs - the same or different?'. The children have to pick up the flashcards from the floor, two at a time, try to read the words, and say whether the words are the same or different. If they pick up two words the same they have another turn. It emerges that some children can recognise if the two words they pick up are the same or different. Kemal can read several of the words: 'foot', 'hand', 'head', 'leg', 'arm', 'chest'; but not 'stomach' or 'shoulder'. Yasmin can't read any of the words. Latifa can read 'stomach', 'head', 'leg'.

Jenny comments, *'I often make like mental notes.'* These mental notes appear to be made on the basis of lessons such as that just described, and stored away for instant retrieval. She is always ready to contribute comments about various kids, giving summaries of their overall impression of the child's development, particularly, perhaps, behavioural aspects. In discussion she makes the following general observation about Harun, who still does not use English, but who nevertheless has started to show some signs of progress towards participating in the everyday life of the classroom:

> *He's improving with his language and confidence - he speaks some Somali words now, softly. He's starting to concentrate. He likes to be on his own. He seems quite happy, beginning to understand what school is about. He needs affection.*

She has these comments to make about another Prep child, Yousef, who is 5 years old, and who is starting to use English:

> *He speaks lots of Somali, plus the occasional English word or phrase, such as 'here', 'come and look, here'. He's counting up to 5.*

This last comment followed a lesson where Jenny observed him counting the candles on the cake they baked that day, when she asked him 'how many candles?' It is clear that Jenny considers use of the first language a significant indicator of readiness to learn English.

Checklists

As well as informal observation and making anecdotal records, Jenny does sometimes use checklists for individual assessment activities, as Sample 6 shows. She used this checklist at the end of a unit she had taught on personal information, which is a standard part of the curriculum for all Language Centre students. The assessments and comments she made for five of the students are recorded here: Abdulaziz (10 years old, from Ethiopia), Leila (8 years old, from

Ethiopia), Sahra (6 years old, from Somalia), Kemal (7 years old, from Turkey) and Harun (6 years old, from Somalia).

Sample 6: Assessment Sheet for Unit on Personal Information

code: ☐ = beginning

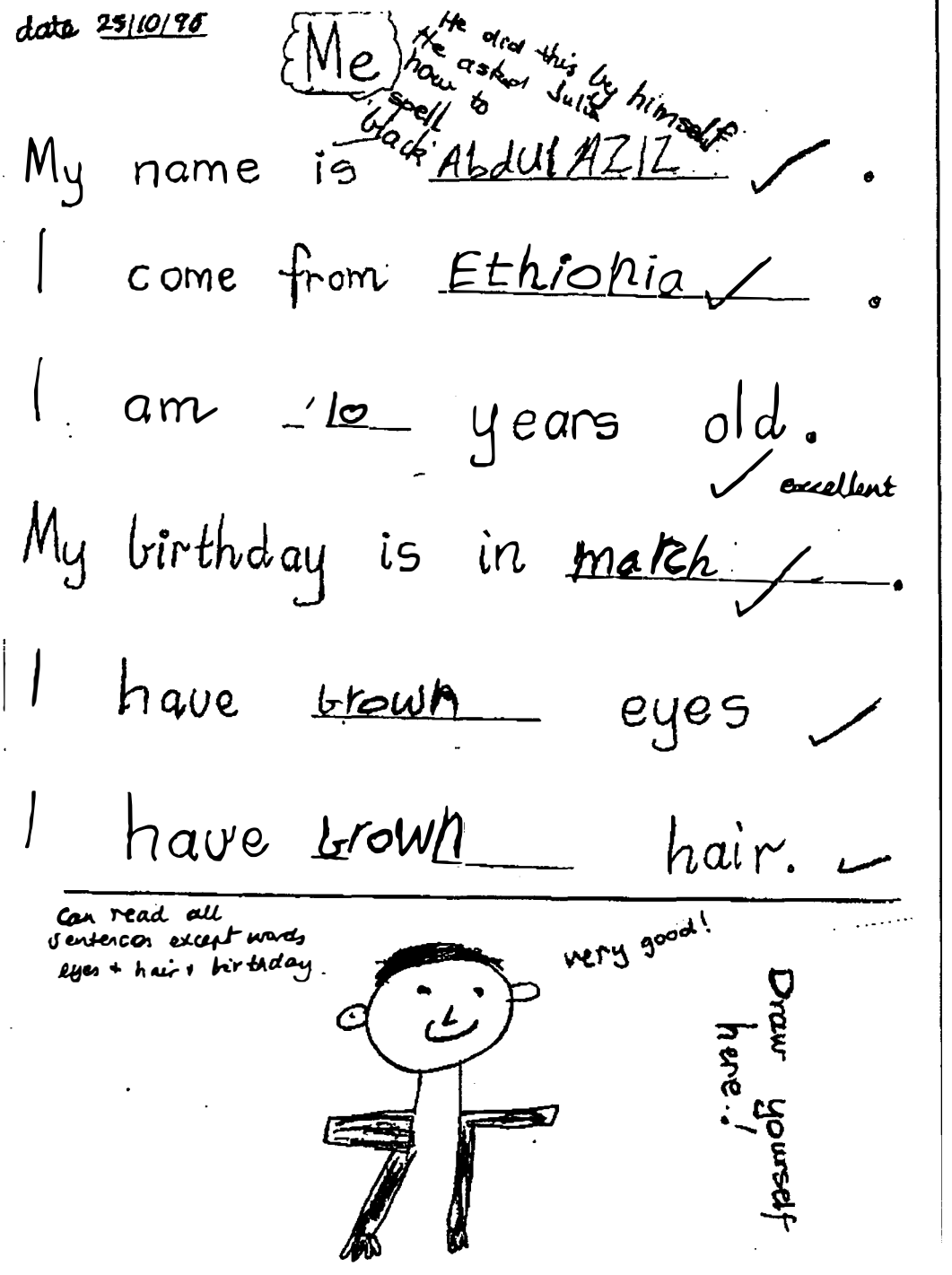
Organisational focus: Me

Objectives: students will be able to:	Abdulaziz	Leila	Sahra	Kemal	Harun
1. Learn the names of the students and teachers and use these in class	☐	✔	✔ could use names more often	☐ could use names more often	☐ needs to use more
2. Recognise their own names in a list of names, and the names of other students	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔ recognises own locker
3. Become familiar with school routines and rules, eg. put up your hand, line up,	☐	☐	☐	☐	some basic understanding
4. Answer personal information questions in single words or phrases	✔	✔	✔	✔	single words sometimes; very soft voice
5. Answer personal information questions in sentences	×	×	×	×	×
	Note: It's more natural to give a single word answer				
6. Complete sentences regarding personal information	✔	x needs the teacher to point to the words before she can complete the sentence	x needs the teacher to read the sentence and then she can complete it	✔ teacher points to the words	×

Sample 7 is the worksheet that one of these students, Abdulaziz, completed as part of this unit. It is clear that he was able to meet objective no. 6 in the checklist, 'Complete sentences regarding personal information'. He has been in the class for three terms now, and is the only student in the class able to do this. Jenny makes hurried records on worksheets to indicate the level of independence with which the students can work. On this day Julia, a student teacher, was present, and Jenny took care to consult with her to establish what level of help Abdulaziz had received. This is an indication of the way she feels she must be

quite clear about what the students can achieve on their own, and what kind of assistance they might require in reading or writing English.

Sample 7: Work sheet for Unit on Personal Information (Abdulaziz)



Record keeping

Selected parts of the anecdotal records made during classroom activities are transferred to a more formal Assessment Record, which is Jenny's main form for recording assessment information which may be used in reporting. The terminology for these various assessment and recording formats can be confusing, because of the constant use of the same words (assessment, anecdotal, record, form). I will therefore use the term Assessment Record to refer to the forms taken

from either the ESL Essentials ('A Stages - Literacy and Beginner - Assessment Form'), intended for use with Junior Primary students, or from the Victorian ESL Course Advice ('Anecdotal Record Form - Stages B1 [Beginner] and BL [Preliterate]'), designed for use with Middle and Upper Primary students. Both forms are organised according to the same principles, as developed in the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines and used in the ESL Framework of Stages, and much of the wording in both is identical.

Jenny comments that when completing the Assessment Record, she starts with the anecdotal language records she has made in her note books during and after lessons. She consults the anecdotal language record at the beginning and end of each term, to help her track students' behaviours. These language records all find their way into the Assessment Record form, although some of the biographical details (like family background and personal experiences) will be left out.

> *so that (anecdotal) record is what I'm basing the Assessment Record on. So, first I look at the anecdotal record. In a way it's a little bit like transferring the information in it to the Assessment Record. It's just that in this format (the Assessment Record) it's slightly more easy to read.*

For example, an informal classroom Anecdotal Reading Record was made for the student Kemal:

> *3/12/96 "The Red Rose" - He could point to the word 'rose' when requested to by the teacher.* (Notes by Jenny).

This entry was transferred to the formal Assessment Record Form (see Sample 8) for this student, in the section on learning-how-to-learn goals (under the entry for 4/12/96). It appears to relate to these questions in that form:

- *'How well does the student communicate and use English when asking and responding to questions';*
- *'Is the student developing: confidence when reading and writing in English;*
- *an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and between sounds and letters in English?'.*

Sample 8: Assessment Record for Kemal

Anecdotal record form—Stages B1 (Beginner) and BL (Preliterate)

Name: Kemal **First Language:** Turkish
Age: 8 **Date of arrival:** Aug '96 2 years of schooling in Turkey

	Date: 30/11/96	Date:
Communication goals **Interpersonal goals** **1. Establishing and maintaining relationships throughout the exchange of personal information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings and experiences and discuss topics of interest.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • interacting in classroom with adults and other students, in play or social situations • exchanging information about self, family and friends, interests, feelings and possessions • exchanging information about past events or personal experiences • expressing and understanding simple opinions and points of view? **2. Interacting socially with others: solving problems, making decisions and arrangements.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • making choices, arrangements and decisions • expressing wants and needs, obtaining goods and services • inviting others and accepting, apologising and responding • participating in games and working with others?		
Informational goals **3 Obtain spoken or written information, and use it.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • following simple written and spoken instructions • obtaining information from general classroom talk and discussion, simple announcements and short presentations • obtaining information from simple advertisements, signs, tables, etc., or from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, maps etc. • obtaining information from reading or listening to a short informational text etc? **4 Giving information in spoken or written form.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • giving simple spoken information and discussing topics of interest • recording information as a sign, label etc • recording information as a graph, table, map, plan etc., or filling in a simple form • recording simple observations and information or writing a simple account of an experience • writing short simple procedural/descriptive texts and completing simple worksheets? ✓ **12/11/96**	12/11/96 He completed a book about the animals he saw at the farm and he read the sentences fluently. He recognises most of the animals	
Aesthetic goals **5 Responding personally to a creative stimulus, e.g. a story, play, film, song, poem, picture, art work.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • listening to/reading or viewing a simple story, poem, song, a simple play etc., and giving a response • expressing simple views about a creative stimulus? **17/10/96** **6 Involvement in creative personal expression.** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • writing or talking simply about imagined experiences • participating in songs, plays, rhymes etc. • improvising orally or in the written form on stories, songs etc. ✓ **3/12/96** • writing or performing for others • using and experimenting with different writing and art materials, and talking and writing about making, drawing, creating things?	17/10/96 He did a beautiful painting of his face using 6 colours. When the teacher pointed and asked what are these? he replied 'eyes'	3/12/96 In library lesson he drew some beach things e.g. water. He could identify objects. He wrote the title. He didn't label but the teacher did.

Learning-how-to-learn goals **1 Is the student beginning to take responsibility for own learning?** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • managing the working environment • working in groups/cooperating with others • locating and recording information, checking and revising own work? **2 Is the student developing communication strategies in order to sustain communication in English?** *How well does the student communicate and use English when:* • interpreting and using gestures, facial expressions, and other paralinguistic devices • predicting meaning from context • asking and responding to questions • asking for repetition/further explanation? **3 Is the student developing early literacy skills in English?** *Is the student developing:* • confidence when reading and writing in English • an awareness of the importance of reading and writing • an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and the written word and between letters and sounds in English? **23/10/96**	23/10/96 Kenal can write a sentence pattern e.g. I made a cat car dog star He wrote all the sentences without being shown the patterns in writing. He has a good understanding of this sentence structure	04/12/96 Reading He read 'The Red Rose' fluently and he could point to the word rose when requested to.

Jenny also uses all the samples of work she collects during the year to contribute to the completion of this Assessment Record. For example, all the kinds of information in Samples 4 and 5 above (the pictures, the associated writing, and the assessment comments) are collated in a portfolio of work for each student, and contributes to what she writes in the Assessment Record.

Behaviour is obviously a crucial part of communication, and it suggests that communication is what she is assessing, rather than specifically English. This is shown in an extract from her Assessment Record for Leila:

Date: 9/9/96
Interpersonal Goals
Her manner is still quite aggressive but improving.
When upset and at other times Leila talks fluently to the teacher in her own language

At the end of our discussion that day, Jenny commented on changes in her teaching and assessment that she was aware of as a result of being involved in this research project. She felt she was thinking about assessment more, she was enjoying thinking about it, and that she felt she was focusing more on language development than behaviour modification. She added that she found the language development more interesting, even though behaviour modification formed a major part of her work with the students.

Using the Assessment Frameworks

The principal assessment framework that Jenny was using during the time I spent in the school was the ESL Scales, although she had had some professional development with the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework, and expected to use it more as the year wore on.

Jenny gives an example of how she places students on the ESL Scales. She considers a text from her collected samples, written by Wahid, a 6 year old Prep student from Ethiopia who is in his third term at the Language Centre: *'I like the horse because it can ran fast'*. She explains the background to this piece of writing, which came out of a discussion of farm animals and the animals the children liked, and comments on the accuracy and meaning of the sentence:

> *And it's very badly written but I had given them that sentence 'I like the ... because' and then they had to choose the animal they*

> *liked. We had a big discussion about all the animals on the farm and Wahid wrote a sentence which is quite good for prep: 'I like the horse because', and then he gave an explanation 'it can run fast', after 'because'. He copied the word 'because' correctly but the next bit 'it can run fast' was written as 'ran fast'. The tenses, the grammar was a little bit incorrect but the meaning was very clear, and he's only Prep so I thought that was quite a good thing.*

Jenny then talks about her goal for the students:

> *I'm trying to expand their sentences so that they can get to the stage in the (ESL) Scales which says, Level 3, 'joining sentences'.*

She has developed this aim on the basis of her judgement of what they are now capable of:

> *And a lot of them can actually almost now make a simple sentence, like, 'I like the horse', 'I like horse', 'I like ....', whatever and then a lot of those kind of sentences.*

This kind of sentence is given as an example of performance for (main strand) level 3.11: 'Use simple phrases to express personal opinion ('I like ... because ... and ...'). Asked how she would relate sentences like the one above ('I like the horse because it can ran fast') to the ESL Scales, Jenny considers the sentence again, and talks about the student's family background:

> *Well, on the writing, that's pre-lit and he's a Prep but he seems to have come from a family where perhaps they had a bit of schooling so I could look there in the Level 3 of the pre-lit (beginning strand) or I could look over here at Level 3 (main strand). I suppose, they haven't actually done things at that level.*

After considering and rejecting the descriptions at level 3 (main strand) of the ESL Scales, she looks at level 2:

> *Now that says 'basic sentence structures and incorporates pictures of learned oral and written language'* (ESL Scales 2.11: 'Writes simple coherent texts using basic sentence structures that incorporate features of learned oral and written English'*), right, but the next one up goes, 'cohesive text and simple language'* (ESL Scales 3.11).

Jenny gives an idea of how she interprets the term 'cohesive text':

> *Now, cohesive text is more like three or four sentences on the one topic, not like 'I like apples, I like bananas, I like' that's more formulaic,*

She goes on to talk about her own students and the need to challenge them:

> *None of mine are at Level 3 but I was thinking to push them ahead because I think they're a bit bored, some of them, and they need to be pushed.*

She realises that she is looking at the main strand descriptions (for students with a literacy background), and skims through the book again to find the (B) levels for pre-literate students.

> *'They write several coherently linked sentences'* (ESL Scales B3.7), *so that means they're using words like 'and' and 'because', and that kind of thing. Okay they're not doing that (yet), except that that's what we did today, so maybe that's one example of it. It's showing signs of it because we've actually introduced it and he's showing signs of it so if I had say three or four anecdotal records of this I'd be able to say 'yes Wahid's doing something like that'. But the other thing there, though, it's saying that the sentences are coherently*

> *linked so that they're actually joining the sentences somehow, and they're not quite doing that.*

She concludes this discussion with a suggestion that Wahid is perhaps showing some sign of performance at this level (B3), although she would need consistent evidence before she could confidently place him at that level.

Jenny makes this comment about the value of the ESL scales in the way they describe ESL learners.

> *What they do really well is they talk about the type of students you'll get in this level and what you can expect from them and so I guess it makes you realise that if they're not paying attention and not focused that's okay cos that's what children at this stage do. Okay, it'll give you the characteristics of the learner. And then it has lots of ideas and strategies to incorporate.*

Jenny added that the use of a mainstream English Curriculum and Standards Framework only would be completely inappropriate with her students, since they failed to allow teachers to record the crucial signs of progress when learners are beginning to use English.

Reporting

The Language Centre's Assessment Policy is described in detail in the previous case study, Sue at Hillsdale Language Centre. Essentially, the teachers are required to produce reports of two kinds: Exit Reports for students who are moving to mainstream schools, and Progress Reports for those who are staying at the Language Centre. The Assessment Policy stipulates that before students leave the Language Centre, they should have mastered at least 75% of the outcomes for the level in the ESL Scales deemed appropriate for their age Grade, as shown in this extract from the Exit Report form:

Guidelines for Decisions

Students should be able to master 75%+ outcomes for each level to be deemed ready to exit. Recommendations should be forwarded to Leadership team for discussion.

Pre literate Prep 1-2
Oral - Level 2 Writing - Level B2 Reading - Level B2

Literate 1/2
Oral - Level 2 Writing - Level 2 Reading - Level 2

The Progress Reports produced for students who are not leaving the Language Centre are consulted by the teacher of the student in the following term. Sample 9 shows the progress report Jenny wrote for Harun at the end of the year. By now, he seems to be considered a Grade 1 student. We can see that in the months that have passed since his arrival in the Language Centre, he has started to speak and write English.

Sample 9: Progress Report: Harun

Harun: 6 years old, Grade 1 7/12/96

General
Harun is making steady progress in his English language development. He enjoys learning the routines and procedures related to school. He always returns library books and excursion notes, etc.

Spoken language
Harun went through a long silent period when he arrived at the Language Centre. However, he is now responding with single words when asked a question.
Listening

Harun can follow simple instructions and can deliver a simple note or message. He now shows some appropriate listening behaviour such as concentrating and looking at the speaker but he still has periods when he can't concentrate.

Writing
He can copy his own name but he can only write 2 to 3 letters of his name. In story writing he can identify people, actions and objects when asked by the teacher.

Reading

He can recognise his own name when written. He 'reads' simple stories after the teacher. He shows interest in looking at books in his own time.

Handwriting

He can trace over dotted sentences and letters. He is experimenting with writing letters and numbers.

Jenny has also recently started to use the form Sue developed (see the previous case study) to track students' progress according to the ESL Scales from term to term, as we see in Sample 10.

Sample 10: Tracking students on ESL Scales, Terms 1 - 4 (extract)

	Reading				Writing				Oral					
Name	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	Comment	Y
Term 3														
Ali M		B2	B3				B2				L2		exit Term 3,	G 1
Wahid		B2	B2			B2	B2			1	2		term 4,	P
Term 4														
Harun				B1 end				B1				L1	staying	
Leila				B2 middle				B1 end				L1 near end	staying	

While I was at the Language Centre I observed one clear indication of the way in which Exit Reports are used, when I listened to an exit interview between Jenny and Olivia, a teacher in Hillsdale Primary School. Olivia is now the class teacher of one of Jenny's ex-students, Abdullah, a Somalian child about to turn 6, who had been in the Language Centre for three terms before going into the Prep Grade in the mainstream school. He left the Language Centre at the end of Term 3, and the interview took place during the first week of Term 4. Although this kind of interview between the Language Centre teacher and the teacher in the mainstream

school used to be common practice, reduced funds have meant that now it is less common. It was essentially because the Language Centre and the Primary School share the same premises that it is possible for this kind of detailed discussion of the Exit Report to take place. Olivia was given the Exit Report at the beginning of the term, when Abdullah arrived in her class, and she brought the Report with her to the interview, so that they could examine it together.

To indicate some of the descriptors used in the ESL Scales which appear to be salient to her, at the beginning of the discussion the level and the strand from which they come, have been noted, using the following abbreviations:

L1 = Level 1
B2.2 = Level B2 (B Levels are for pre-literate students), Organiser 2 (Language and Cultural Strand)
OI = Oral Interaction
R/R = Reading and responding

The descriptions contain features from different levels. Jenny has reformulated the contents of her anecdotal records to provide descriptions of language behaviour in terms of the ESL Scales. Perhaps more accurately, she has selected from the Scales those descriptors which are consistent with what she has observed while she has been teaching the student. Jenny begins by making reference to when he arrived at the Language Centre, to give a point of comparison with the development Abdullah has shown since then:

> *So when he came in he had no communication directly beyond like gestures* (L1 - OI), *smiling, acknowledging* (L1 - OI).

She moves onto a discussion of his oral language by the time he left the Language Centre, placing him mostly at Level 1, but with some signs of language use at Level 2:

> *He can initiate* (L1 - OI) *but has difficulty staying in conversation. He can comprehend most conversations that we use, say, and I also put a little bit into this level, into level 2, where it says 'Express self in simple terms but with frequent hesitation.' He gets the gist of most conversations. He's sort of, not perhaps as fluent as some other students who exit but he actually knows the language.*

We see, then, that Jenny includes descriptions of language use at more than one level where this seems appropriate.

> *He can follow instructions* (L1.1 - OI), *he can respond appropriately with non verbal language* (L1.4 - OI), *he can comment, smile and greet etc. He can identify single items of information from short spoken text* (L2.1-OI), *for example, you know, how many, what colour, what size. He can give you a single answer. He can give basic personal information on request, like what's your name and where do you come from? He uses simple formulae or short sort of telegraphic utterances* (L2.3-OI) *like 'How are you?' Or maybe if you ask him to retell a story, like an animal story, he might just give you one or two words and you really have to prod him to get more information. When you do he will give you more information, but it's in that short utterances kind of style. And, or in responses, short utterances in response to questions. He sometimes has difficulty naming things for himself, just some expressions.*

The picture we get here again crosses levels 1 and 2 in the ESL Scales, and also contains more contextualised information, with rather different examples, compared to what is included in the ESL Scales. Olivia then asks Jenny about Abdullah's reading. Jenny responds:

> *Okay, he was, he's what we call a pre-lit student. Even though he's a Prep, it means that he didn't have experiences in reading Somali or*

> *in reading or in writing in his own country. And even though he's well adjusted to school, he actually hasn't had those background experiences so his reading and writing are at a very basic level. I guess it's okay because he's a Prep student anyway.*

Jenny feels it necessary to explain here something about the typical background of a pre-literate student, and the implications this has for his literacy development. In fact, Olivia comments that she has found his writing is well advanced, and suggests that this might be partly the result of his having spent so much time with students in years one and two, who would perhaps have practised writing activities more than a class composed solely of Prep students.

> *Olivia* *His writing at the moment is ahead of most of the other kids.That's why I was quite amazed. I though he might have been a Grade 1. Maybe from copying the Grade ones and twos, as you said.*

Jenny agrees: *'Yes I think it's more from that. And also he's well coordinated. Like he's a very big boy but he's extremely well coordinated for his age.'* before moving onto discussing his reading:

> *He's interested in reading. He joins in shared reading activities (B2.2 - R/R). That's just a basic kind of thing. He completes simple activities around the class texts, example, draws the characters from the story (B2.2 - R/R). He shows a personal response, you know, whether he enjoys it or whatever (B2.2 - R/R). And he uses his memory of the text to read (B2.4 - R/R) so he can read a little bit after the teacher (B2.4 - R/R) and he can read some basic texts, more from memory than actually word recognition. He understands what words are and that words make sentences and he can write words. I think he's got recognition in the sense that he can write words, but it's more that when it's reading he, he can tell you some of the words.*

She summarises his stage of development in writing as follows:

> *In writing, he can write some simple text, some copied or formulated language so something 'I like apple, I like banana' seeing that structure or 'I can draw a car.' If he sees someone else doing something else like that he can copy and so generate his own text. He went kind of beyond that copy stage. And some sort of basic writing conventions such as, maybe he's putting capital letters, the words are spaced correctly, maybe full stops and uses some basic strategies to convey information and writing. He uses, he can use words from the environment. So he sees a 'Stop' sign, he'll put that in a story and he sees words around the classroom puts those into a story and he can use those in his writing as well. He can copy phrases or sentences accurately from the board. He can write, he can write a word in say a homemade dictionary. With some help he can write a word in his dictionary, he has some understanding, you know, under the letter C.*

They followed this with a broad-ranging discussion of how Abdullah generally coped well with the demands of the mainstream school. The mainstream teacher was very pleased with the report and delighted to be able to keep the Exit Report, with all its detail. She assured Jenny that she would continue to advise her on Abdullah's progress. She also appeared glad to have the opportunity for this interview, in which the descriptions from the Report were contextualised for her.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

It will have become apparent that teaching and assessment are intimately connected for Jenny. She is constantly assessing her students' progress, making anecdotal notes or simply storing mental images. She was asked whether the various assessment frameworks she used had an overt influence on her teaching. She commented that in some way, they do seem to. Because the teachers use the Assessment Record as their formal document for collecting assessment information, she is influenced by the categories it contains:

> *I noticed that I didn't do much in this area (Aesthetic Communication Goals), because another teacher might do the art or something and then I say to the teacher 'do you think you could put some comments down about how they're responding in that kind of way', because I notice that I rarely have comments in that area.*

She comments also on how she observed that she seemed to record less information about the students' use of oral language, and relates this to other aspects of their behaviour:

> *Also I noticed that I didn't have much in oral language, and I guess it was more my reflections on the students I could write in there because, you know like with Leila I'd noticed that her manner is very aggressive and I might notice at the beginning of next Term that she's not doing any of this behaviour so it's more easy to see.*

Jenny finds that she does not necessarily write comments related to all of the goals listed in the Assessment Record, and the absence of comments can lead her to including activities that she feels might be missing:

> *So in fact I might* **not** *have something in all of these spaces, I might actually only observe something in a few of these, so then I can kind of make a note, "oh I need to you know give them a story" and try and concentrate on finding how they respond in that way. I might sometimes just do it from memory like from having observed them in class, but it's actually probably better to have an actual kind of anecdotal record to go from like that they're smiling.*

She summarises the value of the Assessment Record as follows:

> *(The Assessment Record) is a way of collating observations and it's a way of working out which areas that you're not covering, so that's its only use, really.*

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Jenny feels she should have more records upon which to base her assessments of her students. This feeling conflicts with her awareness of the problem of organising assessment efficiently and using what time she has in the most productive way. It does seem that she feels under some pressure to carry out regular assessment. She feels the need for streamlining evaluation processes, commenting that in a primary school there is no automatic mechanism for assessment such as the regular assignments that are used in secondary school.

Jenny referred to experience with three assessment frameworks for English language and literacy. Firstly, she mentioned the Victorian English Profiles Handbook, or the Victorian Scales, as she referred to it. This does not appear to be used much in the Language Centre, although Jenny did comment that the Bands (levels) in it *'are easy to use, because of the checklists they contain'*. There is more discussion of this publication in the case study Clare and Stephanie at Oxford Street Primary School.

Jenny also talked about using the ESL Scales. She comments that by comparison with the English Profiles Handbook, the ESL Scales are *'more broken up'* and hence complex to use. She looks at the Reading scale for descriptions of pre-literate student behaviour, which she notes were lacking in the English Profiles Handbook. We have seen something of the process Jenny uses in placing her students on these Scales.

Thirdly, Jenny talks about the ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework . She notes that, as a result of encouragement and some in-service training with Carol, the curriculum coordinator and Upper Primary teacher, she is beginning to use this, although her preference is for the ESL Scales at this stage, with which she is still in the process of becoming familiar:

> *I'm starting to look at it (the ESL Companion) a bit. Well, I'm getting familiarity with the (ESL) Scales and I intend using those this year. I'm virtually using that for reporting at the moment. I think I want to use that this term (Term 3) and then perhaps in the last term I'll have a look at the (Curriculum and Standards Framework ESL) Companion and see if I couldn't overlap the two, but at this stage I'm not really au fait and not confident enough judging whether a student is 75% on a (particular) level which is what they're supposed to be and I don't want to start a new system until I feel I can just translate this, 'cos they do come together quite well.*

We see here Jenny's lack of confidence in adopting an assessment framework with which she is not familiar. Her reservation is caused by the criteria the Language Centre uses for making the crucial decision concerning the students' futures, namely, when each will move to a mainstream school. She has spent a fair amount of effort becoming acquainted with the ESL Scales, which she wants to consolidate before using the ESL Companion, although she recognises that the two frameworks have a lot of common ground. She gives an indication that it takes time to develop a sense of the levels that any framework contains, and wishes to use her familiarity with the ESL Scales as a base to which she will relate the levels in the ESL Companion.

THE REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES CASE STUDIES

Sara and Carly at St Bertrams

Barry at Daviston Primary School

Meredith at Daviston Primary School

Deidre at Greenvale Special School

Sara and Carly at St. Bertrams School

Beverly Derewianka

The School Context

St Bertrams is a diocesan primary Catholic school in a regional city in NSW. Just around the corner from Daviston Primary, it shares a similar population, with 20% of the children coming from families of non-English-speaking backgrounds.

In talking with the staff, what strikes you is the systematic and comprehensive approach to meeting the language and literacy needs of the students. This is a whole school commitment with each teacher (as well as parents) playing a defined role. In this case study, we will be looking at two staff members, Sara, the ESL Co-ordinator, and Carly, the ESL General Aide. Because they work as a team, they will not be separated out into individual case studies.

Sara has some 20 years experience as a teacher and has a Masters degree in TESOL. She was previously the school's ESL teacher and is now teaching a Year 2 mainstream class. She is also a facilitator in the ESL Scales professional development program run by the local diocese.

Carly is the ESL General Assistant in the School. She has worked at St Bertrams for 7 years and in that time has attended several professional development courses, including a substantial course in ESL methodology.

Whole School Literacy Program

The school's literacy program is co-ordinated by a committee at executive level which includes representatives for ESL, Gifted and Talented, LOTE, Special Education and Reading Difficulties. The funding received from all these Specific Purpose Programs is pooled and utilised in an integrated way to service the school population in an efficient and streamlined manner. This committee has developed a number of procedures to ensure that the needs of all the children are identified and addressed. ESL, therefore, is seen as one substrand within this overall program.

The school-wide strategies for all pupils include:

- an allocated time for 'Drop Everything and Read'
- a Guided Reading program
- a Literacy Support program (parent tutors)
- a Self Access Centre where the pupils can have access to a variety of reading material in a casual, comfortable environment and receive individualised help
- a Readers' Club, where weak readers are paired with stronger readers to read aloud to each other

In addition, a variety of screening and support measures have been implemented which identify those learners who might be 'at risk'. In Kindergarten, each child is given an ***Early Literacy Assessment***. Their progress in later years is then tracked through the use of a ***Pupil Learning Portfolio***, documenting their achievements over time in reading and writing.

This portfolio will contain such data as:

- samples of work
- checklists
- miscue analysis/running records
- reflective journals
- reading and writing logs
- student Reading/Writing Interview
- teacher's anecdotal comments
- interviews with child
- record of student strengths
- other teacher assessment
- parent comments

The classroom teacher draws on the information in the Pupil Learning Portfolio to detect children who need specific help. These children are then referred to the school's ***Student Review Committee***. As an initial step, the Committee, headed by the Assistant Principal and including the ESL Co-ordinator, discuss with the teacher possible ways in which the classroom program might be modified to address the child's observed needs.

Following further monitoring, the Committee might arrange for diagnostic assessment of the child and then, if warranted, design a particular intervention program. This might include counselling, parental involvement, Reading Recovery, ESL input, or even outside assistance from Consultants from the local Catholic Education Office.

There is a file on each child in the program outlining the reason for referral, the action plan, progress through the program and follow-up (including evaluation of the success of the intervention).

The ESL Program

The ESL Program is organised by the ***ESL Committee***, co-ordinated by Sara, a senior member of staff.

For ESL students, it is assumed that every teacher will take responsibility for their progress by designing the class program to operate at different levels of need. This assumption is backed up by the provision by the Diocese of a substantial professional development program for generalist teachers in the basics of ESL methodology. The course involves attendance at some twenty 3-hour sessions throughout the year.

There is no longer a specialist ESL teacher, but rather an ESL General Assistant (Carly): a teachers' aide who is not a qualified teacher but who is quite experienced in working with children. The role of the ESL General Assistant is to:

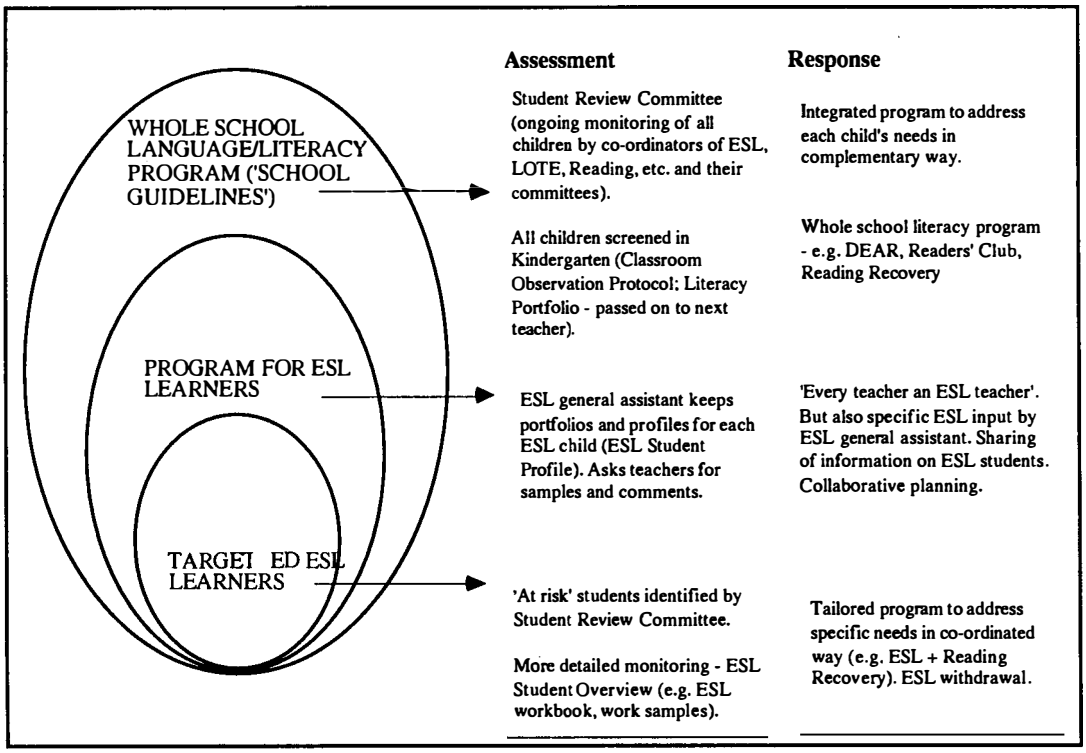
- assist teachers in implementing a collaboratively designed program that targets particular children of ESL background
- maintain the ESL Student Profiles and the ESL Student Overviews (collect data and comments from classroom teachers, collate information, keep the files up-to-date, liaise with teachers regarding ESL students' progress)
- assess targeted children
- locate and/or make resource materials for classroom teachers (eg. taping stories for use at home, collecting appropriate resources from library)
- orientation of new students to school

It is Carly's job to screen all ESL students and to target those who appear to require assistance in a particular area. Carly either focuses on these identified students within the classroom environment or else withdraws these children from

class, either in a group or as individuals, and provides extra input. Carly's ESL program is drawn up during regular collaborative planning sessions with the class teachers.

For each ESL child, Carly maintains an ***ESL Student Profile***, in consultation with the class teacher. For those who have been targeted as being 'at risk', Carly keeps an ***ESL Student Overview*** record, detailing assessment information, action plan and follow-up, as well as maintaining a folder of worksamples, running records, etc.

The overall program can be represented as in the diagram below, which describes the various levels of intervention, the procedures for assessing and monitoring the students, and the types of responses to the students' needs at the different levels.



This whole scheme is underpinned by the English K-6 School Guidelines, a substantial working document which informs all the school's decisions in the area of language and literacy. It has been developed by the staff with Sara's guidance, and is constantly evolving in response to the changing nature of the school, the students and the syllabus. The document is functional, not simply a formality. It provides the basis for the teachers' on-going professional development program in Literacy and ESL.

This document will soon be supplemented by the school's Assessment Policy, outlining a whole-school approach to assessment and evaluation.

The school's language and literacy program receives considerable guidance and support from the local Catholic Education Office, which provides funding for the Collaborative Planning Days (at the beginning of each term), a team of specialist consultants, recommendations on Diocesan-wide initiatives (eg. a Guided Reading Program), sharing of innovations in local schools (eg. the Early Literacy Assessment Program), and so on.

The Classroom Context

Sara has a relatively large class of Year 2 students (approximately 7-8 years old). In the class are eight ESL learners, mostly 2nd and 3rd phase[1], from a range of language backgrounds (Macedonian, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese). Because Sara is with her class for most of the day, she takes most of the responsibility for assessing the language development of the children, including those of ESL background.

In this particular term, Sara was doing a number of activities which allowed her the opportunity to observe the children's language strengths and weaknesses. She would make anecdotal notes, referring to selected pointers from the English K-6 Syllabus:

- Shared Reading
  - participation and contribution to discussion
  - sustained attention
  - ability to recognise different text types

- Independent Reading
  - self-selection of a wide variety of texts
  - sustained period of engagement
  - reading silently
  - sharing enjoyment
  - concepts about print
  - finger pointing

- Modelled/Joint Construction Text
  - participation and contribution to discussion
  - sustained attention
  - knowledge of a variety of text types

- Sharing
  - willingness to discuss & share
  - sense of audience
  - reflection

During a Collaborative Planning Day, Sara and Carly reviewed the progress of those children in Sara's class who had been targeted for extra assistance. With Carly, Sara went through her program for the ensuing term and they selected a variety of activities which they felt would address the specific needs of that group of children. A couple of these are described below to give an idea of activities which are typical of Sara and Carly's program.

The class was doing a unit on Australian poetry and reading a novel, *The Paperbag Princess.* They decided that Carly would initially work with the children in the classroom to get a feel for what they were doing and would then withdraw them as appropriate to give them extra assistance when it came to understanding the cultural aspects of the poems, the sometimes obscure vocabulary, and the 'poetic language'. She would also review the storyline of *The Paperbag Princess* to make sure that they could follow along with the class.

Carly would meet with the children in a demountable building which had been remodelled as the Self Access Centre. They were enthusiastic about their special time with Carly and feel quite at home in the welcoming atmosphere of the Centre.

[1] See the end of Deidre's case study for an explanation of the different phases used in NSW schools.

They started by working on one of the poems, *Mulga Bill's Bicycle.* They began by listening to Carly reading the poem aloud, and then they all joined in reading it together.

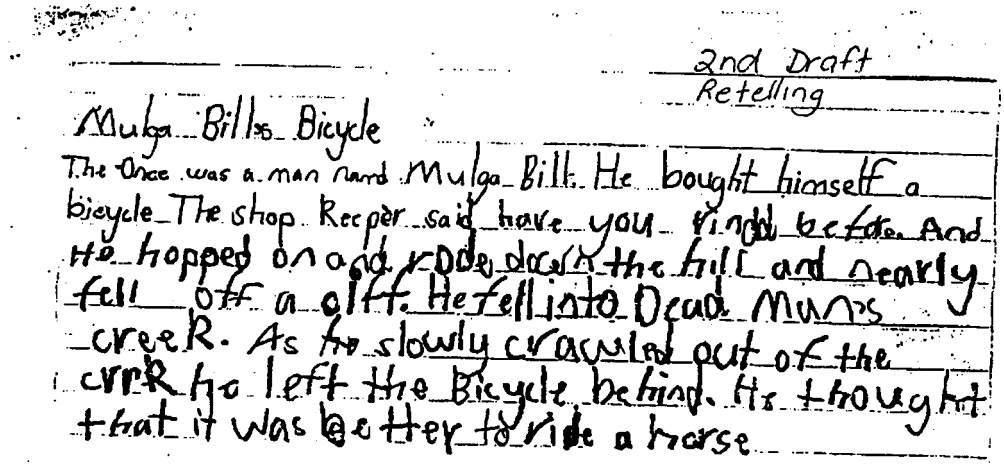
> *'Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that caught the cycling craze;*
> *He turned away the good old horse that served him many days;*
> *He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen;*
> *He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine;*
> *And as he wheeled it through the door, with air of lordly pride,*
> *The grinning shop assistant said, "Excuse me, can you ride?" ....*

Carly then focused on any particularly difficult words – 'Twas, craze, resplendent, lordly pride – and explained them. In order to bring the poem to life and see whether the children had understood the main idea of the poem, she got them to act it out as she read it through again.

Following this, they broke into pairs and each pair had to assemble a line of the first verse from flashcards on which the words were written. Once they had put their sentence together, they then had to choose an appropriate picture to illustrate that sentence. Finally, each pair brought back their assembled sentence and picture and the whole group pieced together the first verse.

To complete the activity, each child wrote a re-telling of the poem:

Sample 1: Mulga Bill's Bicycle Retelling



2nd Draft
Retelling

Mulga Bill's Bicycle

The Once was a man nard Mulga Bill. He bought himself a bicycle The shop Recper said have you rindd before. And He hopped on and rode down the hill and nearly fell off a cliff. He fell into Dead Mans creek. As he slowly crawled out of the cvrk he left the Bicycle behind. He thought that it was better to ride a horse

The following week, they concentrated on *The Paperbag Princess.* Carly read part of the story aloud, reinforcing what they had been doing in class. After discussing what had happened, they did a joint reconstruction of the story. Carly scribed the children's retelling on the board and as she did so, they discussed how they might express their thoughts best in writing.

One of the most difficult tasks was to condense the story. How could they give a summary of what happened without repeating every bit of dialogue and every detail of description? This proved to be an excellent exercise in paraphrasing – trying to capture the main elements and edit out the less relevant aspects.

> *We had a very long version of the first draft and it was very interesting to see the children because we had to think about some of the things we would leave out. So one of them said that we didn't need to keep repeating the fact that they were a Prince and a Princess*

– once that had been said at the beginning we knew who they were and didn't have to repeat it.

We decided to leave only the important bits of dialogue in, 'Magnificent!', 'Do it again!', but otherwise we left most of the speech out. Then it came to the part like when Elizabeth went to see Prince Ronald, and he spends a lot of time describing how awful she looks, And so finally we came up with 'You are dirty, come back when you look like a real princess' and that more or less summed the whole thing up.

So it was really interesting, you could see they were trying to make it a little bit shorter but still keep the meaning.

The retelling provoked a great deal of interesting discussion not only about the story but about how you go about writing stories: the descriptive language, the series of events, the outcome of those events, and so on.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Sara's assessment program

Sara assesses all the children in the class continuously within the context of regular classroom activities. The following diagram represents the way in which Sara relates her choice of teaching activities ('episodes'), to her beliefs about literacy, and to the assessment practices employed:

EPISODES	WHY THESE EPISODES?	ASSESSMENT DATA
TEACHER READING	• Literature needs to be promoted. • Students need immersion in fiction and non-fiction. • Students need demonstrations of how an efficient reader reads. • Students need to ask questions about what they are hearing. • Students need to be alerted to text features. • Reading is an enjoyable and a valued activity.	TEACHER OBSERVATION (eg anecdotal records)
DROP EVERYTHING AND READ	• Students need time, an uninterrupted period to engage with written text in order to make meaning. • Opportunity to be immersed in texts of different forms. • Reading is enjoyable and rewarding. • Teacher models reading by reading. • Students become responsible for their choices.	STUDENT READING LOGS
MODELLING & DEMONSTRATION	• Focus on skills identified by teacher. • Demonstrations should be regular, planned & negotiated. • Provide opportunities for children to ask questions and clarify thoughts. • Assist children to make connections. • Should provide transferable skills and strategies.	OBSERVATION & READING LOGS
WORKSHOP TASKS	• Students need an opportunity to work together in groups so they can learn from each other. • They need to use talk for learning. • They need the opportunity to listen to each others' ideas. • They need to learn to work in a cooperative manner to achieve a goal. • They need to use reading and writing to learn. • They need opportunities to learn the skills of learning and to use language for real purposes and audiences.	CONFERENCES INTERVIEWS SURVEYS

DISCUSSION SHARING	&	• Opportunity to hear what each other thinks. • Ask questions, gain information. • Make connections about reading, writing, talking, listening.	LEARNING JOURNALS

Carly's assessment program

The prime responsibility for assessing ESL students in the classroom rests with the classroom teacher (in this case Sara), who then enlists Carly's assistance in addressing identified needs. In a maths class, for example, Sara noticed that certain students were having problems with the concepts of directionality and 'left' and 'right'. Carly withdrew them for a short period and involved them in an activity where each child in turn was blindfolded and the others had to give directions for the child to reach the end of an obstacle course by giving very precise directions. Then, in pairs, they played a barrier game which required the use of language to indicate position: 'It's on the right hand side in the top corner'.

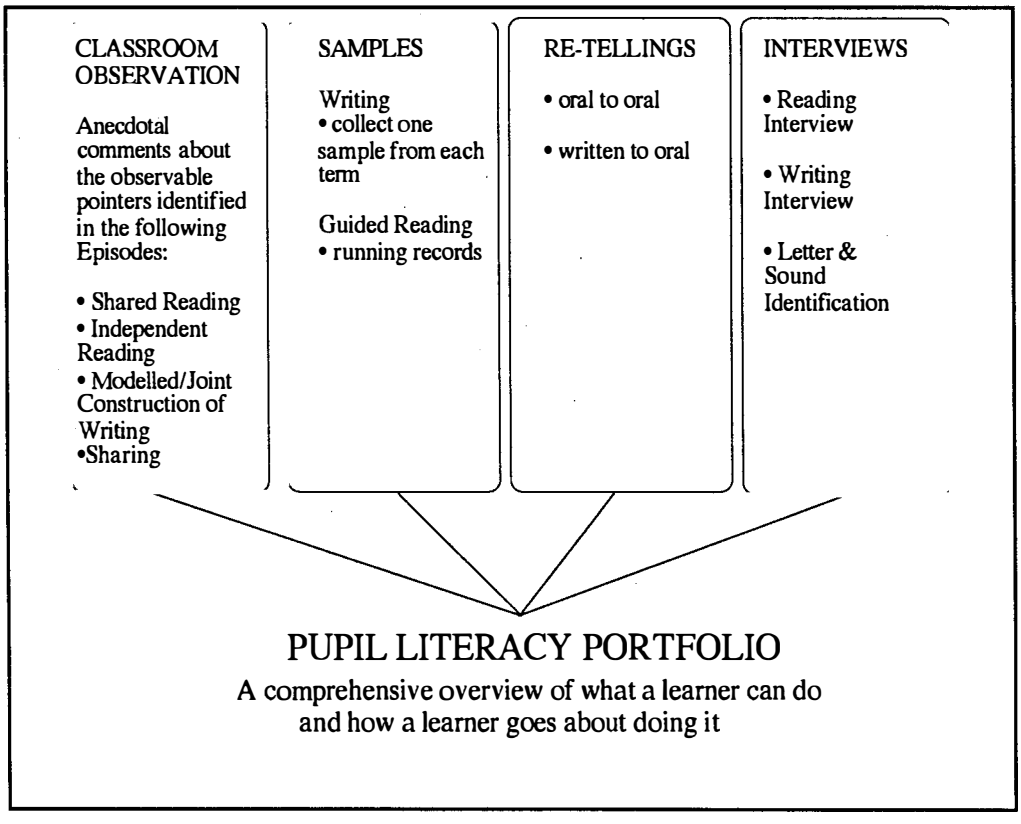
Although Carly does not do the on-going classroom assessment, she does take responsibility for systematically assessing the language of ESL learners in their early years of schooling.

The Early Literacy Assessment Program

This program was developed by the local diocese to provide Year One teachers with accurate, consistent information that highlights a child's literacy experiences. It allows:

- feedback to all stakeholders (child, parents, teachers);
- identification of children for attention by the School Review Committee;
- mapping of all children's experiences and progress;
- the development of skills for teachers to analyse a learner's process and product

The assessment program can be represented as follows:



Towards the end of the Kindergarten year, Carly takes each child individually for a half-hour session where she collects data such as the following:

Reading/Writing Interviews

Carly begins by chatting with the pupil about their attitudes to and understandings about reading and writing. This gives the pupil a chance to reflect on their own feelings about reading and writing and to share their literacy experiences. During this interview, Carly will ask such questions as:

- Do you like reading/writing? Why?
- Tell me someone who is a good reader/writer.
- What makes him/her a good reader/writer?
- Are you a good reader/writer?
- If yes, how do you know?
- If no, what do you need to do to be a good reader/writer?
- What do you do when you come to a word you don't know?
- Tell me about some of the books you have read/some writing you have done.

Running Record

Carly then asks the child to read a text which has been carefully selected to match the child's reading ability. As the child reads, Carly looks for the child's use of various information systems:

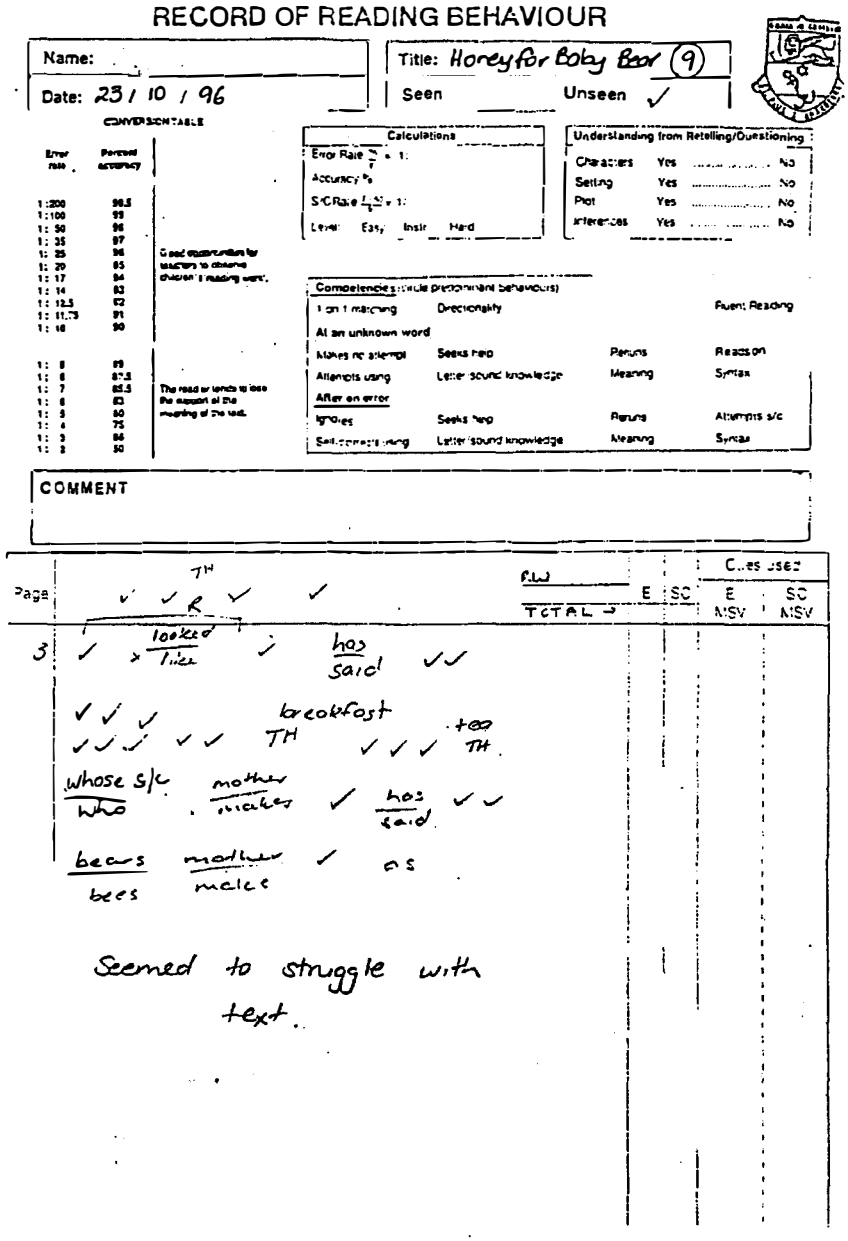
- semantic (does it make sense?)
- grammatical (does is sound right?)
- graphological/phonological (is there a match between letter and sound?)

She also looks for evidence of the child using certain strategies:

- prediction
- substitution
- self-correction
- picture cues
- concepts about print:
  - where to begin?
  - left to right
  - top to bottom
  - spaces, words, letters
  - punctuation

This information is recorded for each child on a Record of Reading Behaviour in Sample 2:

Sample 2: Record of Reading Behaviour



RECORD OF READING BEHAVIOUR

Name:

Title: Honey for Baby Bear (9)

Date: 23 / 10 / 96

Seen

Unseen ✓

CONVERSION TABLE

Error rate	Percent accuracy
1:200	99.5
1:100	99
1: 50	98
1: 33	97
1: 25	96
1: 20	95
1: 17	94
1: 14	93
1: 12.5	92
1: 11.75	91
1: 10	90
1: 9	89
1: 8	87.5
1: 7	85.5
1: 6	83
1: 5	80
1: 4	75
1: 3	66
1: 2	50

Good discrimination for teachers to observe children's reading work.

The read or tends to lose the support of the meaning of the text.

Calculations

Error Rate $\frac{}{}$ = 1:

Accuracy %

S/C Rate $\frac{}{}$ = 1:

Level: Easy Instr Hard

Understanding from Retelling/Questioning

Characters Yes ..... No

Setting Yes ..... No

Plot Yes ..... No

Inferences Yes ..... No

Competencies (circle predominant behaviours)

1 on 1 matching	Directionality		Fluent Reading
At an unknown word			
Makes no attempt	Seeks help	Returns	Reassess
Attempts using	Letter/sound knowledge	Meaning	Syntax
After an error			
Ignores	Seeks help	Returns	Attempts s/c
Self-corrects using	Letter/sound knowledge	Meaning	Syntax

COMMENT

Page

R.W

TOTAL →

E | SC | Cues used: E MSV | SC MSV

3 ✓ looked ✓ has said ✓✓

✓✓✓ breakfast TH ✓✓✓ tea TH

✓✓✓ ✓✓

whose s/c Who . mother makes ✓ has said ✓✓

bears bees mother make ✓ as

Seemed to struggle with text.

Re-telling

When the child has finished reading, Carly asks him or her to retell the story in order to see whether the child has understood the main message. At this point, informal reference is sometimes made to the pointers from the English K-6 Syllabus:

- able to identify the key points in a text eg. plot, main characters, climax
- able to understand the text
- control of the oral form of language

Letter identification sheet

For this procedure, Carly asks the child to respond to a list of letters, first in upper case and then in lower case, giving the alphabetical name for the letter and then the 'sound' of the letter. If they respond appropriately, a tick is given on the Letter Identification Sheet:

Sample 3: Letter Identification Sheet

Letter Identification Sheet

CHILD'S NAME: _____

UPPER CASE	ALPHABET RESPONSE	SOUND RESPONSE	WORD
A			
M			
T			
S			
I			
F			
D			
R			
O			
G			
L			
H			
U			
C			
N			
B			
K			
V			
E			
P			
W			
J			
Y			
X			
Z			
Q			

LOWER CASE	ALPHABET RESPONSE	SOUND RESPONSE	WORD
a			
m			
t			
s			
i			
f			
d			
r			
o			
g			
l			
h			
u			
c			
n			
b			
k			
v			
e			
p			
w			
j			
y			
x			
z			
q			

Comments

_____

_____

_____

Sight words

Carly also sees how many sight words each child is able to identify from the following word list for Kindergarten:

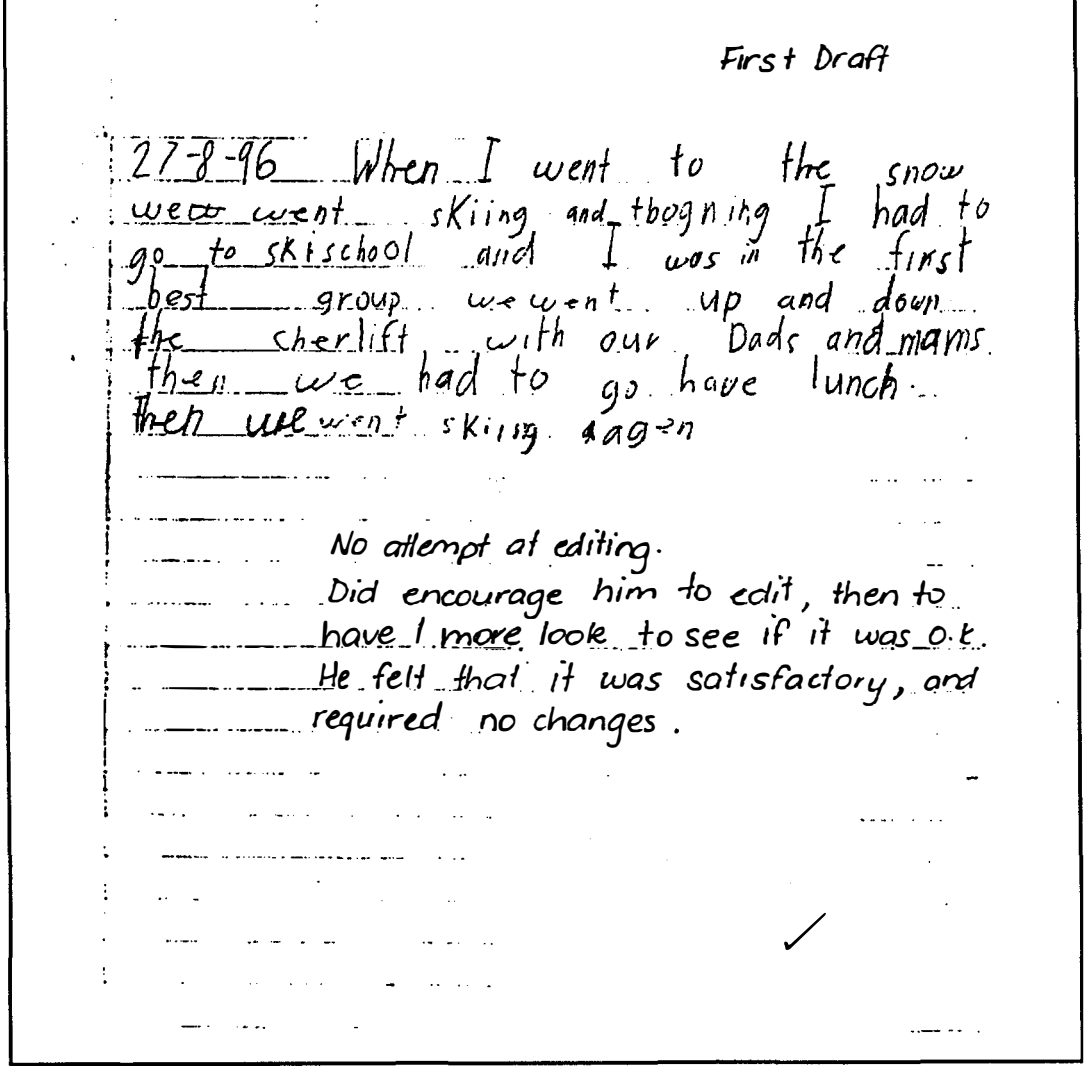
a	and	at	the
me	he	we	be
I	in	is	it
no	not	my	by
of	to	was	you
up	can	on	one
go	went	big	little
has	see	got	look
day	let	yes	good
mum	dad	like	love

Worksamples

Every term, Carly also collects a work sample to include in the Pupil Literacy Portfolio. Each sample is a self-edited first draft. She makes notes about each writing sample drawing on pointers from the English K-6 Syllabus such as:

- Re-reads during writing in order to maintain sense.
- Use of environmental print.
- Understanding of phonemic awareness to decode text.
- Letter formation/handwriting style.
- Editing Practices (does the writing make sense?)
- Proofreading practices (use of grammar, punctuation, spelling strategies)
- Concepts about print.

Sample 4: Annotated Writing Sample



First Draft

27-8-96 When I went to the snow we went skiing and tbogning I had to go to skischool and I was in the first best group we went up and down the cherlift with our Dads and mams then we had to go have lunch then we went skiing agen

No attempt at editing.
Did encourage him to edit, then to have 1 more look to see if it was o.k.
He felt that it was satisfactory, and required no changes.

✓

In addition to annotating the writing sample, Carly summarises the child's achievements by completing a Written Language Assessment Sheet. These proformas, originally developed in South Australia, outline those criteria which are specific to the particular type of text being assessed (in this case, a recount of personal experience).

Sample 5: Assessment Sheet: Recount of Skiing Holiday

WRITTEN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY RECEPTION - YR. 2
Recount

Description of the activity: Students write and self-edit a recount of personal experience e.g. an event or topic.

Name of Student:
Name of School:
Title of recount:
Year level/Class: 2
Teacher:
Date: 27/8

Criteria (Tick appropriate box)	Very Competent	Competent	Limited Competence	Not Yet	Comments
Ability to carry out the task: Did the student • write a recount with minimal teacher support i.e. introduction to/ clarification of the task			✓		verbal support given in preparing recount.
Structure and organisation: Did the student • provide an orientation, establishing *who* was involved, *where* and *when* the events happened e.g. "On Wednesday I played netball"				✓	
• provide a sequence of events in keeping "on topic"			✓		very brief
• provide a re-orientation and/or concluding personal comment (optional) e.g. "We won the game"				✓	
Language Features: Did the student • focus on individual participants eg. our dog, the sh[illegible]sper, Mrs. Brady			✓		dad, mum
• focus on past tense eg. simple past			✓		
• use a range of action verbs e.g. barked, climbed, raced				✓	
• attempt to use pronoun reference e.g. she, this			✓		I, we
• use specific vocabulary appropriate to the information being recounted e.g. "Soccer Carnival"			✓		tobagganing ski school chair lift
Accuracy Did the student attempt to use • grammar and syntax accurately eg. word order, verb endings, pronouns			✓		
• spell common words accurately, using invented spelling for less known words and attempt punctuation e.g. full stops and capital letters.			✓ spelling	✓	• good use of inventive spelling • punctuation • no attempt at punctuation

General Comments:

[illegible] was asked to edit work. [illegible] lacks proof reading skills, which is evident in all 3 work samples - written.

More work necessary in appropriate structure of recount.

Global Rating: (Circle) 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5
Lowest Highest

For the reading samples, she will make notes on how the child makes use of:

- the three information systems (semantic, syntactic, grapho-phonic)
- picture cues
- concepts about print
- substituting but still making sense

- predicting
- using initial letter sound
- self-correcting to ensure text makes sense
- repeating chunks to get the word
- attempting to sound out word

All the above information, as well as the teacher's classroom observations, is summarised in the Developing Writer Checklist and the Developing Reader Checklist (supplied by the local Catholic Education Office) as in Sample 6 and 7:

Sample 6: Developing Writer Checklist

Appendix 4 Developing Writer Checklist

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ YEAR: 19_____

	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
PROOFREADING				
Writes legibly				
Uses correct grammar				
SPELLING				
Able to identify non standard spelling				
"Has a go" with words				
Uses: Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check				
Uses a dictionary				
Uses class word banks				
Uses a thesaurus				
Able to use a variety of spelling strategies				
No over-reliance on one strategy				
Strong word attack skills				
Does not repeatedly make the same errors				
PUNCTUATION				
Writes in complete sentences				
Able to paragraph				
Uses capitals correctly				
Uses full stops				
Uses commas				
Uses question marks				
Uses apostrophes				
Uses exclamation marks				
Uses speech marks				

Sample 7: Developing Reader Checklist

Appendix 5 Developing Reader Checklist

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ YEAR: 19_____

READING ASSESSMENT	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
ATTITUDE				
Enjoys reading				
Borrows freely				
Reads at other times				
Takes initiative when selecting				
Reads silently for sustained period				
Is enthusiastic towards reading				
READING PROCESS				
Reads for meaning				
Able to predict				
Able to self correct				
Uses semantic cues				
Uses syntactic cues				
Uses graphophonic cues				
Reads fluently				
SELECTION SKILLS				
Selects a variety of books independently				
Seeks advice when necessary				
Selects books appropriate to purpose				
Uses library effectively				
Uses reference materials				

In writing up the report cards at the end of the year, the classroom teacher draws on the information in the above checklists, from the Pupil Literacy Portfolio and from the Early Literacy Assessment program.

Using the Assessment Frameworks

Like most other schools in NSW, St Bertrams was affected by the moratorium on implementing the outcomes and profiles in the English K-6 Syllabus and the ESL Scales. At the start of the project they were just on the point of resuming in-servicing in the use of the ESL Scales and trying to incorporate them into the various documents and assessment procedures in place throughout the school.

Sara is one of the local facilitators who will be training others in the ESL Scales, so she is quite familiar with them and can see their potential to contribute to the coherence of the ESL assessment program:

> *We're at that stage now when we really should be considering them and Carly should be looking at it and working with one or two teachers and then sharing it, taking it back and sharing it. What we're asking all schools to do is for the ESL person to work with one or two teachers, not go in feet first and say 'Here it is', because then it's like the English document, they were just scared off by it. The ESL Scales is a fine document in a lot of ways but it needs to be tried because we need to be able to say 'Look, this works for us and this doesn't'. So we're right at the beginning.*

Carly was new to the ESL Scales, but was keen to come to grips with them during the course of the project. She decided to familiarise herself with them by undertaking a case study of one particular child. She chose Nick, a 7 year old boy in Sara's class who was born in Australia of Macedonian parents. His ESL Student Profile revealed that the family spoke both Macedonian and English at home, and that Nick can speak and understand Macedonian, though his receptive language is stronger than his productive. He is unable to read Macedonian, though he does have access to books at home.

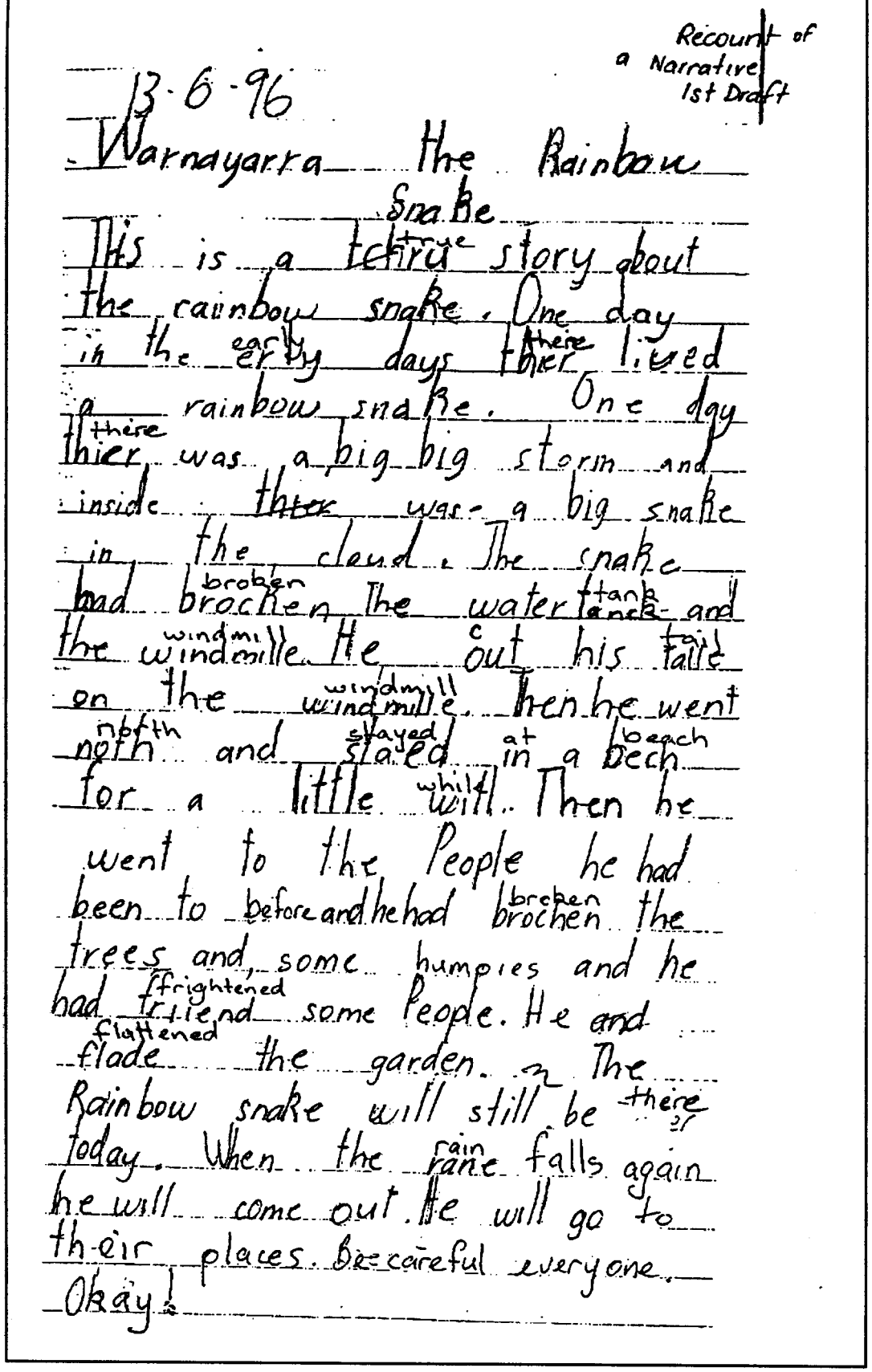
Nick was chosen because Sara had expressed a concern that he was 'currently entrenched in Phase 2 in regard to reading and writing'.

Over a period of a few weeks, Carly involved Nick in writing, reading and oral activities and used these as the basis of her assessment. Below, as an example, is her assessment of Nick's writing proficiency:

Nick's writing

Nick wrote three texts, each of a different type (Narrative, Information Report, and Recount). One of the texts which Nick wrote was a retelling of an Aboriginal story, *Warnayarra the Rainbow Snake*:

Sample 8: Warnayarra the Rainbow Snake



13-6-96

Recount of a Narrative 1st Draft

Warnayarra the Rainbow Snake

This is a tetru story about the rainbow snake. One day in the erly days ther lived a rainbow snake. One day ther was a big big storm and inside ther was a big snake in the cloud. The snake had brocken The water tank and the windmille He out his tail on the windmille. Then he went noth and slaed in a bech for a litle whil. Then he went to the People he had been to before and he had brocken the trees and some humpies and he had frend some People. He and flade the garden. The Rainbow snake will still be there today. When the rane falls again he will come out. He will go to th-eir places. Be careful everyone. Okay!

From Carly's analysis of this work sample (and the other two mentioned), she estimated that Nick was working at Level 2 on the ESL Scales and was able to make the following judgements in relation to the scales:

	Communication	
	At level 2, a student:	
	Communicates ideas, events & experiences using a limited repertoire of spoken & written English.	
	Evident when students, for example:	
√	• participate in shared writing activities.	*Actively participated on previous occasions.*
√	• initiate own writing for particular purposes.	
√	• create simple fictional or poetic texts modelled on familiar forms and repetitive patterns.	*Refer to Report on 'The Female Butterfly'*
√	• write for a variety of purposes.	
√	• write simple texts such as personal recounts, retellings, descriptions and procedures on a range of familiar topics in different subject areas.	*Refer to 'Warnayarra' and the 'Snow Trip*
	Language & Cultural Understanding	
	At level 2, a student:	
	Demonstrates awareness of particular ways that information is presented in written English.	
	Evident when students, for example:	
√	• identify the nature and purpose of different text formats.	*Observed on numerous occasions.*
√	• fulfil a number of writing purposes using a range of writing media.	*Observed on numerous occasions.*
√	• use a range of formats to record information.	*Observed - does require assistance.*
√	• represent an idea in a sentence.	*Observed - included in work samples*
√	• separate ideas when writing using fullstops.	*Rarely - more work needed when working independently.*
	Language Structures & Features	
	At level 2, a student:	
	Writes simple coherent texts using basic sentence structures that incorporate features of learned oral and written English.	
	Evident when students, for example:	
√	• write texts that show simple structure or progression.	*Observed. Refer to Personal Recount.*
√	• Write texts that show simple and logical sequence of ideas.	*Observed. Refer to retelling of Narrative.*
√	• write texts that show simple cohesion of ideas, joining them with 'and' and 'then'.	*Observed.*
	• write sentences that use subject-verb-object patterns.	
√	• write texts closely related to level of everyday spoken English.	*Observed on numerous occasions. Refer to all 3 work samples.*
√	• use some common irregular past tense verbs.	*Observed on numerous occasions. Refer to both Recounts.*
	• use simple present or present continuous tense for a range of tenses.	
√	• use common adjectives to describe a range of meanings.	*More work needed in this area, however, has been observed on rare occasions.*
	• use some adjectives and adverbs interchangeably.	
	• use specialised vocabulary of personal significance.	
√	• spell accurately some familiar common words learned in the classroom.	*Observed on numerous occasions.*
√	• spell some words on the basis of own pronunciation.	*Observed - refer to 3 work samples.*
√	• use some basic punctuation markers accurately in own writing to indicate sentence units.	*More work needed in this area. Observed on rare occasions when working independently.*

	Strategies	
	At level 2, a student:	
	Uses a variety of basic writing strategies to create a coherent text.	
	Evident when students, for example:	
	• use repeated formulae to generate and structure writing.	
√	• use a preferred recount for writing whole text.	*As opposed to 'brainstorming' before independent writing.*
√	• attempt to provide more detail in writing through illustrations, listing of items.	*Need to work on descriptive words.*
	• use limited language resources to create desired effect such as repetition for emphasis or intensity.	
	• ask for the English word or phrase for something, ask how to spell it in English and use it in their own writing.	
√	• rewrite after correction or conferencing.	*Need to work on enhancing editing skills.*
	• over-generalise spelling patterns.	
	• rely on sound or visual features of words to spell words in English.	
√	• continue writing about the same topic or theme while practising an element of writing.	*Particularly in writing which has not been modelled eg. Personal Recounts. Refer to #3 work sample.*
	• concentrate in writing on one or two elements of a sentence at one time.	
	• translate text literally from first language to English.	
	• use a dictionary to find English equivalents for words from first language.	
	• experiment with some basic punctuation markers.	
	• experiment with less familiar punctuation markers.	

Carly summarised Nick's achievements in writing as follows:

It is evident that Nick:

- is familiar with some structures of text types and text language, however, needs confidence in working more independently;
- can include main elements in the retelling of a narrative and uses some of the literary text language in his writing;
- produces cohesive text by using a range of temporal and additive connectives and pronouns;
- has some knowledge of tense variations and can include relevant and descriptive details in the retelling of a narrative. However, he needs to work on including descriptive details when working independently.
- on most occasions, Nick displays the correct use of grammar and syntax and can accurately spell most common words;
- displays good use of invented spelling and correct use of all tenses in the samples;
- shows good use of facts and factual knowledge when writing a report and stays on topic;
- can summarise details when writing a report.

She also observed that there were certain areas that needed further work, and drew up the following needs analysis:

In order for Nick to develop his English language skills in the area of writing, he needs to:

- be exposed to different techniques and strategies to enhance his writing skills;
- be able to become more independent in the use of editing and proofreading skills;
- be aware of the meaning and use of the conventions of writing, focusing on punctuation;

- be able to incorporate new vocabulary items/skills in his work such as descriptive words.

From her observations and needs analysis, Carly drew up the following plan of action:

To support Nick's continued English language development in the area of writing, I plan to:

- encourage Nick to attempt to provide more detail in writing through illustrations, listing items (2.12);
- encourage the use of editing and proofreading skills by allowing Nick to write after conferencing;
- encourage Nick to concentrate in writing one or two elements of a sentence at one time (punctuation rather than spelling);
- encourage Nick to incorporate new vocabulary items/skills such as descriptive words, by allowing him to continue to practise writing about the same topic or theme, and through ongoing 'brainstorming' activities; exposure to stories which have a high level of descriptive words and discussing the effect of those words in the text; developing a simple sentence into a complex sentence using more interesting words.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching.

From her years of experience as both ESL teacher and mainstream teacher, Sara has a sound understanding of the relationship between her assessment procedures and her classroom program:

> *It's sort of like a teaching/learning/assessment cycle, where we assess and on the basis of that respond with our teaching and record our observations and then evaluate. And then we look at teaching/learning activities which Carly can work on that will help certain children.*

While Sara can see it working in their school context, she does not agree that such a rigorous program would be feasible for all teachers:

> *Maybe as a general mainstream teacher that is not as easy ... it's a bit unrealistic, but I think from the ESL point of view, particularly the first stage and second stage learners it probably would work. And I would think that in a lot of schools, lots that I've visited, that people just would not have seen those connections so clearly and maybe, you know, it's just not always the way that they operate.*
>
> *I think that the ESL Scales are looking at it from that perspective that there is that link [between assessment and teaching] and sometimes there's not. It's idealistic, it really is, from a mainstream teacher's point of view, whereas from the point of view of the ESL teacher, it's more manageable and necessary. I used to be sort of tunnel visioned as the ESL teacher, but now in mainstream teaching, you've got just so much to look at.*
>
> *And it should work, I know that it should work, but when you're thinking of one person with their 32 children, it is not possible. That's what I found. When we have a person like Carly coming in, that makes it easier because you can assess and you can say 'Look, these are the needs', and then you could ask Carly to cater for those needs. But when you've got a big class with no assistance, you think 'this is what this child needs and that child needs', but you have to go with the main group. It certainly works from that ESL perspective. But only, I think, if you have somebody competent like Carly to do it.*

At St Bertrams there is obviously a very close relationship between assessment and teaching, with Carly and the teachers working in a close complementary partnership, the teachers taking responsibility for the on-going observation and monitoring of the students in the classroom and the identification of children with specific needs, while Carly designed activities to address those identified needs and undertook the more detailed diagnostic assessment of the kindergarten students.

Views on Assessment Frameworks

Having begun to work somewhat tentatively with both the ESL Scales and the English K-6 Syllabus, Carly felt that the Scales could be used as a checklist, but that English K-6 provided a much fuller and more accessible description. She stressed, however, that she had only just begun to experiment with the documents, and that she would like to continue familiarising herself with them.

Sara, as facilitator for the diocesan ESL Scales inservice program, had somewhat firmer opinions. She felt that the more she worked with the ESL Scales, the more she came to appreciate them.

> *It appears to be a really good document, but it takes time. That was the trouble with English K-6. In the departmental schools, they rushed the inservicing and tried to implement it all at once, whereas the Catholic system took it much more slowly, introducing just certain parts at a time and allowing the teachers to become comfortable with them before moving on to the next.*

Drawing on her discussions with teachers at the inservice sessions, Sara made the following observations:

- Like Carly, many teachers saw the ESL Scales simply as an assessment checklist which bore little relationship to their classroom program. They commented favourably on other documents such as English K-6, Literacy Strategies that Work, and First Steps because they supplied ideas for related activities rather than simply list the outcomes and indicators.

- Many teachers were asking whether they needed the ESL Scales at all. Most agreed that they were useful for new arrivals (ie. the very early levels such as Reading B1-B3), but that once the ESL children were well integrated into the class, then it was just as useful to use the English K-6 indicators. The ESL Scales didn't add anything sufficiently different to make it worth the trouble of using them.

- The Scales could be used in relation to programming when working with new arrivals because at that stage individualised programs were drawn up in response to identified needs. More proficient ESL students, however, were simply part of the mainstream class, and so it was not possible to develop a special program for them based on assessment using the Scales. It was more a matter of fitting in with the classroom teacher's program.

- Some classroom teachers found the ESL Scales threatening and were fearful that their use would mean that ESL students would once again be seen as 'different' rather than as regular class members. And because the ESL Scales were seen more as the domain of the ESL teacher, a divide was being created between mainstream and specialist colleagues.

- Primary teachers tended to react with "Oh no! Not another document!", whereas their secondary colleagues, having only one or two syllabus statements to deal with, welcomed the information contained in the Scales. The primary teachers were already quite used to working with language and

statements to deal with, welcomed the information contained in the Scales. The primary teachers were already quite used to working with language and literacy issues, while secondary teachers, particularly those from disciplines other than English, found the language information quite new and refreshing – "finally, something to hold onto that spells it all out!".

- Some felt that the fact that the ESL Scales included strands within each macroskill which were different from the English K-6 strands and from the Early Learning Profiles strands, made it confusing, while others found that it made it easier to see what was specifically 'ESL' about the indicators. eg.

ESL Scales: Writing

Communication	Language and Cultural Understanding	Language Structures and Features	Strategies

English K-6: Writing

Text and Context	Learning to Write	Grammar

Early Learning Profiles: Writing

Text and Context	Learning to Write/ Spelling	Strategies	Grammar

Sara couldn't see that Scales provided a common language for teachers to describe ESL levels of proficiency. The notions of first, second and third phase were already quite entrenched in NSW schools and teachers would continue to use that terminology rather than Level 3 or Level 5 on the Scales.

Sara concluded by emphasising that the most important factor in the acceptance and implementation of the Scales was a good quality inservice course where all teachers were introduced in gradual stages to the documents and given the chance to start using them with their colleagues in a non-threatening way.

Barry at Daviston Primary School

Beverly Derewianka

The School Context

Daviston Public School is located in a large regional city in New South Wales, in a suburb with a mixture of lower to middle socioeconomic groupings. There are a number of different ethnic groups in the community, including Spanish, Filipino, Arabic, Italian, Greek and Macedonian.

The school has approximately 20% ESL population, predominantly second and third phase students[2]. There is no specific school policy on ESL or any documentation regarding the ESL program. The ESL teacher is a fractional appointment, allocated to the school for two and a half days per week.

The ESL program is not highly structured, with the ESL teacher operating in a very low-key fashion in finding diverse ways to meet the needs of the various ESL students. Her efforts are concentrated mainly in the lower grades.

The school principal has recently applied for a Multicultural Grant to involve parents, teachers and students in producing a newspaper reflecting the activities and composition of the local community. The newspaper would also become available on the internet.

The Classroom Context

On the one hand Barry was chosen because he was atypical – a male teacher in a kindergarten classroom, the only male in the sample. On the other hand, he was chosen because he was quite typical of the large number of mainstream teachers who have a sprinkling of ESL students in their class, most of whom have been born in Australia. Barry is representative of the bulk of generalist teachers who are certainly caring and sensitive to the needs of their ESL students, but who are not trained in ESL methodology and don't regard themselves as in any way 'specialists'.

In a class of some twenty-five children, a handful are identified as being ESL. Barry can talk at length about each child:

> *There's Benny, of Albanian background, who has gone from 'dumb' to 'smart' overnight. The greatest improver in the class. Then there's Nina, the enigma, who hasn't spoken a word in class the whole year – though she is known to speak with her parents and siblings in English and Arabic and manages the occasional interaction with her peers. Her friend Sara is protective of her and lets her copy her work. Sara herself is a bit of a plodder, but 'getting there'. Maria, with a Filipina mother and English father, 'would have to be one of the brighter ones', full of confidence and well on her way to being a writer. Lily, whose parents came from Macedonia, is not far behind, even though 'her imagination needs a kick-start'. Slatko, from Serbia, 'doesn't like writing. He likes doing things. Sit him before a computer and he'll work out how to play the game. You can see his*

[2] For a definition of these terms, please refer to description of phases at the end of the Daviston case study.

> *mind at work. I think he's got quite an intellectual mind, but it's not directed particularly towards language. Writing doesn't turn him on in any way.' And Robbie, of aboriginal background – 'He speaks a bit like an ESL child. Leaves out 'a' and 'the'. But I'm not sure whether he is ESL or not. I mean being Aboriginal might be considered ESL at times.'*

Barry doesn't see these children primarily in terms of being 'ESL learners'. They are simply individuals who, like all kindergarten children, come to school with a great range of strengths and needs. In fact, he regards some of them as being far more advanced in their literacy development than many of their classmates from English-speaking backgrounds. In Barry's words:

> *In thinking about it, what's a true ESL anyway? Because like Maria Brown, whose mother is a Filipina, and I think they speak a bit of Tagalog or something at home, but basically she's English speaking, because Dad's English. And again with Lily – I think the prime thing at home there is English. There is a bit of the other language, but the prime thing is English. Benny I think's likewise. The prime thing is English but there's a bit of the other one too.*

Barry does recognise the positive aspects of these children's bilingualism:

> *They reckon that bilingual people have advantages, even initially, and I think it's great to know two or three languages, I think you're very intelligent, and it's great.*

But sees that this can also bring with it certain drawbacks:

> *I think where the difficulty lies is if you're having difficulties in one language or the other, and it can be compounded by learning or having to deal with both languages, but, I don't know. It's certainly something to bear thinking about anyway. ... It may be advantageous to them, or it may not.*

Barry's classroom program does not have a specifically ESL component, though the ESL teacher, Meredith, does take the class at times for some general language activities and works with individual students during groupwork time. (*'I would give her the writing up part because I felt that she was more competent at getting more out of them from writing than what I was. I think I'm alright on the technical side, but actually getting them to be a bit more creative, I think I fall down.'*)

Over the span of a week, Barry will include several language sessions. During news time, for example, he writes down what the children said and then the class read it together. He reads stories aloud to the class, selected because they include the letter which was being focused on that week:

> *I would read books that were related to that particular letter of the week, and so for 'W' it was Mrs Wishy Washy, and for 'R' The Red Rose was one. Sing A Song was one I think I used for 'S' and The Jiggeree. When we're doing 'Z' we did a lot of Zoo books. And so there would be a book that would be going with the letter of the week, because with their reading part I like to put a literary part in it as well.*

Parent helpers listen to the children read or else take a group so that Barry is free to listen to the reading of individual children. And then there is a home reading scheme, where the children take home readers and parents listen to them read and write comments on their progress.

> *Reading was actually 'reading in inverted commas' initially, and so they were remembering what they said together with the pictures, but then after a while they begin to pick it up, so it's a matter of osmosis more or less. I try as much as possible to keep them interested*

in reading so that they change their books nearly every day, even Benny, even though sometimes I felt like saying 'You better take that one again and learn it better', I wanted to keep his confidence up and interest up too, so I kept on changing them, and that worked out fine in the end anyway because he felt as though he was reading and the confidence is very important at that particular stage.

Sample 1: Nina's Reading Log with comments by parents

BOOK TITLE	COMMENT	PAREN INITIAL
Getting Dressed.	READING is good	
	But she forgot the words	
Shopping	She read this	J.B
	book. because the	
	pictures helping her.	
	To read this book.	
I like	Her reading was	Y.B
	good.	
To School	Her reading was	
	NOT Bad	
I go go go	Her reading was	
	very good.	
I write	Her reading was	Y.B
	NOT BAD	
Run!	Her reading was	
	very good	Y.B.
My friend.	Her reading was	Y.B
	good	
My shadow	Her reading was	Y.B.
(She listened) if 24.10	good.	
faces 24.10.	Her reading was	
	Excellent	
Big + Little	Her reading was	
	Not Bad. read to me 31	
The Big Race	Her reading was NOT	Y.B
	Bad.	
Bugging Flies	Her reading was not	
	Bad.	
A Journey Moving	Her reading was good.	

His major language focus, however, is when they have groupwork. Here the class is typically divided into four groups.

One group would be doing process writing –

They'd write about anything that they like. Of course some of them would just be copying, which is fine. Initially it was just a matter of doing a picture and transcribing what they want to write in the story underneath. That was the first part, but of course they were learning from that anyway. And then the next part came when they were just maybe writing anything, but then they had to interpret it,

> *and some of them were actually doing some writing. And then of course by the end of the year, then nearly everybody was doing some writing, with a few exceptions. Some of them like Maria would be writing about three or four sentences. Not punctuated very well, but spelt alright, with some conventional spelling and some spelling that was not conventional but readily understood.*

Another group would be engaged in some sort of game, such as a jigsaw puzzle. This was seen as a time when the children could interact around a problem-solving situation.

Yet another group would be working with the computer, where they would play concentration card games, or games involving word recognition, or spelling, or the insertion of the initial sound of a word.

And lastly there would be a group working on a phonics sheet. The class works through the letters of the alphabet – their shapes and sounds – week by week. They complete worksheets where they trace over the shape of the letter (eg 'v'). Then they colour in the worksheets (eg in red and yellow for the fiery colours of the volcano).

> *We always did learning sounds of particular letters and then towards the end they were looking at words. We'd have booklets each week for the letter of the week, that was the more formal part and in that they would be writing over the top of the letters and looking at words that started with that letter and doing some interesting stuff with that.*

> *When it came to the sequencing of letters, we followed a phonemic awareness program last year, but this time because we have a blind person in X's class we decided we'll make it easier for the blind kiddie and follow what's easiest to do in Braille. And so that's been our sequence. So, 'i' didn't come until the end because of it being one of the more complicated ones as far as Braille is concerned. Obviously by the time we got to that, some of them knew the sound of 'i' because it's a common one to know. I mean, really I don't suppose it matters which sequence you learn it in, some are going to know it and some not.*

Assessing the ESL Children's Achievements

Barry has had some twenty four years in the teaching profession, ranging across various grades in the primary system. He has therefore had broad experience of different approaches to assessing children's development.

When asked how he goes about assessing the children's language, Barry immediately dismisses the possibility of tests:

> *They've got to learn somewhere along the line [about tests] but I think kindergarten's a bit early. With kindergarten it's very difficult to stop them from looking at each other's work or helping....because they're being very co-operative with each other, and it's a bit difficult to tell them now 'I just want to know what* ***you*** *know, not what the other person knows' and half the time when I've done that I could see that somebody's helped somebody.*

Barry prefers to simply observe individual children as they engage in the group activities and to talk with them about their work *'so that I can actually hear and see their responses and also note particular responses'*. In Barry's opinion, through talking with individuals you actually get to know the way each one is thinking. You go beyond the 'product' and tap into the process. You see **why** they might be coming

up with a certain response, which might not have been obvious if you had just looked at their work.
While observing the children, Barry sometimes makes notes

> *... although I often didn't do that because there wasn't time, but sometimes if something in particular had happened that was notable, then I'd take a note. If they did something that was out of the ordinary for them or it was a big step forward for them.*

The children's oral interaction strategies are observed as they participate in the group work activities. More specifically, their oral production skills are monitored in one-to-one discussions and oral presentations:

> *I'm constantly listening in, and very particularly with news, because they give news once a week and I'll be listening rather carefully then to actually what they are saying and the way they said it, and helping them to say things maybe better, or present things, which is also part of the speaking.*
>
> *You're listening for the quality of the voice. I mean as far as actual speaking correctly grammatically is concerned, then there are some that may be of concern, but because they're still experimenting with their language and say 'I runned' or something or other, well just by saying 'Ah well, you ran did you' or something, then that's all I do. I don't really say that's it's wrong: 'you don't say it that way, you say it this way'. I'll put the question back to them: 'Oh, you ran did you?' But there's a lot of that going on, because they're still exploring the language, so I don't consider that. It's nice when you do hear the correct version of it, but I don't worry too much about it if it's incorrect at that particular stage. I mean there are a lot of adults using the wrong thing too.*
>
> *I think clear speech becomes important. Can I understand them? And if I can't understand them, then that becomes a matter of concern too, and trying to get them to speak clearly, and if what I do in the class doesn't succeed, then refer them to the speech therapist.*

With regard to assessing the children's listening skills, Barry replied:

> *Of course there are the subjective ways of reading a story and seeing whether they are listening, and see whether they've actually carried out the instructions when you've asked them to. But that doesn't always mean they have really understood – maybe they just know from watching others. You only know the person who wasn't really listening who's done the wrong thing. I mean even if they are sitting up looking at you, doesn't necessarily mean that they're listening either. They look attentive, but you could ask them something and they don't really know the answer, because, well particularly with kindergarten, they might not know the answer because they just don't know the answer anyway, or they just haven't listened properly, so it is a hard one to assess properly.*

Barry keeps track of the children's writing development through their Progress Book. Every few weeks they will write in these exercise books, giving both Barry and the parents an indication of how their writing is developing over time.

Perhaps the most formal, systematic way in which Barry assesses students' language development is the use of the school's Kindergarten Screening Procedure, used to identify any students who are not progressing according to expectations. Barry sits with individual children and gets them to work through a program involving:

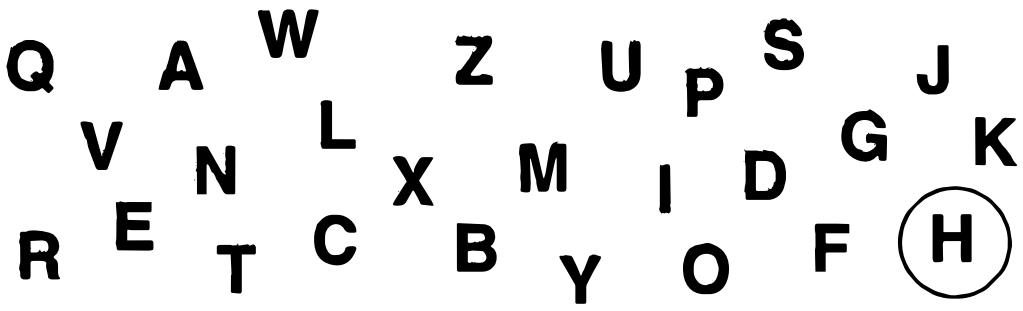
- recognising initial letter of first name

- sounding out individual letters from a chart
- reading aloud sightwords from a list
- writing his or her name
- discerning writing from drawing

Sample 2: Kindergarten Screening Procedure

Task: Recognise initial letter of first name.

Name:☐ **Date:**



Task: Recognise and say common sounds for most letters consistently.

Name: **Date:**

s	m	f	l	t	a
c	b	j	n	d	h
e	r	w	p	z	i
y	k	g	o	q	u
v	x				

Sample 2: Kindergarten Screening Procedure (cont.)

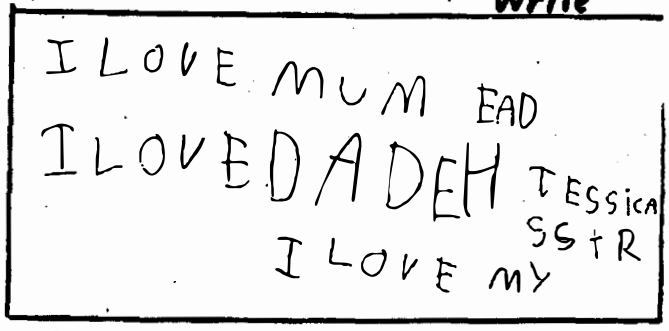
Task: Recognise sight words

Name: **Date:**

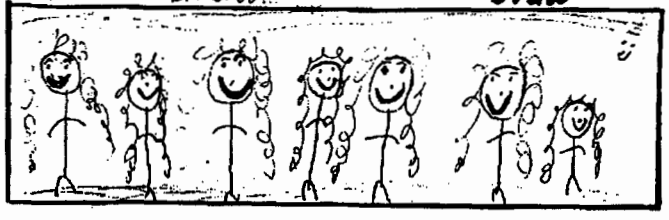
I	am	in	like	go	to
the	is	school	my	can	
and	a	with	mum	dad	

Write your **name** in the box below

I know how to write... **Write**



I can draw... **Draw**



The Early Learning Profiles

Barry's assessment program has had a somewhat tenuous relationship with the Early Learning Profiles. In New South Wales, a state version of the National English Profile was included within the English K-6 Syllabus. It was felt however that there was not enough detail at the lower end of this profile, so a further two introductory levels were added: Foundation and Transition, together forming the Early Learning Profiles.

The outcomes for these two levels can be summarised as follows:

Foundation Level

Talking & Listening	*Reading*	*Writing*
Outcome:	*Outcome:*	*Outcome:*
Uses talk and listens when interacting in familiar informal situations.	Demonstrates emerging awareness that written & visual texts convey meaning.	Demonstrates awareness of what is involved in writing-like behaviour.
Pointers: *eg* • name familiar objects • talk with others about familiar objects • use talk as part of make-believe play • talk to peers, teachers and other adults in the playground • talk about their own interests • use questions in familiar situations • express feelings • respond to simple questions • respond appropriately to one-step instruction or request • retell a simple, familiar story in sequence using pictures • respond to their first name • hear and say everyday words • listen to stories, rhymes, songs • join in known rhymes • begin to give news with teacher encouragement & assistance • used talk as part of make-believe play	*Pointers:* *eg* • identify pictures in books, magazines, television & video • know some early book conventions • respond to literary, media & factual texts • recognise & interpret print in the environment • recognise initial letter of first name • name favourite television programs • recognise own first name in print • ask for a book to be read to them • ask questions and make comments about texts heard or viewed • show beginning awareness of direction when reading • begin to attend to literary, factual and media text	*Pointers:* *eg* • use implements to make marks on a page • hold writing implements in a way which allows them to make marks on a page • are confident in using a variety of implements • 'write' in scribble or draw • know writing & drawing are different • make random marks on paper • produce scribble patterns • 'write' using horizontal scribble with or without breaks to represent words • attempt to write using marks on a page usually left to right • attempt to write own first name • trace own first name • trace text scribed for them • describe own drawing or 'writing'

Transitional Level

Talking and Listening

Outcome:

Text & Context

Uses talk & listens when interacting with peers, teachers & other adults in classroom situations.
eg
- listen attentively & responds to a short story
- respond to questions
- listen to peers talking

Uses different kinds of spoken texts when interacting with others for a variety of purposes.
eg
- recount personal experiences
- retell main events from a short story
- express likes & dislikes

Strategies

Uses a variety of strategies to communicate.
eg
- use descriptive terms
- recount personal experience to group
- take turns in conversation

Grammatical Patterns

Uses linguistic structures & features of own variety of English when talking and listening.
eg
- use expanded sentences
- supply a rhyming word
- respond to teacher's gestures

Reading

Outcome:

Text & Context

Relates own experience when responding to ideas, events & information in texts viewed and heard read aloud.
eg
- draw a picture of part of a text
- retell part of a text
- spend time looking at a book

Begins to develop an understanding of the purpose of a variety of texts.
eg
- recognise the difference between literary & factual texts
- relate different texts to situations in their lives
- label familiar pictures

Learning to Read

Begins to use the phonological, graphological, contextual & semantic processing systems to 'read' the text.
eg
- reread own writing efforts
- recognise some sight words
- use initial sound cues for unfamiliar words

Demonstrates reading-like behaviour.
eg
- use a picture book to create own story
- demonstrate developing early book conventions
- approximate reading texts from a variety of sources

Grammatical Patterns

Uses some of the linguistic structures & features of familiar texts.
eg
- recognise that a series of words makes up a text
- recognise that words are made up of letters

Writing

Outcome:

Text & Context

Recognises that written & visual texts have meaning.
eg
- discuss the purpose of a text
- use the terms 'drawing' and 'writing' accurately
- can describe what they have written

Engages with writing to convey an idea or message.
eg
- 'write' for a variety of purposes with adult assistance
- attempt to 'write' independently
- copy a written text scribed for them

Learning to Write

'Writes' using a combination of standard & non-standard letter shapes, handwriting movements and spelling.
eg
- copy print from models
- form most lower case letters and some upper case letters
- write letters for known sounds

Strategies

Uses a variety of conventional & unconventional strategies to present ideas & information in writing.
eg
- place letters, numbers and invented numbers randomly on page
- use symbols in writing which may be unconventional

Grammatical Patterns

Recognises some features of writing.
eg
- use group of letters or symbols to represent words
- put spaces between groups of letters and symbols
- attempt to use fullstops

Last year, there was a major drive by the Department of School Education for the Early Learning Profiles to be implemented in primary schools at Infants level. Several schools across the state participated in a departmental project which involved a great deal of record-keeping and documentation. Daviston Public School conscientiously went through this process, but it appears that, having put in the hard work, they were not seen to be part of the 'official' project and their efforts went unrecognised. *'It was kind of mandatory for the beginning of the year last year, and then it frittered.'*

This resulted in a loss of morale for the staff, exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding the outcomes and pointers component of the English K-6 Syllabus which had been put 'on hold' following the Eltis Review[3]. Along with most other schools in the state, Daviston lost all impetus in implementing the Syllabus. There was a sense of bewilderment, betrayal of their hard work in coming to grips with the notion of outcomes-based assessment, and a profound distrust of any departmental initiatives.

It was in this climate that Barry was invited to participate in this project. Many teachers would have quite reasonably refused, given their experiences of the previous year. For most, anything to do with profiles and assessment was 'on the nose'. During the course of the project, Barry ventured once more into trying to use the Early Learning Profiles. He felt the project had 'given him a nudge' to revisit them. Despite the frustration of last year, he had found the document to be quite useful and was willing to give it another go.

Using the Early Learning Profiles

Barry had found that using the Early Learning Profiles document as it stood was cumbersome, and so, like most other teachers, had developed his own way of managing it. He had photocopied the outcomes and pointers for the various levels and pasted them onto a single sheet so that he could track progress across levels. He had also left space for inserting his own comments as in Sample 3:

[3] See notes on the situation in New South Wales.

Sample 3 Barry's Checklist

Talking and Listening

Outcomes	Pointers	Date	Comments
• Uses talk and listens when interacting in familiar informal situations.	• Respond to their name • Respond to a simple question • Expresses feelings • Use talk as part of make believe play • Use questions in familiar situations • • •	√ √ √ √ √	

Reading

Outcomes	Pointers	Date	Comments
• Demonstrates emerging awareness that written and visual texts convey meaning.	• Recognise own name in print. • Know some early book conventions (open book, hold book correct way to look at pictures, turn pages indiscriminately) • Recognise and interpret print in the environment (familiar logos, fast food signs) • Use books for appropriate purposes • • •	√ √ √ √	

Writing

Outcomes	Pointers	Date	Comments
• Demonstrates an awareness of what is involved in writing-like behaviour.	• Use implements to make marks on a page • hold writing implements in a way which allows them to make marks on page • 'Write' in a scribble or draw • Make random marks on paper • Trace own first name • Attempt to write own first name • Invent a message to represent print • • •	√ √ √ √ √ √ √	*End of first term*

Barry looked at each of his ESL learners in relation to the pointers in the Early Learning Profiles and summed up their progress.

Sara is progressing steadily and predictably along the scale:

> *Probably getting into Transition now.* 'Record some dominant sounds using appropriate letter (eg first or last consonant).' *She was trying to write 'I see a car' ... and she used 'c' and it was even back to front, but I thought that it showed that she was really now beginning to think. She was now putting down on paper something that was traditional writing. Even though it was the wrong way around, it actually meant something and she had put it down on paper that somebody else could read. It wasn't actually simply copied off the board.*

Even though she's one of the ESL kids she's one of the first to be writing at that level.

Slatko's move into Transition was a bit more dramatic:

He really wasn't interested in writing at first, but coming into the year he was actually wanting to write. Not much of course, but actually wanting to write, which I thought was a great breakthrough, and so if they go wanting to do something in the first grade, that's wonderful. If they leave kindergarten wanting to do things like that, then that's more than half the battle I think.

At first he would write nonsense. He didn't know what he'd written – 'What did you want to say?' – dunno, he can't even read back what he's written. I don't think he had anything in mind in the first place, he just followed the instructions.

In a later interview: *Now you can see he's getting to know some of the sounds, but not too sure at this stage.*

And in the final interview: *It shows a great deal of improvement that he now knows a lot more than he did even a month ago. It's just at this particular stage that things are beginning to gel with some of them. They've gone through all the letters of the alphabet and the sounds. At this time of the year things are starting to click and you can see progress. 'They've got the tools.'*

Slatko didn't go through all the preliminaries to writing in Foundation and Transition. He just all of a sudden got the hang of writing. Straight down to business all of a sudden.

Using the Early Learning Profiles to indicate Nina's level of development was quite a challenge as Nina was determined in her refusal to talk or write in class:

'Respond to their name', 'Respond to a simple instruction'. *Well she really wasn't responding to a simple instruction at the end of the year. I know that she could if she chose to do so, but I really couldn't say that she did because she didn't really respond to a simple instruction unless she wanted to.*

'Used talk as a part of make believe play'. *Well, she didn't make believe play, although she did out in the playground. With Nina it was a matter of observation and seeing what was doing with others.*

'Used questions in familiar situations'. *Well I didn't hear a question from her, even though the rest of them were ready for that in the first week.*

I think she's very intelligent, and she's choosing not to talk, but it's hard to know exactly what she does know. I know that at the beginning of the year, I'd see her looking up at the colours that I had on the board, and I'd written the various colours like blue in blue, and she was looking up there and making use of that information, so she was obviously doing some reading then.

Benny was somewhat easier to locate on the scale:

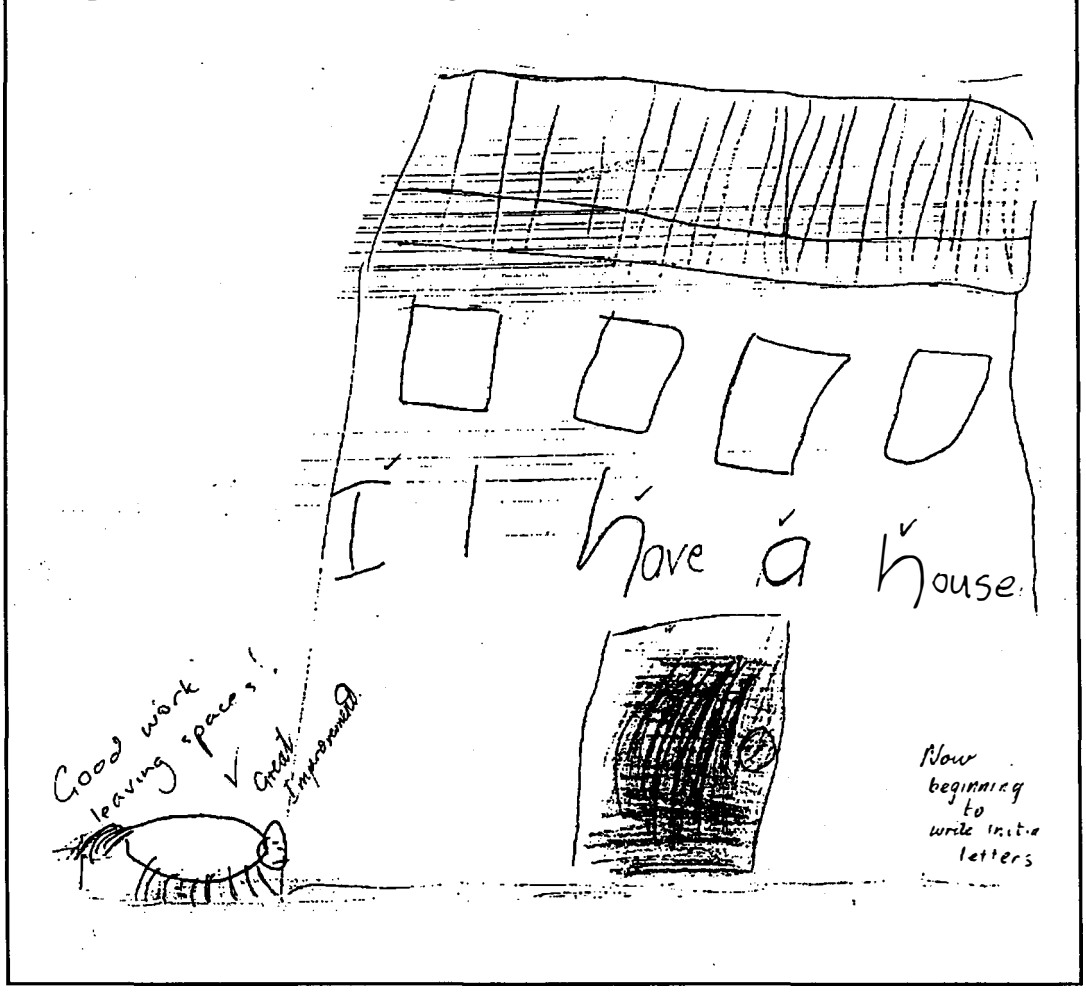
'Write in scribble or draw' – *well Benny really wasn't really writing even with a scribble or a draw until the end of first term.*

'Trace his own name' *and* 'Attempt to write his first name' – *well he was doing that since the beginning of the year.*

'Invent a message to represent print', *he didn't do that until the end of the term 1.*

Benny's really showing an awareness of sounds as he is trying to write. He knows the initial sounds of quite a few words. He's always been able to write his own name in capital letters. And now in small letters. A few letter reversals. Still not much of an idea, but getting there. Now knows the sounds – he has the tools. But there's a difference between identifying 'p' and knowing how to write 'p'.

Sample 4: Benny's drawing of house



Robbie was showing signs of moving from Foundation to Transition:

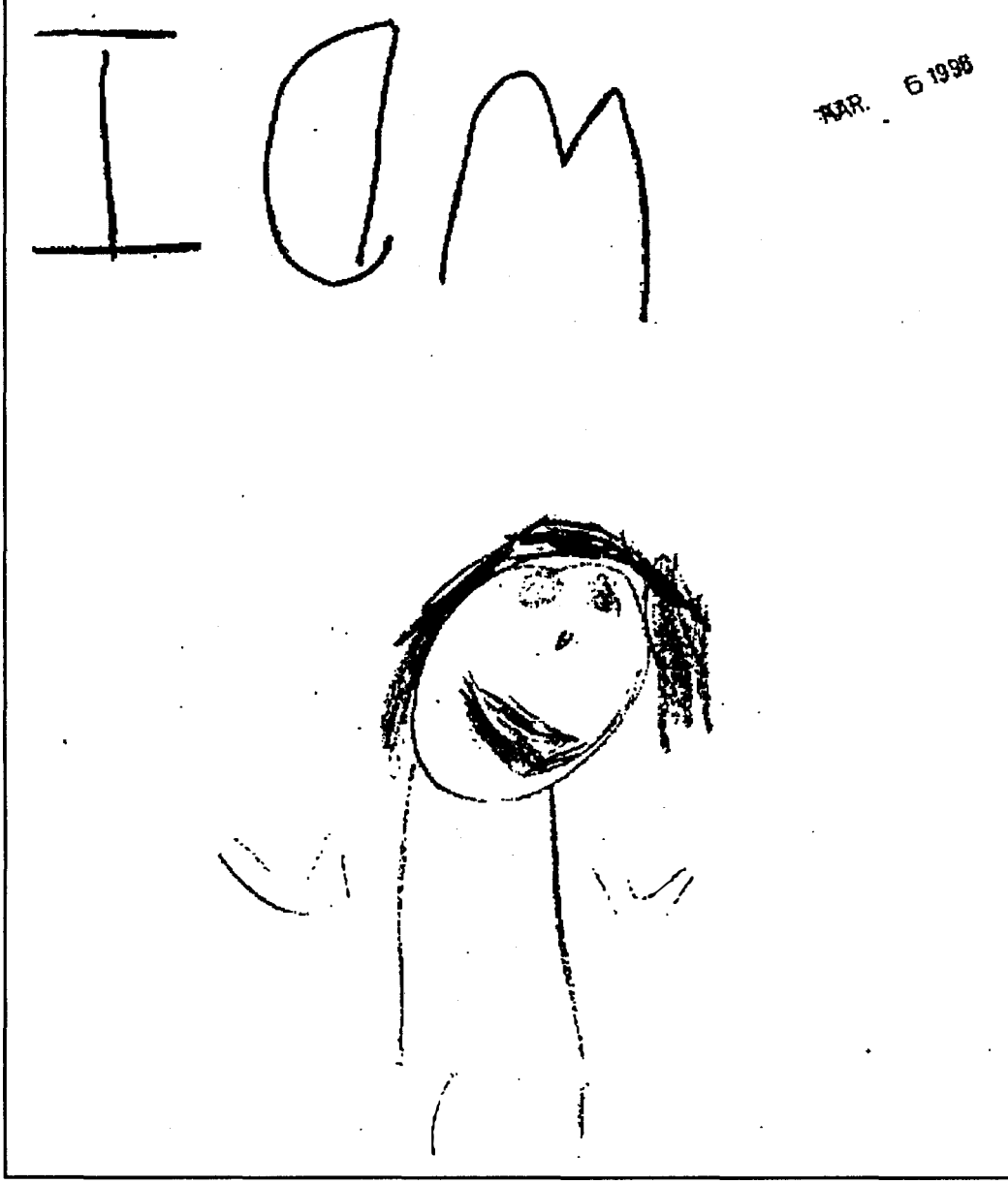
'Copy print from models' – *Robbie was one who could copy words, but he really couldn't write anything. But Robbie is getting into the phonetic bit and can actually work out some words now: 'Recognise and say known sounds in written text'. So the mechanical way of actually working out things, like 'green' – he could work out green, he went 'gr r e e', so once you can start doing that... And one time he was able to write the initial sound 'b' and 'p' and give it correctly, but I haven't been able to get him to replicate it since. He must have been in a wonderful mood that day, or something, but I haven't been able to get him to do it since. I thought I made a breakthrough, but that was that day. He was certainly brilliant for that day.*

Maria has progressed beyond Transition and into Level 1:

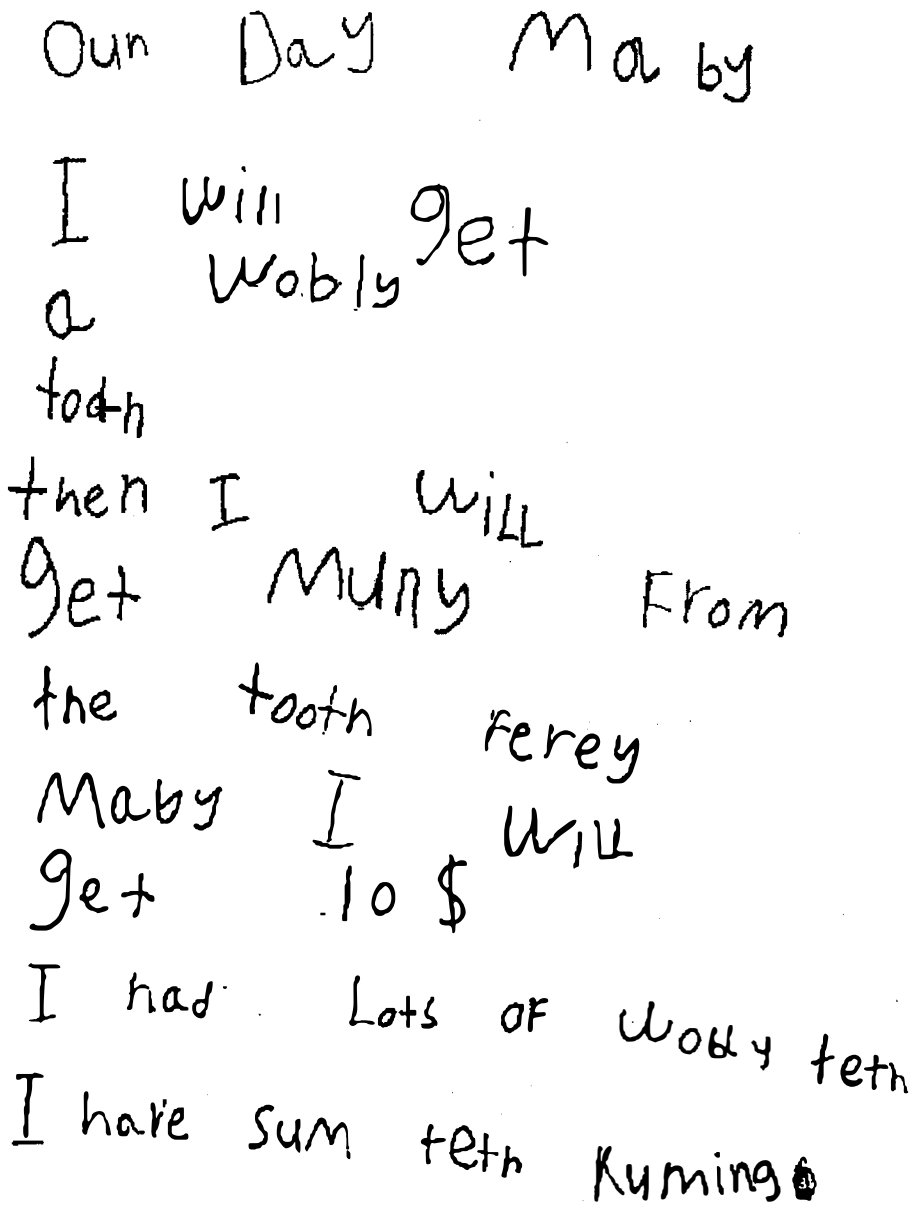
> *She's probably one of the brightest of the whole lot. I mean even writing her name right at the beginning. You really can't get much neater than that. [Looking at work sample.] In a way, you can only get smaller. But even at the beginning of the year she can do quite a few sounds. She can write a number of sentences now and even puts a fullstop at the end. I'd say that she's a writer now really. All she has to learn is the conventions!*

This development can be seen in samples from her Progress Book:

Sample 5: Maria's early writing



Sample 6: Maria's later writing



While Barry is able to look at the Early Learning Profiles and identify various pointers in relation to particular children, it is not something that he does regularly. Rather, he has a general idea of what is involved in Foundation level and in Transition level, and

> *I would look through them [the Early Learning Profiles] and see what in general would be needed, and then I thought back and saw that they were all doing. All the ESL ones got through Foundation level early on, with the exception of one which was Benny. I didn't think that he got through the Foundation until the end of first term. And then there was Transition, and all of the ESL ones got through Transition by the end of the year, even Benny, except for Nina.*

So at the end of kindergarten, Barry feels that all the ESL learners (with the exception of Nina) were, to varying degrees, operating at Level 1 as outlined in the English K-6 Syllabus:

> *Of course some of them are just the beginning of Level 1, and others are well along the way, and it depends on how you interpret some of those pointers. Some of them like Maria might even be half way through or even more than Level 1, whereas Benny's just beginning and Sara, a bit difficult particularly when you look at her writing in that it's still very phonetic. I've got to think hard when I read her stories because they are so phonetic, whereas with Maria she uses more conventional ones and therefore it's a bit easier to see where she's at.*

Giving feedback

When responding to students' work, Barry believes that the most important feedback he can give is an immediate, non-judgemental evaluation:

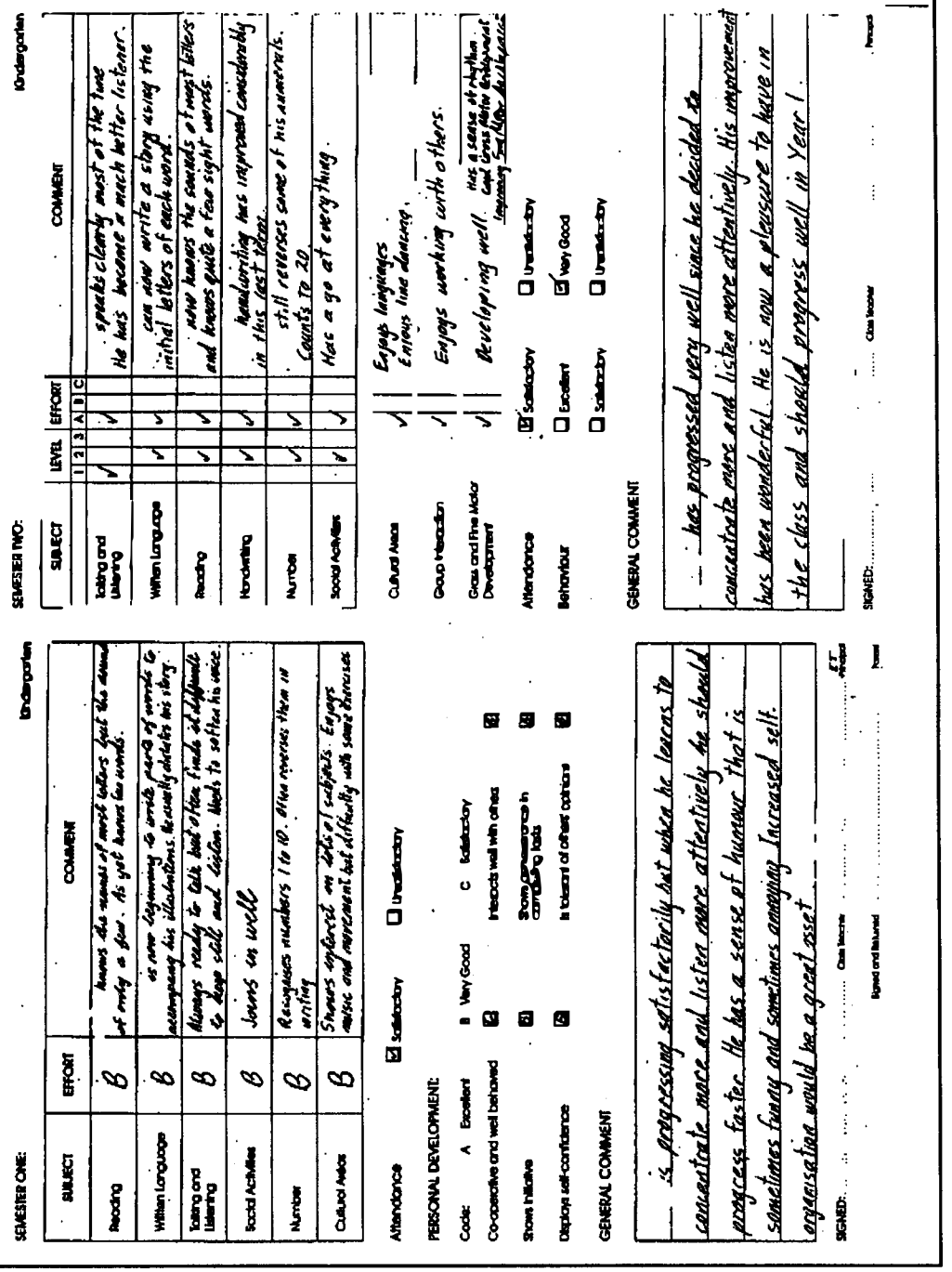
> *I try to mark any work that they did on the spot, so most things had a stamp put on them, some even if it wasn't the best so it was usually about two or three or four stamps if it was really good, and one stamp if it was just mediocre or something or other. And that indicated to me too that I'd also marked it as well. But there's not much point in writing comments on it, particularly at the beginning of the year because they didn't understand it anyway. The stamps told a story. Towards the end though I began to write comments on it showing improvement.*
>
> *Even if you didn't think it was very good you never told them that: 'Well, do you think you can do better than that?' I accept I did tell a couple of them that it was unacceptable, particularly if it was really and you knew that they could do better than that sort of thing, but I mean if they were doing the best they could, well. It's a bit hard to know when they're doing the best they could though.*

In keeping records for his own benefit (and for the benefit of his colleagues) Barry has a number of strategies. He will, for example, write notes on the children's work samples so that he can remind himself of what he noticed in terms of their progress. Meredith, the ESL teacher, would also write her observations on the work samples so that the two teachers were able to share from different perspectives what they were noticing about the child's language development. (See Sample 4 for an example of this).

These comments would also be shared with parents. When the Progress Books were sent home, for example, the parents would be able to read the comments and respond with their own observations.

Parents also receive information on their child's progress through the report card which is sent home twice a year (see Sample 7).

Sample 7: Kindergarten Report Card



SEMESTER ONE: Kindergarten

SUBJECT	EFFORT	COMMENT
Reading	B	knows the names of most letters but the sound of only a few. He get knows the words.
Written Language	B	is now beginning to write parts of words to accompany his illustrations. He really dislikes his story.
Talking and Listening	B	Always ready to talk but often finds it difficult to keep still and listen. Needs to soften his voice.
Social Activities	B	Joins in well
Number	B	Recognises numbers 1 to 10. Often reverses them in writing
Cultural Aktos	B	Shows interest in Art & Craft activities. Enjoys music and movement but difficulty with some exercises

Attendance: ☑ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Code: A Excellent B Very Good C Satisfactory

Co-operative and well behaved	☑	Interacts well with others	☑
Shows initiative	☑	Shows confidence in speaking tasks	☑
Displays self-confidence	☑	Is tolerant of others opinions	☑

GENERAL COMMENT

is progressing satisfactorily but when he leaves to concentrate more and listen more attentively he should progress faster. He has a sense of humour that is sometimes funny and sometimes annoying. Increased self-organisation would be a great asset

SIGNED: ..... Class Teacher ..... Parent

SEMESTER TWO: Kindergarten

SUBJECT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	EFFORT A	EFFORT B	EFFORT C	COMMENT
Talking and Listening	✓			✓			speaks clearly most of the time He has become a much better listener.
Written Language		✓		✓			can now write a story using the initial letters of each word.
Reading		✓		✓			now knows the sounds of most letters and knows quite a few sight words.
Handwriting		✓		✓			handwriting has improved considerably in this last year.
Number		✓		✓			still reverses some of his numerals. Counts to 20
Social Activities		✓		✓			Has a go at everything.

Cultural Aktos: ✓ Enjoys languages, Enjoys line dancing.

Group Interaction: ✓ Enjoys working with others.

Gross and Fine Motor Development: ✓ Developing well. Has a sense of rhythm Can throw a ball Needs encouragement Improving Fine Motor Techniques

Attendance: ☑ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

Behaviour: ☐ Excellent ☑ Very Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Unsatisfactory

GENERAL COMMENT

has progressed very well since he decided to concentrate more and listen more attentively. His improvement has been wonderful. He is now a pleasure to have in the class and should progress well in Year 1.

SIGNED: ..... Class Teacher ..... Parent

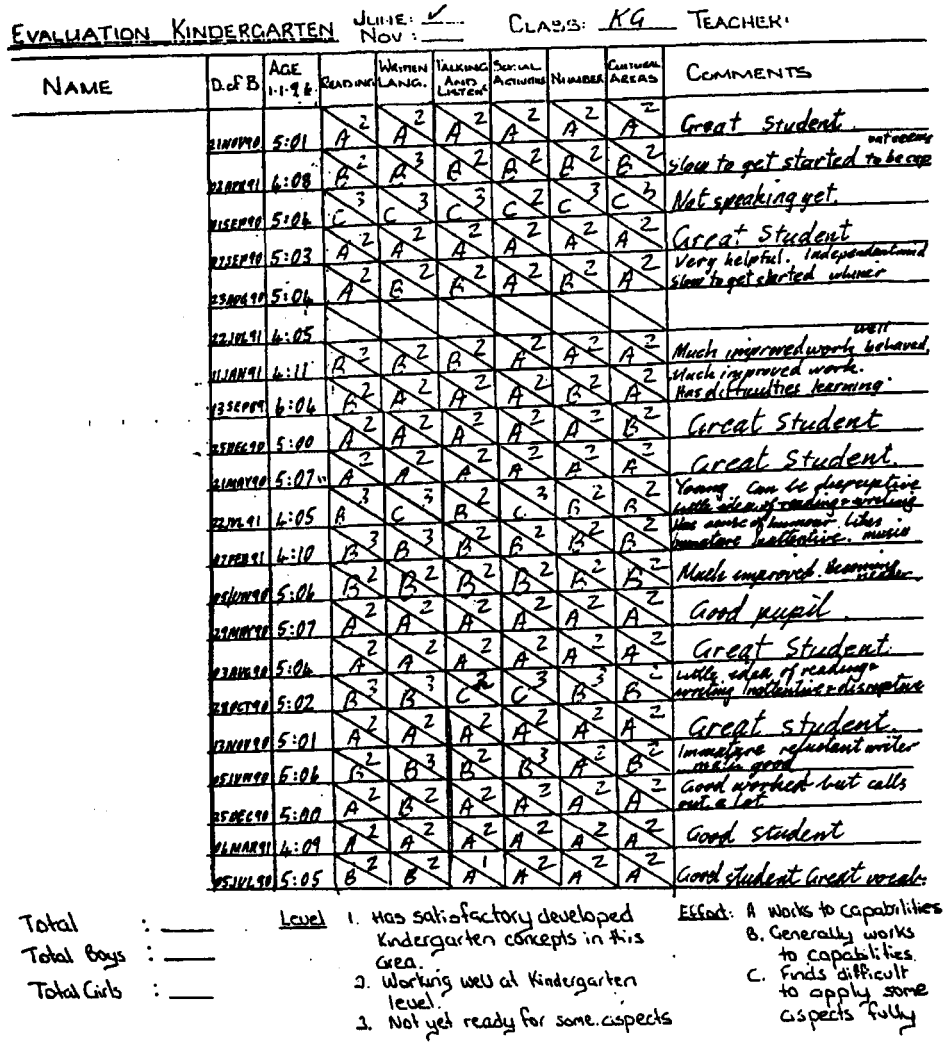
When asked about school policy relating to assessment and providing information on students' progress, Barry referred back to the experience of the previous year:

> *We were doing profiles and they were mandatory at the beginning of last year, and then it kind of slipped away, which was a pity actually because if it had been mandatory I would have done it. We were really ready to go with the student profiles, but then there was the halt, and getting the momentum up again was the thing, so there was no actual absolute school requirement for the profiles.*

At this stage, with the English K-6 Syllabus still perceived to be 'in limbo', there appears to be no firm policy relating to how teachers will assess or provide feedback at the grade or school level in any systematic way. The only information which Barry is required to provide is a single sheet indicating students' abilities in

reading, writing, talking and listening by assigning A, B or C (for effort) and 1,2 or 3 (for level - though this does not relate to the levels of the Early Learning Profiles).

Sample 8: Kindergarten Evaluation Sheet



EVALUATION KINDERGARTEN JUNE: ✓ NOV: ___ CLASS: KG TEACHER:

NAME	D.of B.	AGE 1-1-96	READING	WRITTEN LANG.	TALKING AND LISTEN	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	NUMBER	CULTURAL AREAS	COMMENTS
	21NOV90	5:01	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great Student.
	28APR91	4:08	B 2	A 3	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	slow to get started to become
	15SEP90	5:06	C 3	C 3	C 3	C 2	C 3	C 3	Not speaking yet.
	22SEP90	5:03	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great Student
	23AUG90	5:04	A 2	B 2	B 2	A 2	B 2	A 2	Very helpful. Independent and slow to get started volunteer
	22JUL91	4:05							
	11JAN91	4:11	A 2	B 2	B 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Much improved work behaved well
	23SEP90	4:04	B 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	B 2	A 2	Much improved work. Has difficulties learning.
	25DEC90	5:00	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	B 2	Great Student
	21MAY90	5:07	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great Student.
	22JUL91	4:05	A 3	C 3	B 2	C 3	B 2	B 2	Young. Can be disruptive with lack of reading + writing has sense of humour likes music + enjoys halloween. music
	07FEB91	4:10	B 3	B 3	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	Much improved. learning
	05JUN90	5:06	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	B 2	Good pupil
	29MAY90	5:07	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great Student.
	03AUG90	5:04	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great Student.
	28OCT90	5:02	B 3	B 3	C 3	C 3	B 3	B 3	Lacks ideas of reading + writing inattentive + disruptive
	13NOV90	5:01	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Great student.
	05JUN90	6:06	B 2	B 3	B 2	B 3	A 2	B 2	Immature reluctant writer maths good
	25DEC90	5:00	A 2	B 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Good worker but calls out a lot.
	26MAR91	4:09	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 2	Good student
	05JUL90	5:05	B 2	B 2	A 1	A 2	A 2	A 2	Good student Great reader

Total : ___
Total Boys : ___
Total Girls : ___

Level 1. Has satisfactory developed Kindergarten concepts in this area.
2. Working well at Kindergarten level.
3. Not yet ready for some aspects

Effort: A Works to capabilities
B. Generally works to capabilities.
C. Finds difficult to apply some aspects fully

Assessing ESL learners

Just as Barry's class program doesn't make a distinction between learners from English-speaking backgrounds and those from non-English speaking backgrounds, so his assessment procedures don't discriminate between them:

> *There's not much difference particularly I feel in kindergarten, not much different to how I assess the others, because they're all learning and pretty much at the base level, then I don't think their assessment at this stage needs to be very different.*

Barry illustrated this lack of major differences between kindergarten-level learners from English-speaking backgrounds and those from non-English-speaking backgrounds with reference to spelling:

> *I don't think that spelling is a big thing in kindergarten, provided it's phonetic and I can read what they meant to say, or even with some help. I mean I think if they just give the initial letter of something that's a start, and if they can do that then by the end of*

> *the year at least they're on the way to writing, and all the ESL students managed to be able to do that. I can't say the same thing for some of the non-ESL kids.*

In kindergarten, Barry even sees some potential advantages in 'coming in fresh' from a second language background:

> *There are some differences. They seem to have more difficulty when it comes to writing, because they tend to be more phonetic, but in kindergarten that's a great deal of help because everybody is virtually at the phonetic level so you're going to get wrong spellings anyway, but provided that it makes sense and I think that the ESL students are as good as that, maybe even better than the others, because they don't realise so much that it may be spelt a different way and that's where the experience tells them the English speaking way as well, but it may not be spelt that way, perhaps there might be another way, whereas the ESL one tends to plough straight in and write it phonetically I think, but whether that's a difficulty in kindergarten is debatable. It becomes more of a difficulty in the upper grades.*

Barry doesn't dismiss the possibility that ESL students might have specific needs, particularly in terms of vocabulary range:

> *When Sara was reading to me – it was a book about underwater stuff – and even though the pictures were there, she had no idea of what these particular items were called, but then again maybe the English speaking ones might not have any idea either. Even though Sara could read the first part of the word, it didn't really mean anything much to her, so she just didn't know it. She tried but just couldn't succeed in working it out, whereas some of the other kids, particularly those who had wide experience, would see the picture, know what it was called in English, and particularly with the help of the first three sounds would be able to work it out, whereas Sara was rather lost when it came to specialised vocabulary.*

Sara's problems, however, were seen as simply a phase which most children go through regardless of language background. The Support Teacher (Learning Difficulties) concluded that *'the ESL tells, but she'll get there'*, a comment echoed by Barry himself:

> *That's one of the things we have to think of with ESL. They may not be as forward in learning certain things, but then after a while they get there.*

So, rather than any explicit inclusion in his assessment program of an ESL dimension (eg using the ESL Scales), Barry's approach is somewhat more intuitive, treating each instance on its merits, considering the child's background as well as a complex of other factors which might be influencing the child's progress. When asked about the rationale behind his assessment program, Barry replied:

> *I don't know. Some of the times I don't know why I do what I do. It just seems to be the right thing at the time, and most of the time it is the right thing. I mean there are a few wrong things too, but sometimes I don't really think as to why I did it. It was just maybe I did it because that what was done for me or that I'd seen it done before with success, or I had an idea and thought that it might work.*

He did however point out that he had certain goals for the kindergarten year:

> *As far as kindergarten was concerned I wanted them to know their sounds. That was the initial thing, and to be able to count, and meaningfully count, and listen. And also knowing a few words as*

> *well, and being able to write a story that I could read. It didn't matter about the spelling.*

His assessment therefore was in relation to whether the children were achieving those goals:

> *Do they know their sounds? Are they listening? Do they know their numbers? Can they count meaningfully? And I always had those in mind when I was doing assessment.*

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

In general, there is not any direct relationship between Barry's assessment of the students and his teaching practices. It's usually a more implicit, relatively unconscious process, where Barry makes mental notes of what he is observing and then tries to address any salient points within the general teaching program.

Barry doesn't necessarily see a causal relationship between teaching and learning:

> *If I taught ten letters or something, then I test those particular ten letters to see what they knew, and of course some knew more than that because they already learnt it, and others knew less. So obviously my teaching for those particular students wasn't successful, and then I'd think why. Well in most cases I didn't think that they were quite ready for it, and even if I did give them some extra work, it still wasn't getting through at that particular stage, so I thought well I'll just leave it for awhile and eventually, all became ready and learned. And then they learned so quickly that, well like Benny – he knew nothing and then all of a sudden he knew a lot, and I kept on getting him to work on it and asking him sounds etcetera, but most of the time it didn't really make much sense to him, but then all of a sudden it made a lot of sense and then he really progressed from there.*
>
> *I mean sometimes they learn in spite of us as well as because of us.*

In Barry's view, children will learn when they are ready, and even though you might identify a weakness, 'remediation' will often be to no avail if they are not at a developmentally receptive stage. So while assessment can give an indication of where a child is at, it doesn't necessarily have implications for teaching.

In terms of how use of the Early Learning Profiles might inform his teaching, Barry sees it more as a general prompt:

> *I think it does affect practice. When you look at it and say 'Oh yeah, I should be doing something more than that'. And I think 'Well, the kids ... most of them are fine there, most of them are fine there, they can't do any of that at the moment, I'd better do something about that'. So it's a checklist. To some extent, rather than being a checklist for each individual student for me at the moment, it's a checklist as far as the class is concerned.*

Rather than being concerned with the minutiae of each child's progress in each of the areas, Barry is more interested in 'the big picture', involving the children in a range of literacy experiences which will eventually and cumulatively lead to development.

> *I mean, the main focus really has been getting them interested in reading. If at the end of the year they're keen about reading and learning, then to some extent we've done our job – if they leave with a keenness for books and wanting to read and become better.*

> *I think the most important thing, particularly for the kindergartens, is that you remain positive and say 'Oh good, you've done that really well, that's much better than what it was before' and seeing improvement all the time and encouraging the improvements so that they end up feeling positive about themselves. Because I think actually if we could have them being able to listen well and thinking good about learning, then to some extent I think the kindergarten teacher's done their job, even if they can't read. If they feel good about themselves and think that they're still doing pretty well, then in First Grade then they will get on, particularly if they're young.*

In general, Barry does not see much point in detailed assessment as he believes that the main job of the kindergarten teacher is to engender self confidence in the children and an enthusiasm for learning which will stand them in good stead in later years, even if by the end of kindergarten they are not yet reading and writing.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

The Early Learning Profiles

Despite the problems caused by the 'moratorium' on implementation of profiles and outcomes (both of English K-6 and the Early Learning Profiles), Barry was quite positive about the value of the Early Learning Profiles. In the early days of the project, Barry ventured this opinion on the document, based on his use of it the previous year:

> *I thought it was great. I mean it was great doing that. Only trouble was I lost the momentum of it. Trouble is, the difference between thinking it's great and putting it into practice – there is a gulf. Particularly when it comes down to time and to some extent attitude. I mean, I spend quite a bit of extra time doing extra things – but not as much as I used to, because, to put it frankly, I was fed up with the system. And I hope I didn't do anything that would disadvantage the class or anything, but when it came to doing things to do with policy ... and I know that those profiles are great, and every now and then I look and think 'Should I do that?' But doing it for every individual kid, I haven't got around to doing it yet. I've been meaning to do so. But it does take time to do it. So I think they're great, but as I said, the theory part and putting into practice the way I think it should be I haven't done.*

Through his involvement in the project, Barry tentatively started to revisit the Early Learning Profiles:

> *I think they're very useful, and I think that I should have perhaps been using it more formally than what I had. It would have been useful, but I was using it informally, and if it had been mandatory I would have been using it formally.*

In using the Early Learning Profiles, Barry found particularly helpful a support document produced by the Department of School Education: Choosing Literacy Strategies that Work. This was a rich source of classroom activities, each accompanied by a list of relevant outcomes and pointers from the Early Learning Profiles and the English K-6 Syllabus.

> *I think it's been a helpful book because it brings a lot of those ideas together. I find it particularly helpful because you've got your objectives in there, and some activities that go with it, and so it virtually programs it for you.*

objectives in there, and some activities that go with it, and so it virtually programs it for you.

The NLLIA Bandscales

Because the Early Learning Profiles was intended for use with learners whose mother tongue is English, Barry was interested in looking at some of the outcomes described in other documents which related more specifically to the progress of ESL learners. He started by looking through the NLLIA Bandscales (Writing: Junior Primary Level 1 and Literacy Observation Guide) to see whether in fact their descriptions of ESL students threw any extra light on what he was observing in his classroom:

'Use drawing as an initial form of self-expression. Will copy writing pictures from others.'
Yes, well that's what they're all doing at that particular stage, well most of them anyway.
'

May have little spoken English to help them talk about their writing and pictures.'
With my particular ones that I had, spoken English didn't seem to be a problem in general. As I said it became a problem with specifics and for specialised language, but for general talking about general things their English was as good as the others. Of course, I mean if you probe more closely, it may have been different, but just as a general overlook, they choose to talk about their writing.

'Script-different learners: May need more time to develop the concepts of left to right and top to bottom in writing eg Arabic-background learners.'
Well I suppose in general a lot of the kindergarten they can't. I didn't notice with Sara that, she's nearly always been left to right. I mean, there is differences, but she's always worked from what I can gather from left to right, so that wasn't a problem to her.

'Have developed a literacy set (to varying degrees) in L1 and/or English at the level expected for their age.'
I really don't know anything about what literacy they had done in their first language, and I wouldn't really understand the Arabic part, when they were taught their different forms of text.

'New to writing in L1 and/or English.'
Well they came with that, new to literacy. Well, it's definitely new to writing when they came to school, as far as I know they were new to writing in English and in their own language.

'Drawing on their knowledge of the world in L1.'
I consider that all this is important in thinking about it, important if they come from overseas, when they've come in there about first or second grade, but I think in kindergarten they're doing a lot of learning anyway, so the things that you are doing, pointing out to the pictures, and doing things, and doing lots of talking and lots of activities about the things, it's of less significance than in first grade, because there are some English background people who don't have a love of books or haven't done much in the book area as well. So they're disadvantaged, whereas if they've done something in their own background, then they're not probably not disadvantaged as much as those who haven't done anything in the English language.

'Upper, lower case, simple punctuation.'
Well all those things are common to ESL and to native speakers as well.

'Range of vocabulary recognised.'
That becomes more of a problem, the range of vocabulary. But again a lot of English speaking ones at that particular age have only a small range of things, so you actually found yourself explaining quite a bit of vocab anyway to them. I suppose, like 'brother' has different meanings in different cultures. All those things to think of, but I mean explaining those kinds of things, even if you are aware of that, explaining that sometimes is very difficult, because it comes down to experiences and how do you explain those kind of differences if you're not really quite sure yourself actually.

Barry's overall impression was that, while at later ages the differences between learners whose mother tongue is English and those from non-English speaking backgrounds might be significant, in kindergarten all the children had similar problems, so the Bandscales weren't really very illuminating:

The only real differences there are a reference to Roman script, but as for meanings – at the kindergarten level they've got to learn the meanings anyway, so you've got to explain those things.

I mean that's just for dividing them up into groups. When it comes down to practicality, all that's probably important at a later level, but I think as far as kindergarten's concerned, it wouldn't really make a great deal of difference to what we do.

The ESL Scales

With regard to the ESL Scales, Barry had seen them, but had not looked at them in any detail. In-servicing on the ESL Scales was interrupted when the moratorium was imposed, so they were not being used to any extent in the schools. Moreover, the approach had been that only ESL teachers will be in-serviced in their use. The main responsibility for implementing them in the schools would lie with the ESL teacher. Classroom teachers were not seen as having to deal with them, though the ESL teacher could inform them about their use if they were interested. Despite the fact that some five pages in the Early Learning Profiles are devoted to informing teachers of the relationship between the Early Learning Profiles and the ESL Scales, this does not seem to have penetrated into teachers' practices.

When Barry looked through the ESL Scales, he couldn't see much difference between them and the Early Learning Profiles:

I mean basically there' s very little difference between that [ESL Scales] and what's in there [The Early Learning Profiles]. 'Use drawing ... shows awareness in writing ... copy text ... demonstrate writing like behaviour'.

Barry reasons that because the Early Learning Profiles had in fact elaborated upon what would be expected in the early stages of first language development, it resembled very closely what would be happening in the early stages of second language development. He could see that when ESL students entered school at a later age, that the pointers in the ESL Scales would be useful for teachers in upper levels to inform them as to expected behaviours, but for kindergarten teachers, the pointers were similar to what they normally worked with.

Overall, then, Barry can see no real advantage in referring to specialist ESL assessment frameworks as he believes that development in Kindergarten is similar whether the child is of English-speaking or non-English-speaking background.

Meredith at Daviston Primary School

Beverly Derewianka

The School Context

Refer to Barry at Daviston Primary School for a description of the school context.

Meredith has been an ESL teacher at Daviston for some six years and works with a number of classes across the school. Having taught previously at the nearby Catholic school (St Bertrams), Meredith is familiar with both systems and finds the approach to ESL teaching in many government schools quite different.

> *I've worked for both systems in ESL, they use their funding differently and the formula is different. The Catholic schools actually get a lot less money so they have fewer ESL teachers and therefore all of their staff have to take responsibility. They've never been able to just say 'Well it's the ESL teacher's problem'. They have an ESL co-ordinator in each school, but no-one is seen as 'the' ESL specialist. They've always been inclusive. Whereas the Department, if you have a significant number of ESL kids they will appoint somebody, so the whole school doesn't have to be so involved. The schools where the numbers are very high, the school's involved, but in schools where the numbers are lower, the whole school doesn't necessarily become involved. And where the ESL teacher is part time it's very very difficult to get them involved.*
>
> *In fact I think that's a two edged sword, because whereas the Catholics of course are doing very well with the little that they've got, even someone like Carly from St Bertrams, who has done a lot of training and everything and is only a general assistant, and you know there are all sorts of ethical problems with that, they're now cutting her back so much that she can't afford to stay there ... They're losing a trained person like that. You know, so the whole thing's running on a shoe string and you're losing a lot of expertise even though the whole school might be involved. What they did on their shoe string was amazing.*

The ESL program at Daviston

The ESL program organisation in the school varies from class to class. In certain cases, Meredith withdraws targeted children:

> *In Year 1 I withdraw a child to support the class program. There's one child who had very little English – it's not worth sitting in the classroom, he needs one-to-one. So I go in to the teacher and say 'What are you doing this week?'. She has all the resources so I take a bucket of books with me, pre-read them to Slavko, so that when she does it in the class, she can see the difference. 'Oh' she said 'It's wonderful. He puts his hand up.' Some of the ESL ideas she took and did with the rest of the class and I thought 'Ooh, ooh, this is a breakthrough here'...So even though she's building up the field in the class, he's getting a double hit. So she gives me the information and we pre-do it before she does it in the class, which works well.*

> *There's a child in Year 6 that I'd like to target, but he doesn't want to be targeted. Chinese. Very high ability. But it's a cultural thing. Parents do not wish it.*

Sometimes she will take the whole class, particularly if there are several third phase[4] learners:

> *Year 2 I go in and do a prepared whole-class lesson on whatever the teacher is doing.*
>
> *Year 3 it's a whole-class thing, mainly on grammar and specific aspects. It's whole class because they all need it, although there is one child in there that I focus in on because she's probably getting into second phase now but she's only been here two years, so I target her.*

She does some team teaching in Year 4, where each teacher (ESL, librarian and class teacher) prepares an activity related to a theme and the children rotate from activity to activity:

> *I team teach with Year 4 in the library. It's a very loose terminology. The year 4 teachers don't like withdrawal. They like it to be in a group and they don't like the kids to be singled out. So they give us a copy of their work – the librarian and myself – and they have a library block. And they were doing something on Space this term, so the librarian planned something on Space that she could do with a small group, I planned something on Report-writing on Space, and the teachers prepared something. So theoretically during the library period we would rotate the three groups. Last term we did Procedures and every group got hit with Procedures.*

Meredith can see the benefits of systematic collaborative programming:

> *I do try to say to the class teacher 'If you have an area you're working on, then tell me and I'll work on the same area with the students'. A Year 5 student recently had a project on Gold. It was wonderful because firstly this student really wanted to work, secondly she'd gone to the library and got all the books, and thirdly she was fluent in Portuguese so her transfer to English was much easier – she understood grammar, she understood all of that so we could sit and really get down to the nitty-gritty of what she had actually written. And it was like editing, her vocab., everything came into this project. And I thought 'Yes, this is what it's all about'.*

But as in most schools, her colleagues find it difficult to allocate the necessary planning time, especially with a fractional ESL position:

> *Most of the time it's 'Can you fix the problem? Can you just give so-and-so a bit of a push along with his vocab' or 'We're doing the picture talk on the rabbit and they don't know the words – can you do a quick thing on this so they know the words?*
>
> *"I was so enthusiastic when I first came here, keen to try out all the things I'd learnt at uni. But nobody wanted to know. So now I post-program. 'Cause I found that I would turn up at classes and I'd be greeted with 'Oh, I forgot you were coming!' 'Oh, they're at sport.' Or 'I'm just doing this lesson now because I didn't get it done yesterday'. So all this programming was useless. ... I learned to think on my feet and do something straight away – sit with the child there and then and edit it. It was immediate, everyone was happy. I tried programming meetings after school, at home ... and it just went out the window. Nobody used it and it was like 'why bother'.'*

[4] For a definition of first, second and third phase learners, see description at end of this section.

So Meredith's approach is a bit of a smorgasbord, responding on the run to needs and opportunities as they arise and being very flexible!

The Classroom Context

To get a sense of the way in which Meredith operates in the school, let's look at a few typical activities.

Pre-teaching

As mentioned previously, Meredith sees great benefit in preparing ESL students to participate more fully in the mainstream program by 'pre-teaching' much of the vocabulary:

> *I do a lot of building up the understanding of the topic before the class do it. So last term they did a unit on Just Imagine.... So I read the books to Slavko before the teacher did. And we talked about it, and we discussed it, and he got the vocab. And when the teacher read the book in the class ... light dawned! His hand went up. He knew something about it. And she was really pleased. When they did Where the Wild Things Are I read it to Slavko and we did our own activities on it, we talked about the activity she was going to do on it. He went back into the class and when she said 'What's happening here?' up went his hand, 'I know', and his confidence was so much better. Did the same with each book.*

Meredith feels that mainstream teachers often don't recognise the difficulties that ESL students have in following the lesson because they do not have a sufficient grasp of the language related to the unit of work:

> *We were doing a unit of work on humour, based on the departmental materials. And I thought 'Oh great!' And the teacher said 'Now this is what I've photocopied and this is how I'm doing it', and the entire section on building up the field had been left out. Didn't think it was relevant. And then they wonder why the kids don't have the vocabulary.*
>
> *It happens all the time. That 'building up the field' which I think is so important for all kids, not just ESL kids, is seen as 'they know all that'. Particularly as they move up in grades, there's this assumption that 'they've done all that. They did that in the infants.' A lot of assumptions are made, and yet in classes where the field is really built up before they actually do it in class, you can see the difference. It's brilliant.*

Gerardo is a relatively new arrival from Italy, though he did spend his early childhood in Australia. He is ten years old and having problems keeping up with the rest of the class, so Meredith regularly takes him aside for a pre-teaching session.

Gerardo's teacher was about to start on a unit with her Year 4 class on Frogs and Toads. Meredith asked her for a list of the main outcomes of the unit and for copies of the books they would be using. The class would be writing Information Reports, including a comparison of the characteristics of frogs and toads.

Meredith started by finding out what Gerardo already knew about frogs and what he could express in English. Together they looked through the books and talked about the illustrations, seeing if Gerardo could name the parts of the frog's body, could describe attributes such as colour, size, texture of skin, could discuss their habitat, and so on. As they talked, Meredith jotted down Gerardo's current 'knowledge of the field':

FROGS

WHAT ARE THEY? (Family)	WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE? (Appearance)	WHERE DO THEY LIVE? (Habitat)	WHAT DO THEY EAT? (Diet)	WHAT DO THEY DO? (Behaviour)
'like fish'	'green' 'little' 'soft'	'in water'	'flies' 'mozzies'	'jump' 'make noise'

They then looked at the pictures again, this time extending the range of vocabulary items in each column:

WHAT ARE THEY? (Family)	WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE? (Appearance)	WHERE DO THEY LIVE? (Habitat)	WHAT DO THEY EAT? (Diet)	WHAT DO THEY DO? (Behaviour)
'like fish'	'green' 'little' 'soft'	'in water'	'flies' 'mozzies'	'jump' 'make noise'
- amphibians (can live on land or in water)	- large mouth and eyes - pads on fingers - strong hind legs - mainly green, but also brown & yellow - some are striped or spotted	- most parts of the world - in or near water - trees or burrows	- insects - beetles - spiders	- croak to communicate - change from eggs to tadpoles to frogs

Gerardo then labelled a drawing with some of the new words and with Meredith, read a couple of simple texts on Frogs.

Meredith then provided a 'skeleton report' and asked Gerardo to fill in the blanks with information from the above chart:

Sample 1: 'Skeleton' of Information Report on frogs

FROGS

What are they?

Frogs are .....
They can .....

What do they look like?

Frogs have .....
They have .....and.....
Most frogs are .....but some are .....
Some are .....or.....

Where do they live?

Frogs live .....
They like to be.....
A few live .....or.....

What do they eat?

Frogs eat.....such as.....

What do they do?

Frogs communicate with each other by .....
Frogs begin as .....and then change to .....and finally they become.....

From this activity, Gerardo had a sense of accomplishment that he had managed to construct a lengthy text. He would be able to draw on this model when he returned to class.

As a follow-up activity, Meredith showed Gerardo pictures of frogs and toads and from the accompanying text, they completed the following matrix, indicating the differences between the two types of amphibians:

	FROGS	TOADS
APPEARANCE	smooth skin long hind legs for jumping	rough skin short hind legs
HABITAT	mostly water (slimy skin)	mostly land (dry skin)
BEHAVIOUR	swim and jump	crawl

When they then composed an oral text from the matrix, Meredith introduced 'contrast markers' such as "but" and "however":
Frogs have smooth skin **but** toads have rough skin.

Guided Writing

In Kindergarten, Meredith team-teaches with Barry. Meredith had noticed that during Process Writing sessions, the children were becoming restless: *'A lot of them wouldn't even give it a go. Or they were tending to write the same story again and again.'*. She therefore decided to introduce a bit more structure, where the children would be writing on a similar topic. In this way she was able to give them some input which they could then draw on for their writing.

Because they were about to visit an animal park, she provided a stimulus session on 'Animals'. They discussed their own pets and then thought about the differences between domestic animals, farm animals and wild animals. To extend their descriptive vocabulary and powers of observation, Meredith showed them large posters of farm animals. They named the different animals and then shared ways of describing them:

> *The black and white cow with the bell around her neck...*
>
> *The fluffy, yellow chicks running after the red mother hen...*

Meredith wrote a number of useful vocabulary items on the board for later reference, and together they constructed sentences to describe what was happening on the farm:

> *The man is scrubbing the old horse with a bucket of water and a brush.*

The children thus had a model of how to write about the farm activities as well as a databank of words to draw on when they came to write their own texts.

Phonics

No matter how many ideas the children had for writing, or how their vocabulary had been enriched, there were always a few who were still have problems with 'the basics' – simply recognising the relationship between certain sounds and the letters to represent them:

> *They would draw the picture and they would sit and wait. 'What is it?' 'Tell me about it.' 'Write it.' No. No. It's only when I got a few*

Even 'b' and 'aw' for 'ball' was good, 'if you put that down we'll know what it says'. And gradually all of them now are putting pen to paper.

But that group that Michael's in, that's the lowest group, and I've really been hitting them because they have not put pen to paper all year. So that's been the big push – actually put something down so we can recognise it. Lots of ticks, lots of stickers, that's why I've ticked every letter that they get right. So they see 'oh I can do it'. They were obsessed with getting it right perfectly. 'If I can't get it right perfectly, I can't do it.' And now 'If I put a sound down, good, I'll get a tick and I can give it a go'. So I guess it's a start.

Assessing the ESL Children's Achievements

Meredith is a fractional appointment, teaching for two and a half days at Daviston and two days at another school. She is a very experienced practitioner who has been teaching for 16 years, 12 of these as an ESL specialist. She is one of the region's facilitators for the inservicing of the ESL Scales and her qualifications include a Graduate Diploma in ESL and a Master of Education (TESOL). The fact that her position is part-time, however, imposes limitations on the degree to which she can draw on that expertise and experience, especially in the area of assessment.

Meredith's assessment program

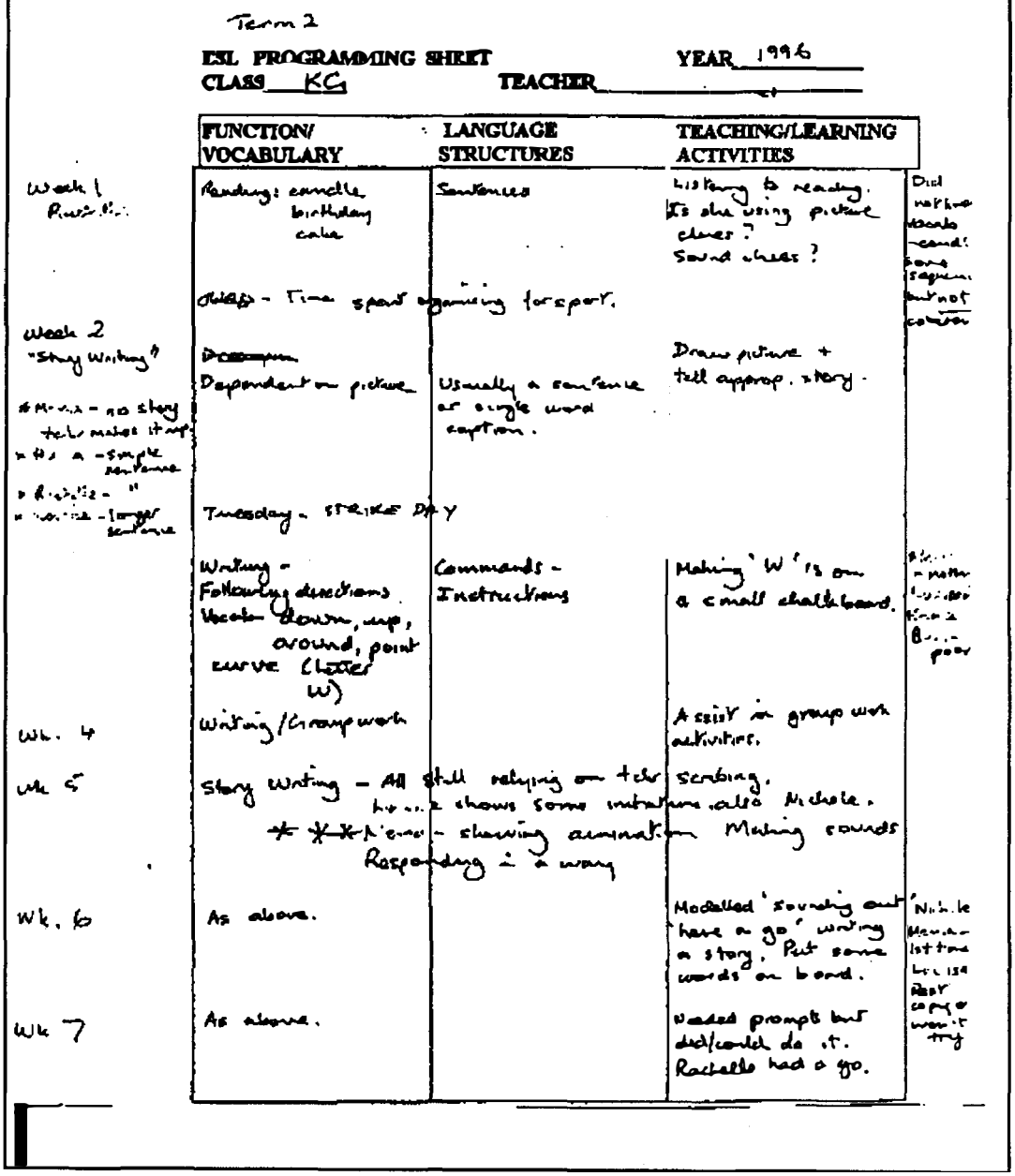
Meredith tends not to have a systematic program of assessment. Rather than using proformas and checklists, she keeps anecdotal records, noting down what the class is doing and what she notices about specific learners.

On the basis of these observations, she will target individuals for further attention.

It's just something I do informally. I try and target the kinders from Term 2 onwards. I know who is ESL in kindergarten from the enrolment form. Often the teachers will say to me 'I've got someone who really needs help'. So it's a prioritising thing – who really needs it? And so your third phasers quite often don't get a look in, unless you're doing a whole class method. In primary, the children get a bit funny if you withdraw them. They don't like to be seen to be different.

See over for a sample page from Meredith's ESL program where she has jotted notes about her observations of individual students:

Sample 2: A page from Meredith's ESL Program



Term 2

ESL PROGRAMMING SHEET YEAR 1996
CLASS KG TEACHER

	FUNCTION/ VOCABULARY	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES	
Week 1	Reading: candle, birthday, cake	Sentences	Listening to reading. Is she using picture clues? Sound clues?	Did name words - sound song segmen... but not cover...
	Maths - Time spent organising for sport.			
Week 2 "Story Writing"	Dependent on picture	Usually a sentence or single word caption.	Draw picture + tell approp. story.	
* Mark - no story tells what it is * Bri - simple sentence * Rachelle - " * Nicole - longer sentence				
	Tuesday - STRIKE DAY			
	Writing - Following directions Vocab - down, up, around, point curve (letter W)	Commands - Instructions	Making 'W's on a small chalkboard.	Sh... - name ... Bri... - poor
Wk. 4	Writing/Group work		Assist in group work activities.	
Wk 5	Story Writing - All ... shows some ... Responding in a way	still relying on ...	scribing. ... Michele. ... showing animation Making sounds	
Wk. 6	As above.		Modelled 'sounding out' have a go' writing a story. Put some words on board.	Nicole ... letters ... copy ...
Wk 7	As above.		Needed prompt but did/could do it. Rachelle had a go.	

Using the ESL Scales

During the case study, Meredith had just begun to use the ESL Scales in relation to the children's writing. The status of the Scales in New South Wales was still uncertain at this point, as the moratorium was still in place, with implementation of all curriculum documents on hold following the Eltis Review into the use of outcomes and profiles.

She would draw on her accumulated knowledge of the children over a number of months in placing them on a particular level, rather than analyse specific samples of work – *'I do it a bit intuitively at this stage'*. She would identify certain pointers on the Scales which appeared to describe the child's current levels of proficiency:

> *She's not right up here on the Level 2 on the 'Strategies' but she's getting towards it. She's beyond the Level 1 stuff. She's certainly beyond 'using drawings or illustrations to compensate for lack of*

> *vocab' and she's not 'translating into her first language'. So she's more here. She's not 'using a dictionary' and she's not 'overusing fullstops'... Probably in between somewhere.*

Meredith would then look at what would be the equivalent Level on the Early Learning Profile. She felt that most of the children in the case study were on Level B2 to Level 2 on the ESL Scales (Writing), so would have been the equivalent of Transition Level in the Early Learning Profiles. Michael, however, was felt to be more Level B1 on the Scales, that is, Foundation/ Transition Level on Early Learning Profile.

During the year, Meredith intends to continue developing the descriptive profile for each child, so that over time, the teachers will have access to a comprehensive overview of each child's progress:

> *So you can see with each class I've got a list. So ultimately you will build up a profile on each child and you can carry it through from year to year.*

Providing feedback

It has been Meredith's experience that the classroom teachers have not been very receptive to her evaluation of the ESL students' progress.

> *I'd been working with a Year 1 child solidly all year on a withdrawal basis, one to one. And I was really impressed with his progress. It was just magnificent. In fact I made a special award to him with the presentations we had at the school because I thought he'd done so well. He needed the encouragement. So I thought 'I'll use the Scales here and I'll show his teacher where he's at'. So I photocopied all the pages that I thought were levels he was at. I think I did the level above as well and I highlighted all the pointers that I could see. I gave them to the teacher and said 'Look, when you get time read through this, this is where I think Slavko's at. If you have any queries or you think I've missed some pointers just use a different colour and give it back to me.' About 2 weeks later she said 'Oh, it's very detailed, couldn't understand a lot of it, but it's very comprehensive and I'm sure you're right with where you say he is, thank you'. And that was it.*
>
> *She basically wasn't going to do anything with it. Didn't want to know. 'You've done a wonderful job, Meredith, putting him on here, this is you know, wow, this is very very detailed, oh yeah very detailed. But what you do with it is your business, I don't want to know.'*
>
> *I kept a copy of it because I thought 'Okay, that was an end-of-year thing. At the beginning of the next year I'll give it to the Year 2 teacher and say 'This is where I think he's at – what do you think? Look over it over the next few weeks'. Same story.*

Meredith suspects that part of the problem is that mainstream teachers feel threatened by what they see as specialist ESL language. She gave an example of a teacher with 30 years experience who was meticulous about keeping records:

> *This teacher has the most detailed records I've ever seen. She keeps one of those checklist books with comments all the time. If I go in with Slavko and I say to her, 'Right I noticed he did such and such when we were working today' or 'I noticed he didn't understand this concept' – instantly she'd grab out her little checklist book and she'd put a comment in. She assesses all the time, standard class assessment tasks, and all the results are recorded. She had records like*

> *War and Peace, you know, very very detailed and that was on every child. When the parents came for interviews she could tell you exactly where the child was at, here's an example of the work, whole thing. Every 'i' was dotted. But when it came to the Scales, she backed off. I had thought she'd be a good one to give it to because she has these records and she's somebody that's into lists and all those things. But it was just something foreign to her experience.*

In terms of including input from the ESL teacher when it came to writing up reports for parents, again her contribution was not always sought.

> *I gave up my ESL reports when I did them one year, put them in the teacher's pigeon hole and she didn't give them out with the reports and I thought, I don't want to know any more.*
>
> *I didn't write any comments for Barry's Kindergarten reports. Barry didn't ask for any comments. Some teachers were saying 'Would you write an ESL comment?' and Barry didn't.*
>
> *I find the teachers ask me for a report if it's a first phase child, particularly if they want the report in another language, if they want comments in another language. At one point I acquired about 40 positive and 40 minus comments in Chinese. And we cut and pasted by number. It was a bit like ordering from a menu. 'We'll have a number 1, a 5, and a 6.' And we cut and pasted very carefully because we had no idea what they were. The English was underneath so we picked it according to the English and we really hoped that the Chinese said what the English did, and we cut and we pasted them and photocopied then because we couldn't copy the characters, and we sent those home. It was probably a very stilted report, but we did try. But we never heard a thing from the parents.*

Meredith felt that the language used in the Scales was not appropriate for including in reports to parents:

> *It's not meant to be reported to parents. It's not meant to be a reporting device where you're going to take 'this', 'this', and 'this' out of it and write it on the child's report. But you might say 'Well the child can do this' – you've got to rephrase it. The language is too difficult. You're not meant to say 'here, this is where he's at'.*
>
> *But you are meant to be able to sit down with a mainstream teacher and say 'Now this is where I think he's at, what do you think?' And the mainstream teacher can say 'Well this is where I think he's at' and give it to the ESL teacher and say 'What do you think?'. But from what I've seen that's not happening. It may happen if we get funding next year to inservice mainstream teachers with ESL teachers, which is what we wanted to do this year and couldn't. If we can bring that in, yes, but from what I'm seeing they don't want to know.*

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Meredith doesn't see any direct relationship between her assessment and her teaching. In the brief time she has at the school, it is hard to justify spending the time analysing the children's work, maintaining detailed profiles, and developing programs of work based on her findings.

Rather, she responds to children's needs on the spot as she identifies them. She keeps a running record of their progress in her head and every so often will jot down a few notes. Her teaching is more driven by the class teacher's program

than by any assessment of the children's work. It's not so much the specific needs of individual children which form the basis of her ESL intervention, but rather the content of the particular unit with which the class is dealing.

> *I'd find with the fractional positions, you're there two days a week or whatever – you're seeing the students once a week for an hour – the child has to survive in the mainstream class when you're not there. So I base the ESL work that I do on how that child can survive within the mainstream class whilst getting the ESL that they need within the teacher's program. I don't see any point in me doing a separate thing, it's all within the teacher's program.*

Meredith also felt that the experience of the school last year with the *Early Learning Profile Audit* had left them feeling somewhat jaded about spending time on detailed assessment:

> *Portfolios don't go to the next teachers. They just end up with parents. That's good in a way, but there's no continuity. The Early Learning Profiles is seen as peripheral, external to the teaching process. It's only used perhaps twice a year – at beginning and end.*

Views on the Assessment Framework

Over the period of the case study, Meredith has been participating in inservicing sessions for ESL teachers on how to use the ESL Scales. She feels that the reaction has been very positive:

> *There's been very good feedback from the training days. There's a feeling that ESL teachers now have something to justify their existence. We've got a concrete thing to put the students on now.*

The response from mainstream teachers has not been quite as enthusiastic however:

> *I haven't seen a lot of mainstream teachers jumping up and down saying 'Oh yes, thank you, isn't this wonderful', but the ESL teachers are happy because they have got something concrete now that applies to them. They've taken the scales for planning and for their use. They have given a courtesy copy to the mainstream teacher, but most of the time the mainstream teachers say, thank you and file it. I haven't seen any mainstream teachers being that willing to sit down and talk.*

The most pressing problem for ESL teachers in trying to use the ESL Scales was the very practical issue of how to physically deal with them. At a recent meeting of ESL teachers, they shared how they were each managing the task of making the Scales a working document:

> *A lot of us have found that even though the Scales aren't meant to be a checklist the easiest thing to do is to use them as a checklist. So at first we were all photocopying the different outcomes and pointers for the various levels for each child and using a highlighter to mark those things which the child could do and in another colour those things we were aiming for. I was there for ever photocopying and photocopying and then ruling the lines and cutting and pasting, had glue everywhere. We've been waiting for it to come out on disk, but in the meantime from what I've heard at the courses a lot of people are highlighting.*
>
> *Wanda came up with the idea where she had the students' names written at the bottom of the page and she had all the pointers and outcomes for the particular strand pasted at the top in little boxes and she would highlight the ones she was focussing on in a term. So*

> *Wanda came up with the idea where she had the students' names written at the bottom of the page and she had all the pointers and outcomes for the particular strand pasted at the top in little boxes and she would highlight the ones she was focussing on in a term. So in Class 3Z she was looking at Ahmed, Fred, whatever. So she could see that in oral interaction she was focussing on these pointers and these were the ones she would really look at for this outcome this term. Next term – different colour highlighter.*
>
> *And in the little boxes if she felt they had achieved it she'd tick or she'd put a date or whatever, so that she could say, yes, they have got that pointer and therefore I think they're pretty right. And she also had the pointers or the outcomes for the next level, I think as well. So she could say 'I want to get them from there to there'.*

The local ESL consultant then revealed that she had devised a set of proformas which would be available for use throughout the district.

> *So Wanda had spent weeks cutting and pasting. And I had also spent the whole holidays photocopying and cutting and pasting and then Megan said 'I've just put all the outcomes and pointers on computer and I'm going to print them out and you're going to get them anyway'.*

This experience underscores the extent to which different teachers throughout the State have been spending countless hours coming up with a workable method for using the Scales.

> *Because the difficulty with the Scales is flicking constantly through to find what you need. And quite often the Scales have got it all in levels with oral interaction, reading, writing all together. But if you want to compare Reading and Responding Level 4 with Reading and Responding Level 5, you've got to flick over 10 pages to find it. The original's not terribly practical to use.*

Another problem experienced by the ESL teachers has been a sense of confusion as to the purpose of the Scales:

> *They've gone through the Scales, they know all the Strands and the Strand Organisers, and all those things, but the hardest thing is 'what are they going to be used for? Are they going to be used for survey? Do we have to plot every child on them?' And some schools are pressuring their ESL teachers into plotting every child on the Scales. But we say, 'No, they are only a tool to give the teachers a common language, and if necessary you might say, 'I'm going to put a particular child on the Scales' or 'I'm going to target 'x' number of children and put them on the Scales'.*

Consequently, the ESL teachers are being advised to take it slowly, introducing it gradually into their program, and breaking their assessment processes into 'manageable chunks' so that the experience doesn't become too overwhelming:

> *We're saying to ESL teachers 'don't feel you've got to put every kid on something like that instantly. Target a class or a grade that you work with. Put them on first, then worry about the rest. Or start with Kinder and build them up all the way through. Something like that, and just see how you go with it.'*
>
> *It's meant to be an assessing and programming tool for the teacher. 'Where are they going next? How are we getting them there?' So that question: 'I've got 100 ESL children in my school and I've got to put every one on the Scales!' No. You don't even have to put them on every Strand. You might decide I'm going to target writing*

> *in this class, so I'm going to pick six children out of this class and I'm only going to look at their writing this term. Next term I might look at their reading. But to break it down into manageable chunks. And that's the biggest hurdle we've got to get through. There's this tremendous fear. And no matter how many times we've run these days, that question comes up. Every time. 'But I still have to.' So it's a worry.*

Meredith has observed that the levels are interpreted differently by different teachers. At Training Day, for example, the ESL teachers had annotated work samples and were matching work samples to pointers. There was a big discrepancy between high school and primary teachers.

> *The primary teachers put their kids on Level 2 and so will the high school teachers. The high school teachers object that the primary are referring to a simple little recount of an excursion, while they are doing some in-depth study. The high school people are totally confused as to how a primary child can be on same level as a high school child. They have a perception that high school must be higher and primary school must be lower. The teachers from the Intensive English Centre rank even higher again. It's a problem when they get into high school.*

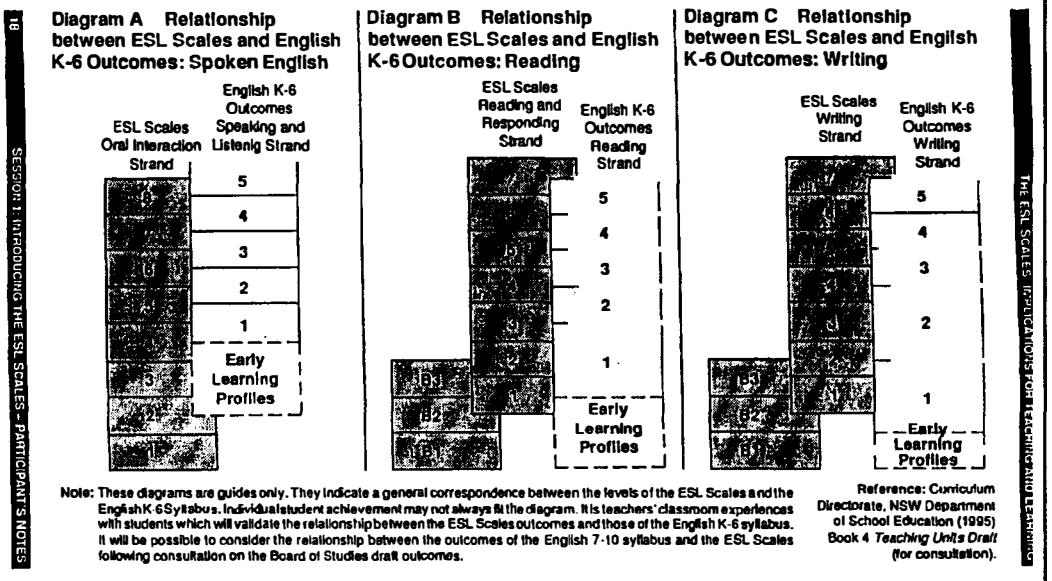
Meredith's personal opinion was that the Scales are not as user-friendly as some other documents, such as First Steps:

> *You have to hunt through the handbook to find the different levels. It makes it hard to compare.*
>
> *They are good when you want to assess a child and find out exactly what they can do, where they're at. But they don't give you any strategies for how to get them from A to B. They tell you what B is, but you have to work out how to get them there. That's a bit of a problem. But they're good in terms of if you've got work samples and you want to annotate them – pinpoint exactly what they're doing and where they're at. They're very detailed for that. But then it's hard because you're left up to your own devices with what you do to move them."*

Meredith has found the process of making links between the ESL Scales and the Early Learning Profiles to be quite confusing:

> *B3 in the Scales fits in with Levels 1&2 of the Profiles, although I don't really see how 'cause I think there's a big jump up here. So if it all fits in, if you're on B1, and even B2, you must fit in here to Foundation and Transition. There must be a correspondence there. Looking at the diagram, this is what you would assume. And if you're B2 you might still be there moving in to Level 1 and B3 should correspond across, which I don't think it does, there's a pretty big jump.*
>
> *So it's a nightmare trying to put it all together, and I don't know whether I've done this right or not, but if you look at it that way, then 'that' should equal 'that'.*

Sample 3: The Relationship Between The ESL Scales and English K-6



She feels that the ESL Scales provide more detail than the Early Learning Profile:

> *They've got more on the communication. Because they've got the strands - Communication, Language and Cultural Understanding, Structure, and Strategies – it gives more pointers, more detail. And specific to ESL children.*
>
> *We had a child in Year 1 and the teacher was saying 'this didn't fit him, he can't do these things' – he's not even on Foundation level. So this (the Early Learning Profiles) didn't really indicate what he could do. And when we went back to this (the Scales) we found that this indicated a lot more things that he could do. So we found that the Scales just gave you more details specific to those children who didn't fit the Early Learning Profiles.*
>
> *So sometimes we had to look at the Scales for children like that – especially when we had to profile for the Department and there was this big panic – 'Oh, but they don't fit this (Early Learning Profiles)!' - 'Ah but Slavko fits this (Scales)'. It's just more detailed, but I don't think it's anything you can just give out willy-nilly to classroom teachers, because it's too much to wade through. It's a pain even for us to wade through.*

Meredith believes that the different terminology used in describing the language proficiency of ESL students in NSW can be quite confusing. The traditional terminology has been **'Phases'** (see over: Sample 4). Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 are still used by the bureaucracy for funding purposes. The ESL Scales refer to **Levels** and **Bands** (see over: Samples 5-7). While in the Early Learning Profiles and English K-6 the terms **Levels** and **Stages** are used.

> *English K-6 also has Stages as well. So they call Level 1,2 and 3 - Stage 1, Levels 2,3 and 4 are Stage 2. 3,4 & 5 are Stage 3, and then they break Stage 1 down into Early Stage 1, Later Stage 1 - which gets very messy.*

> *But the ESL Scales as well, one of the things says that the beginning levels of all the three strands plus the first and second stage they're calling Band A, and then Level 3 and 4 are Band B, maybe level 5 I'm not sure, and 6 and 7 are Band C. And teachers want to know whether the Band terminology and definitions replace Phases – at the moment they've said no. So we've still got phases. So when it comes to the school survey, we've still got 1st Phase, 2nd Phase and 3rd Phase. It's all very confusing.*

In terms of the inservice support provided for ESL teachers, Meredith felt the ESL Scales Training Days had been quite useful, however:

> *Support is still needed to introduce it to the rest of the school. A lot of the ESL teachers are saying they want support to do that. Although it will probably be five minutes in a staff meeting. Unless they're in schools with high ESL numbers. But the ESL teachers want support to introduce it. But I think a lot of schools will say 'Well it's not spelt out as a priority so therefore we don't want to know'.*

Overall, Meredith feels positively about the potential of the ESL Scales and has conscientiously attempted to implement them in her school, but she uses them only to the extent that they genuinely benefit the ESL children and remains somewhat cautious about their general acceptance by mainstream staff.

Samples 4-7 illustrate the different terminology with which NSW teachers have to cope: Phases, Bands, Levels, and Stages

Sample 4: Definition of ESL Learner Phases (1996-97 Annual Survey Primary Schools, p.7)

ESL LEARNER PHASES

First Phase

First Phase learners are those NESB students whose understanding and production of spoken or written English is obviously limited in all social and educational situations. These learners are acquiring basic English language proficiency and demonstrate elementary functioning in an English-speaking classroom.

First Phase learners range from:

- complete beginners with minimal or no English; to
- students who can communicate in English with limited fluency about events, themes and topics related to their personal experiences.

Some First Phase learners may have studied English in their country of origin and have developed reading and writing skills but have negligible oral skills in English. First Phase learners may also include students from non-English speaking backgrounds who were born in Australia and had limited or no exposure to English depending on factors such as age on entry and literacy in their first language.

As a general rule, an ESL student of average learning ability, social adjustment, with a complete educational background will have moved beyond the First Phase of learning after a period of 3 terms of instruction with ESL support.

Second Phase

Second Phase learners are those NESB students whose understanding and production of spoken and written English is progressing, but is still limited to a range of familiar social and educational situations. These learners have a transitional English language proficiency and demonstrate partial and variable functioning across the school curriculum.

Second Phase learners range from:

- students who have acquired a basic communicative repertoire in English which enables them to participate in and respond to the language and literacy demands of some class activities; to
- students who can communicate with some degree of confidence/ coherence/ appropriateness about subject matter appropriate to their age group but remote from their immediate personal experiences.

Students at the end of Second Phase will have made significant progress in their oral English language skills and will have been applying their English language and literacy skills to both formal and informal situations.

As a general rule, an ESL student of average learning ability, social adjustment and with a complete educational background will have moved beyond the Second Phase of ESL learning after a total period of 3 years instruction with ESL support.

Third Phase
Third Phase learners are those NESB students who generally function fluently and competently in English, but who occasionally need assistance in meeting the particular language and literacy demands of English in specific social and educational situations. These learners are developing broad English language proficiency and demonstrate apparent functioning throughout the school curriculum.

Third Phase learners range from:
- students who have developed a transitional communicative repertoire in English which enables them to access and apply the English required in most language and literacy activities; to
- students who can communicate in English with confidence/ clarity/ flexibility about subject matter appropriate to their age group but unrelated to their direct personal experience.

Third Phase learners include students from non-English speaking backgrounds who were born in Australia or completed the greater part of their education in Australian schools. These learners may exhibit effective oral English communication skills but continue to experience difficulties in successfully completing literacy tasks. Students at the end of Third Phase will normally have extended their English language and literacy skills in both formal as well as informal situations and be able to learn and participate effectively in the mainstream curriculum.

As a general rule, an ESL student of average learning ability, social adjustment and with a complete educational background will have moved beyond the Third Phase of ESL learning after a total period of 7 years instruction with ESL assistance.

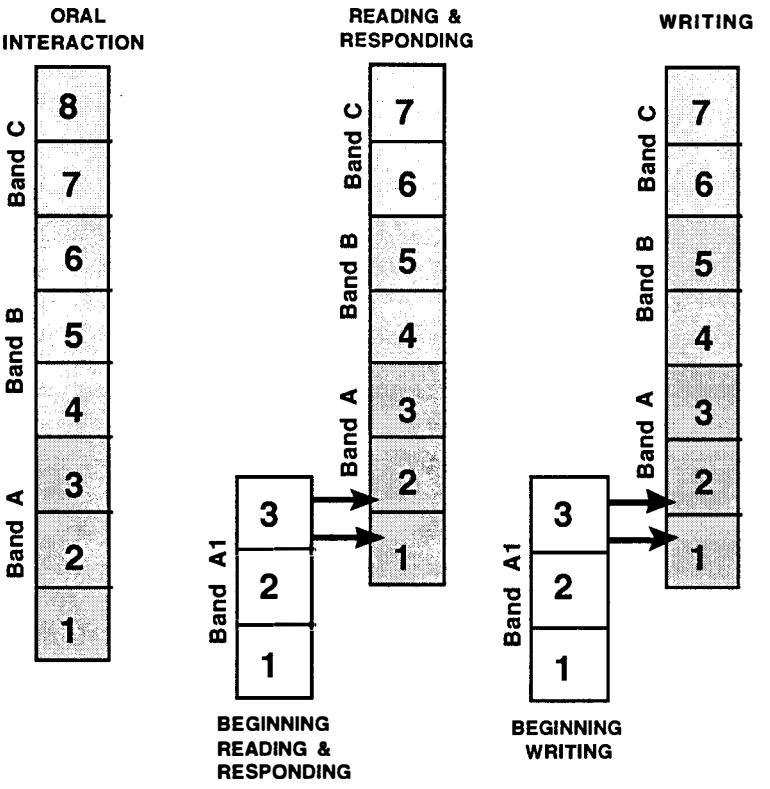
Sample 5: ESL Bands (from English K-6 Syllabus, NSW Board of Studies, 1994: 75)

Syllabus – Planning, Programming and Assessing

Listening and Talking in English	Reading in English	Writing in English
	Band A1 ESL readers range from being complete beginners in the reading process to being able to respond with understanding to well-known texts matched to their developing world knowledge and knowledge of English (*ESL Scales* Beginning Reading and Responding 1–3).	**Band A1** ESL writers range from being complete beginners in the writing process to being able to communicate ideas, events and experiences through simple texts based on familiar spoken and written English (*ESL Scales* Beginning Writing 1–3).
Band A ESL speakers range from being beginner speakers of English to being able to understand controlled English and express simple messages in predictable exchanges (*ESL Scales* Oral Interaction 1–3).	**Band A** ESL readers range from being beginner readers in English to being able to learn from controlled texts containing predictable structures and familiar vocabulary and content (*ESL Scales* Reading and Responding 1–3).	**Band A** ESL writers range from being beginner writers in English to being able to write about various familiar topics in different texts showing a developing use of simple language, structures and cohesion (*ESL Scales* Writing 1–3).
Band B ESL speakers range from being able to respond to and expand messages on familiar topics in predictable interactions to being able to understand and develop messages in formal and informal situations (*ESL Scales* Oral Interaction 4–6).	**Band B** ESL readers range from being able to identify main ideas and specific information in various texts to being able to interpret texts removed from personal experience using the information gained for other purposes (*ESL Scales* Reading and Responding 4–5).	**Band B** ESL writers range from being able to write with some overall coherence on familiar topics using a basic repertoire of text types to being able to communicate ideas through well-known text types showing an ability to adapt content and language for intended purposes and audiences (*ESL Scales* Writing 4–5).
Band C ESL speakers range from being able to understand and develop messages in different forms to being able to engage with and articulate ideas on various topics in varying contexts (*ESL Scales* Oral Interaction 7–8).	**Band C** ESL readers range from being able to read with understanding a variety of authentic texts for different purposes making justifiable interpretations beyond a literal level to being able to evaluate the validity and quality of texts justifying their own understandings against those of others (*ESL Scales* Reading and Responding 6–7).	**Band C** ESL writers range from being able to express their ideas through a variety of text types showing a cohesive and flexible use of language to being able to write effectively for most classroom tasks demonstrating some personal style and consistent control over language features (*ESL Scales* Writing 6–7).

Sample 6: ESL Scales: Bands and Levels (Source: ESL Scales Training OHTs)

ESL Scales: BANDS AND LEVELS



Sample 7: Bands and Phases: What's the difference? (Source: ESL Scales Training OHTs)

Bands and Phases: What's the difference?

It is important to note the difference between the bands and phases.

Phases include 3 kinds of information:

1. proficiency in English
2. ESL learner characteristics
3. time in an Australian school

In government schools, phases are used to allocate ESL priorities on the basis of need.

Bands categorise ESL learner outcomes:

These bands are broad groupings of the levels and outcomes of the ESL Scales. The 3 bands describe basic, functional and extended competence in English. They provide an overview of the ESL Scales and will make is easier for teachers both to plan programs and to report in relation to ESL learner achievement.

Deidre at Greenvale Special School

Beverly Derewianka

The School Context

Greenvale is a special school for children with moderate to severe/profound physical and intellectual disabilities. Nearly a quarter of the children are from families of non-English-speaking background so we felt it was of interest to see whether the various evaluation frameworks had anything to say about this population.

The children's language proficiency varies from non-verbal to verbal. In one wing of the school are those children who are virtually unable to communicate verbally. They require constant intensive care. Unable to walk or even sit upright, they spend their day supported by an amazing array of ingenious devices: wheeled walking frames, belly-boards on wheels, various types of wheelchairs, beanbags, and so on. To the untrained eye, they appear to be in a world of their own, eyes gazing into the distance, unaware of the people around them. The caregivers, however, will be constantly talking to them, stimulating them, making comments as they walk past, asking questions as they adjust their cushions and blow their noses.

In another wing, the children are relatively animated and vocal. Their attempts at speaking might not always make much sense to an outsider, but there is a recognition of the possibility of interaction using the voice, however idiosyncratic the language might be at times.

The numbers in each class are small, averaging about eight students, of whom generally two or three will be ESL. Looking after these children is very labour-intensive. Each class needs at least two full-time adults – generally a trained teacher (often with special education qualifications) as well as a teacher's aide to assist with the physical moving of the children, the constant attention to their bodily needs, and the variety of materials and resources required. In addition there are volunteer assistants. Parents, university students, high school students, people on DEETYA programs, retired people, unemployed workers all regularly provide additional input in the class, as the school principal notes:

> *We have Sister Joan from the convent at Coalport who comes over twice a week I think and spends the whole day with the infants. Really I think sometimes it must be penance with some of the classes she volunteers for. But she comes twice, once or twice a week. We get people who want work experience, who want work either as an assistant or as a teacher, so they come in and volunteer on the days when they're not working, so when vacancies arise they're seen as being keen and they're seen as knowing how the system runs. And just straight volunteers. Jan, for example, comes in every Wednesday, sometimes as a paid day, but most of the time she comes in just to help out.*
>
> *Sometimes we get people on special programs, DEETYA or whatever, where they're paid for so many hours a week. We've just had a whole group of them in and together with some students of our own they've landscaped all the gardens and they've built a sensory garden where the kids can touch and smell the different plants.*

> *And we do get some parents. Not a lot, because mostly they need a break from looking after the kids at home which can be non-stop. There's a new little one in the infant's class. Mum's very very keen. She's Thai. The mum has come in and done cooking with other classes. We've had wonderful Thai food, oh, beautiful curries when she's come in and worked with a High School class. We had a Thai food day and she came in and supervised all the cooking.*

The ESL population ranges from age four through to eighteen, with students from a great variety of language backgrounds: Macedonian, Vietnamese, Thai, Italian ... *'a bit of everything'*. The ESL position was created at Greenvale when the school realised that they were eligible for ESL assistance. Recently, however, the school has had much of its support slashed, losing half a day of the ESL allocation per week as well as the position of Communication teacher and the services of their Community Liaison Officer. This is a significant blow to a school which depends heavily on their specialist staff and the goodwill and assistance of the community.

The ESL program

It is in this context that Deidre works as the ESL teacher. She has been a fractional appointment (two days per week) for four years.

The speech therapist (again a part-time appointment) conducts diagnostic assessments of the children's language and then draws up a detailed, individual program for the guidance of the generalist teachers as well as the ESL teacher.

The ESL program is mainly conducted on a withdrawal basis as each child needs intensive work on quite specific areas. Deidre's description captures the nature of the program:

> *We have an individual program for each student: an Individual Education Program (IEP). We rely heavily on the Severe and Moderate curriculums from the Department. It depends on the students' needs. Some students' communication doesn't even enter into it. Their program is so basic that they're concerned with chewing or whatever. And other students, theirs is quite sophisticated, where they're training the students to get from home to school by public transport alone. Making a cup of tea or some independent skill.*
>
> *The language activities whether they're ESL or whether they're not are all aimed at communication. Everything is communicate, communicate, communicate. It doesn't matter how you communicate as long as there is some attempt at independent communication.*
>
> *Working on colours, reading with them, prepositions, object discrimination, all trying to get the kids to communicate. Sometimes it's with the communication board where they have to press the number or press the symbol and the board talks – robot-like boards. Or it might be with the black and white drawings and they have to choose the symbol that you say. So you might have a dog, a bear and a cat or something and you say 'Show me the dog' and they've got to give you the dog. So it's all of that sort of communication work. However you want to do it – coloured photographs, cards, jigsaw puzzles – the resources there are endless. As long as it involves communication.*

In this case study, we will be concentrating on Deidre's assessment procedures and teaching practices in relation to two students in particular: Jovan and Tania.

The Classroom Context

Deidre is a trained ESL specialist with postgraduate qualifications and has worked in various school systems for some sixteen years. The space where she works with the children is bright, stimulating and welcoming, with cushions, toys, posters, mobiles, picture books, and a large vase of flowers.

Working with Jovan

Jovan is an eight-year old from a Macedonian background. He is a good-natured child, eager to please, who is trying hard to communicate in English. He is physically awkward, small for his age and has a moderate level of learning disability. He communicates by gesture (eg. pointing), action (eg. picking up bag, shaking head), and word (eg. "icka" - sticker).

There are four other children in Jovan's class, each of them with their distinctive personalities and characteristics. Emma has difficulty standing up and needs to be physically supported during group activities. She doesn't have much muscular control so her mouth needs constant wiping and she has difficulty holding things. She is indiscriminately affectionate and has to be taught not to hug everyone. Hwang prefers to spend most of his time in a corner, isolated from the rest. He mainly communicates through crying, from continual soft sobbing through to ear-piercing shrieks. Susan is an alert, wirey girl with quite a competitive nature. She is often unco-operative and attention-seeking and sometimes needs to be physically restrained. And lastly there is Mick, who is socially withdrawn and needs great encouragement to participate in activities.

The classes are physically and emotionally demanding. It has taken several weeks to establish even the slightest sense of group cohesion – something a teacher in a regular school can normally take for granted. The children here do not automatically relate to each other and tend to wander off on their own – physically and mentally. In a one hour session, it is cause for celebration if there are even a few minutes when the children actually interact purposefully with each other.

The children's attention span is generally quite short, so activities need to be changed regularly. One game involved blowing out candles at appropriate points in a poem in order to strengthen the children's breathing and co-ordination. In another activity, children were sprayed with a fine mist of water and surprised with horns and tooters to stimulate their senses. There is a great deal of singing. Even classroom instructions are often sung, as it is felt that the children respond to the repetitive rhythms.

Jovan's social and intellectual abilities are beyond the rest of the class, as noted by Deidre:

> *He's really the star of the show. His communication in the past 2 years, even in the past 12 months, has come on out of sight. I have spent three years with Jovan going 'b, b, b, b' and now he says 'bubbles' 'baby' 'book' 'ball', all these words clearly, and others. His comprehension is so much better. Again when he wants to, but he's developed a lot cognitively and his responses are much much better now. So I think another year with his current teacher would be perfect because she would really really foster that. I could be misjudging him here, but I don't think he's ever going to be a reader by any stretch of the imagination, but he will at least be able to communicate, he'll be able to point to things, he'll be able to respond and he'll be able to sit, listen to a story, do something like that.*

> *The teacher is willing to put time in with Jovan. And that's the important part. She knows him, she's familiar with him and she's more than willing to put extra effort in to a totally individual program for him that the others will just join in, but Jovan will be doing the hard stuff.*

Deidre sometimes works with the classroom teacher during the activities, concentrating on helping Jovan and Hwang. At other times, she works with Jovan independently, getting him to identify pictures and letters, to attempt to count, to produce sounds, to articulate words in response to stimuli.

Working with Tania

Tania is ten years old. Unlike Jovan, she is in the academic class, where the children engage to some extent in reading, writing and maths. She has a moderate sensorineural hearing loss in both ears, but has sufficient residual hearing to enable her to hear quite clearly, as long as she wears her hearing aids. Normally she would be a candidate for the Hearing Impaired Unit with some integration into a mainstream school. It is not her hearing, however, that keeps her at Greenvale. Rather it is her unpredictable behaviour. One day she will give the impression of being co-operative, involved, eager to learn, and other days she will be sullen, verbally abusive, and physically violent. In the school, she is often referred to as 'the feral child'.

Her class teacher has a very close relationship with Tania, taking her home on weekends to give the parents respite time and providing much-needed emotional stability. In a major breakthrough recently, Tania was persuaded to wear her hearing aids and made great progress with her language and reading. In the last week or two, however, she has reverted to ripping them out and refusing to wear them, making communication very difficult.

She comes from a Serbian background with other family members who are hearing impaired. None of the family speaks English. The extent to which her language and behaviour problems are due to physical or mental impairment or to social and cultural factors is unknown.

In the morning session, there would be whole class activities such as singing, craft, learning the day and date, numbers, and other basic skills.

> *Of the eight children, one, two, possibly three of them plus Tania can read to some extent. And two, I'd say, are non-readers totally, one somewhere in between. And one child has come back from integration that didn't work. One of the other girls, to my knowledge, is not reading or anything academic. The other one is, and she's ESL because I've worked with her before, and she's the one that the integration didn't work.*
>
> *She's probably on about the same level as Tania, and she's the same age. She doesn't have a hearing problem though. And one of the boys is ESL background. He's older but he's not at the same level as Tania is. He's still reading 'is', 'to' and basic sight words like that, and with a struggle.*

In a later session, the class teacher and the ESL teacher work with specific children on their individual programs. Sometimes Deidre would get Tania to sound out certain phonemes. Or she would show her certain symbols and ask her to do the appropriate sign. Or they would work on basic sight words for survival and community sight words such as 'Stop' 'Don't Walk' 'Bank' 'Chemist' 'Ambulance':

> *We went through: tick tick tick tick. All of those words she read with monotonous correctness. Sound-effects, the whole thing. And it was*

> *the appropriate sound. For the ambulance it was and ee-aw ee-aw. And if you shuffled the cards up she knew them. So she had a quite a thick wad of cards.*

Sometimes flashcards of sight words were used, often with matching pictures or symbols. There was one which had a wheelchair, for example, indicating facilities for the disabled:

> *She would say 'disability' and then she would say 'Adam's chair' because Adam was in a wheelchair and she would point to Adam 'Adam's chair', even if the word said 'Disability' it was always 'Adam's chair'.*

Following a number of similar activities, Deidre would listen while Tania read the current Reader. As she read, Deidre would note down any particular difficulties encountered and then devise an exercise to address it, such as jumbled words, finding the sentence, or insert the missing word.

When Tania is in the mood for working, she is totally attentive, her eyes bright and her body tensed with concentration.

> *She's got a tremendous amount of potential to go further in reading, specifically. I don't think writing enters into it, because she won't hold a pencil, she shows no interest whatever. Even colouring in, it's scribble, doesn't want to know. But in reading and in speech she's got a lot of potential if she would leave the hearing aid in so that she can hear the sounds correctly. Her speech is clearer by 100% when she's got the hearing aid in. When she hasn't it's no good. And the same with the reading. The reading and the comprehension, her memory is very good. You can give her a book a couple of weeks later and she still can read the book. She reads words in isolation. She'll do a matching exercise for you as long as she doesn't have to pick up the pencil. She can point though and tell you where the word is that it's got to go in the space. You can see by her eyes she'll use picture clues, and she loves to be read to.*

When she is not in the mood, however, no amount of coaxing or bribery will persuade her.

> *She's done this to me two years now where she's gone through a phase where she's worked brilliantly and she's also gone through a phase where you could cheerfully scream, where she's kicked, punched, bitten and generally refused.*

To be aware of her potential, and yet not being able to build on it because of unfathomable problems of behaviour and temperament is extremely frustrating for all concerned.

> *She may end up doing more living type skills this year, I don't know, more so than academic. But the fact that she's got competition in this class in terms of reading may well spur her on because the other little ESL girl can read. So it may be that, 'Oh, well I want to do what she's doing' 'I want to be as good as her' so it might be an incentive. The rest won't offer any competition. Tania would be the top.*

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Deidre's assessment program with Jovan and Tania is not very wide-ranging. Where the scope of their language abilities is so limited, it is often the case that she will spend weeks working on a single aspect. When Jovan came out with a recognisable word rather than isolated sounds it was a great breakthrough, involving months of intensive work.

Instruments such as the ESL Scales are not finely-grained enough to provide the sort of diagnostic information needed at this level, so Deidre relies on the judgement of the Speech Therapist in developing her program. She will assess the children in relation to how they are achieving the goals set for them by their Individual Education Program.

Jovan's Speech Pathology Assessment Report

The Speech Pathologist's formal assessment of Jovan's language revealed that he has delayed expressive language skills, using a mixture of signing, gestures and single words to communicate his message. In his receptive language, he has difficulties with the preposition "around", with comparatives and superlatives (eg. "shorter"; "shortest"), and general vocabulary development.

In terms of his articulation, Jovan was found to have greatly improved in recent times. Despite a severe articulation disorder due to poor musculature, *'he does produce the /m/; /n/; /b/; /d/; and /l/ phonemes correctly and consistently in the initial position. He is also able to produce the /n/ phoneme consistently in the medial position.'*

Deidre's assessment of Jovan

In her own informal assessment of Jovan, Deidre drew on a variety of criteria and indicators. She acknowledged that these were a 'motley collection', including some 'from her own head', some from the ESL Scales and some from First Steps:

- responds to own name
- repeats sound patterns (eg. a a a)
- recognises voices
- uses voice to attract attention
- co-ordinates gestures and words
- understands simple questions
- follows simple directions
- engages in language games, songs, etc.
- can say some words starting with 'b' (eg. bubbles, baby)
- can recognise prepositions "on" and "under"

Tania's Speech Pathology Assessment Report

The Speech Pathology Assessment Report gave the following description of Tania's language:

> ***Expressive Communication:*** Tania uses a combination of signing and verbal communication to interact with others and to communicate her needs, feelings and wants. It was suggested two years ago that Tania have access to relevant Compic symbols within the classroom environment, as not everybody is able to understand her signing, and this will be a greater issue when she interacts in the wider community as she matures. This suggestion was not taken up by Tania's class teacher at the time. Tania's current teacher may wish to employ Compic symbols in a functional manner in the classroom setting.
>
> ***Receptive Language:*** The Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language – Revised was administered. At a chronological age of 119 months, Tania achieved the age level equivalencies listed below. The results from the previous assessment are also listed, to allow a comparison to be made of both performances:

Sub-test	Previous Age Equivalency	Current Age Equivalency
1. Word classes & relations	39-41 months	48-51 months
2. Grammatical morphemes	39-41 months	40-43 months
3. Elaborated Sentence	27-29 months	36-39 months
4. Total Test	37-38 months	43-44 months

Presenting error patterns:
1. Numeracy concepts eg. "most", "many"
2. Prepositions such as "in front"; "between"; "around"
3. Recognition of the plural s marker eg. "bird" vs "birds"
4. Recognition of personal pronouns eg. "He" vs "She" vs "They"
5. Recognition of negative structures eg. "not", "isn't", etc

The Speech Pathologist's report did acknowledge that parents often indicate that they feel that this assessment is not representative of their child's true capabilities. The Test format – being line drawings – is a difficult one, and children do not always concentrate well during testing. It concludes, however, that, whilst the test is normed on American children and provides only a rough guide to an individual's performance level, it is nevertheless a useful assessment process, "as error patterns can be determined, so that a starting point can be made in the therapy program".

Articulation: The Goldman Fristoe Test for Articulation Disorders was administered, although as Tania became a little unco-operative, the test was not completed. From the sections completed, Tania presented with the following substitution and omission errors:

Substitution errors:
initial position (/p/; /g/; /k/; /t/; "sh"; "ch"; "r"; "j"; /s/; /z/)
medial position (/p/; /k/; /t/; "sh"; /s/; /z/)

Omission errors:
initial position (/h/)
medial position ("ch")
final position (/k/; /f/; /d/; /l/; "ch")

The sounds she can make successfully with a general degree of consistency are the /m/; /n/; /w/; /b/; /f/; and /d/.

On the basis of this assessment, the Speech Therapist recommended that Tania receive weekly speech therapy, but acknowledged that "because speech therapy services at Greenvale remain overstretched, Tania will only receive a consultative speech therapy service on a 4-6 weekly basis".

Deidre's assessment of Tania

Again Deidre's assessment criteria were drawn from a variety of sources, including her own observations, the ESL Scales, and the Macquarie program.

In her judgement, Tania can:

- read simple texts by sight words (quite extensive list)
- read words in context and in isolation
- identify correct word order for a sentence when words are put in random order

- predict, using picture cues
- track left to right, top to bottom
- point to words
- match word to word with up to four distractions
- select words with picture clues
- select some words without picture clues

Tania is beginning to:

- use grapho-phonic cues
- learn phonic system
- know initial sounds: m, a, s, t, p, o, c
- tap and sound for three-letter CVC words: mat, pat, cat, etc.

Tania cannot, however, decipher unknown or unfamiliar words. She leaves them out or makes something up. She tends to skip over "little" words: the, it, and, etc. Her knowledge of these appears to be negligible (as with many hard-of-hearing children). she does not have these words in her vocabulary and is currently picking them up through her reading.

Using Assessment Frameworks

Deidre recognises that the Speech Pathology Report is relatively narrow in its focus, and that her own list of criteria is somewhat eclectic and unordered. She therefore was interested in seeing what the various mainstream and ESL assessment frameworks had to offer. At the time of this case study, the school had just been inserviced in using First Steps, and Deidre was exploring the appropriateness of the Early Learning Profile and the NLLIA Bandscales for use in Special Education contexts.

First Steps

In looking at the First Steps program, Deidre felt that Jovan would probably be in Phase 1: Beginning Language. There is evidence that he is using some of the indicators:

- understands more than can be verbalised
- uses non-verbal gestures
- uses non-verbals to support single utterances eg. "icka" and points to chart

Tania, in terms of her reading, would probably be closest to Phase 2: Experimental Reading:

Indicator 1:	she knows print has constant messages
Indicator 2:	this varies according to text/activity
Indicator 3:	she uses prior knowledge of the text
Indicator 4:	she recognises personally significant words
Indicator 5:	she matches most words

She is also achieving other indicators. At the text level, for example, she knows that print goes from left to right and top to bottom. She is beginning to identify the subject through the title and illustrations and is beginning to comment on the action in the story (eg. "girl sick" with appropriate action or sign).

At the word level, she recognises alphabet letters, knows some sound/letter relationships, and points to words.

In terms of her attitude, she selects books on familiarity, is beginning to see herself as a reader, and chooses books for pleasure.

In terms of her attitude, she selects books on familiarity, is beginning to see herself as a reader, and chooses books for pleasure.

From this assessment, and with reference to the First Steps materials, Deidre identified the following behaviours to be encouraged:

- emphasis on meaning using context
- syntactic knowledge
- contextual and pictorial clues

Related activities were then selected, again as suggested by the First Steps program, such as cloze, rhyming words, chants and songs.

The Early Learning Profiles

Deidre also looked at the Early Learning Profile, a document produced by the NSW Department of School Education to supplement the English K-6 Syllabus in the early stages of reading and writing. In particular, she concentrated on Tania's reading ability.

In terms of early indications of literacy awareness and book conventions, the Early Learning Profiles indicated that Tania is demonstrating signs of literate behaviour:

> 'Demonstrates emerging awareness that written and visual texts convey meaning. Asks for books to be read.' *She does that in her own way. She will shove a book into your hands and the assumption is you will read it.*
>
> 'Identify pictures in books, magazines, television, video.' *Well I suppose she does, she knows where the pictures are.*
>
> 'Uses books for appropriate purposes, for enjoyment, looking at pictures.' *Well she will look at a book and become quite involved with the pictures.*
>
> 'Knows some early book conventions. Open the book, hold book the correct way, turn pages indiscriminately.' *Um, I don't think she turns the pages indiscriminately, I think she turns very methodically in fact.*
>
> 'Spend time looking at a book.' *Yes.*
>
> 'Respond to visual texts and to texts read to them. Stories, songs rhymes, factual recipes.' *What sort of response? Well she'll demand another book. It's hard to tell with her, once she gets to the end of the book that's it – thank you very much, now get another one. Sometimes she'll point to a picture. If it's a funny picture or whatever she'll point to it or she'll communicate something, so she is interacting somehow, responding.*
>
> 'Turn the pages of the book telling a story from memory.' *She can do that if she's had the book over and over and over again she will do that.*
>
> 'Relate different texts to situations in their lives.' The toilet sign in the school and the one in the park. Now signs, she would relate, but notes to school when sick and parents writing letters and a shopping list, she wouldn't relate any of that. But signs and those environmental words, yes. Ambulance, police, shop, all of that, definitely.

Tania's rudimentary abilities to deal with print are validated by the pointers in the Early Learning Profiles:

'Recognise and interpret print in the environment. Logos, fast food signs.' *Well that would be her everyday survival words ... and Macdonalds, or course, yeah. She does recognise those sorts of things, but that's part of their individual programs here, we teach all of them to recognise words like 'bank' 'chemist' etcetera, etcetera, so that when they're in the community they do know 'park', all that sort of thing.*

'Recognise initial letter of first name.' *Yes, she definitely knows 'T' for Tania. She might not know the rest but she knows the 'T'.*

'Recognise own name in print.' *Yes. If she sees her own name printed, 'cos we had a language experience book for her that we would add stories to. And she would go to it and see 'Tania, Tania, Tania, Tania, Tania, Tania, Tania' everywhere, 'cos we quite often started the stories with 'Tania'. 'Tania went to the park today'. 'Tania likes the park' – she could pick Tania everywhere.*

'Recognise classroom environmental print, labels on articles in the room.' *I don't know whether that would be more the environmental words that she knows. I don't really have things labelled around the room that much.*

'Approximate reading text from a variety of sources.' *Well, she can read various people's handwriting in the exercise book. We all print, but she can read the varying forms of print, whether it's done with a texta or a pencil or a biro, she can still read what we've written in the exercise book.*

'I don't think she would 'recognise and recall parts of a text'. *She's got the direction though, she knows that* 'reading is left to right and top to bottom'.

'Recognise that a series of words make up a text. Recognise words are made up of letters or sounds.' *Well, she'll say if she sees a 'T' sometimes she will say 'Ah, T for Tania or she'll just say 'Tania' even though it's just a 'T'. Sometimes it's in the middle of another word, but she'll go 'Tania, Tania'. So I mean she knows but I don't know whether she knows that that's a letter and this is a word, but she knows it's the start of her name.*

'Locate and recognise known words while reading a simple text.' *Yes. If she's read it and then you say to her 'Where's the word that says 'cat'?' quite often she can point to it.*

'Recognise some letters or sounds beyond those in their own name.' *She probably could, I'd say, if it was the start of a word. Say it was a 'b' and she'd probably say 'b' for Brendan, kids in the class, she'd recognise possibly, she might even know their name, but she'd also say the first letter, Brendan or Jesse or whatever and she'd pick that.*

'Coordinate and match between the spoken and written word with supportive finger pointing.' *Yes, she can do that.*

'Say common sounds for 6 letters consistently.' *Probably, yes, I think I'd put that in there that she can do that.*

'Match high frequency words.' *Yes, she can do that.*

More specific skills appear not to be as highly developed, however:

'Distinguish between words, letters, punctuation and numerals.' *No.*

'Locate front cover, back cover, beginning, end of text.' *Probably not.*

'Capital and small letters.' *No. In terms of full stops, capital letters, forget it. No.*

Her interest in a variety of text types and her ability to discriminate between different types did not appear to be a high priority:

'Asks for a variety of texts to be read to them.' *Well, no, she just picks a book. A book is a book.*

'Show interest in a variety of texts.' This variety I don't think is relevant to her.

'Collect a favourite book.' *I don't know, haven't seen whether she has a particular favourite or not.*

'Recognise the difference between factual and fiction.' *Definitely not applicable. I don't think that comes into it.*

'Describe and give opinions of characters.' *No. Occasionally she will point to something and she will say it looks like her sister or mum or something like that, but very rarely. It's usually 'book's finished, close, new book'.*

'Talk about the use of different types of text in society when prompted.' *Definitely not. We laugh at stories, photos give us information, instructions tell us what to do. Don't think that's applicable.*

She couldn't 'tell you the news from any other TV show'.

She did, however, show signs of enjoying being involved in literacy-oriented activities:

'Join in shared stories, poems, rhymes, chants with recurring language patterns.' *Yes, to some extent she'd join in. Actually her class teacher was doing a thing on vegetables or something. She had some book and each week they sang the song about the vegetable and they did a craft activity on it. And, yeah, Tania was joining in those.*

'Mimic teacher's role in a share book session, pointing to and reading text of a familiar big book largely from memory.' *Mm, well they don't really have shared book. She could probably read a lot of the big books or whatever books from memory. They didn't have big books in the room, but simple texts, some of them she was learning from memory.*

'Contribute to the reading of a text.' *She'll join in.*

Because of her limited oral ability, those pointers requiring an oral response were not applicable to Tania:

'Retelling in own words.' *No.*

'Talk about familiar stories or texts.' *No.*

'Use a picture book to create their own story.' *No.*

'Express an opinion.' *Not usually.*

'Use spoken word to invent a message to represent print.' *Mm, no, I don't think that would apply to her.*

'Relate personal experiences.' *Sometimes you get a comment from her rather than an actual "I remember such and such". Sometimes she'd say something or something must have reminded her of mum shopping or whatever and she'd make some comment 'shopping' or 'mum shopping' or something like that. But not the sort of thing you can get from a mainstream child. But she would make a comment.*

'With guidance make verbal predictions about story content from the illustration.' *Not really, she's not, once she's got the book she must read it, she won't enter into anything, it's rare that she'll enter into anything else. The book's there, read it, none of this talk about it, read it. And when it's finished that's it, get another book.*

'Construct an oral text from a single picture.' *It's raining, the boy and the girl are playing, this is a dog, it's brown, it's lying on the grass, no. Don't think she would do that.*

Similarly, those pointers involving a written response to reading were not appropriate, as Tania showed little interest in writing:

'Re-read own writing.' *No.*

'Label familiar pictures with guidance. Label parts of a doll or body parts.' *Mm, I wouldn't like to say yes there. It's one of those, depends what it is.*

From this analysis, Deidre concluded that Tania was well beyond Foundation Level: *'She's on a nice little Transition level.'* She even identified reading behaviours from Level 1 which would describe some of Tania's abilities:

'Reading like behaviour, hold the book, turn the pages.' *Yes she does that.*

'Point to text on signs and provide a relevant meaning.' *I'd say she would do that because of the environmental words. And the familiar street and traffic signs. Yes.*

'Expect consistent messages from printed text.' *Well, I would assume she would.*

The Early Learning Profiles enabled Deidre to identify and articulate Tania's progress in relation to mainstream expectations. While the Early Learning Profiles did not address Tania's specific linguistic, cultural or learning background, Deidre felt that is was gratifying to be able to demonstrate her achievements in "real world" terms. Tania might not have been progressing in line with her age group, but at least she was progressing.

'Recognise a name, some letters and words which they encounter frequently and for which meaning is given. Commercial logos, signs, labels, stop, police.' *Yes. This is what she can do.*

'Recognises her name, exhibits reading-like behaviour, choosing a book, sitting, looking at a book, turning pages, studying pictures a limited range of reading, vocabulary and phrases.' *Yes. That's one she is doing.*

'Recognise words and short word clusters in English if they have been recycled often in a variety of language activities.' *Mm. Probably.*

One thing in particular which struck Deidre was the way in which Tania approached reading texts – more in terms of the mechanics than in terms of responding to meaning:

Showing signs of becoming active readers. Responds to a text.' *She can read the texts, it's the response that's lacking. She's got the mechanics, but very little response. And the response is very black and white.*

Actually it's something I've noticed with a lot of these children. We have a satellite class at the local primary school and one ESL child in there is at a definite Year 1 level but the comprehension isn't there. He's very literal. And Tania's the same. It's all black and white. He's far ahead of her in that he's able to decode, he's got phonic skills and he's using them, but when I showed him one of the Storybox books – 'Camping out' or 'Sleeping out' or something and there they are on the front cover and they've got their sleeping bags and everything and a torch – and I asked him 'where do you think they're going?', he couldn't answer. Eventually he said something about camping. Then I asked, 'is it day or night?' Now the torch was on in the picture. 'Is it day or night?' And it was a grey blue colour and you could see stars. And he couldn't work it out. Couldn't. I said, 'look at the picture, look there's something there that you'd only have on at night'. Now finally he said, 'Oh, night', but that comprehension wasn't there. Ask him a literal question and he's fine: 'Where's the such and such in the picture?' Points to it, no worries. 'Where's the boy, where's the girl?' Not a problem. But the inference and that finer comprehension wasn't there and I don't think that's there with Tania either. It's rare, it only comes through occasionally. I think a lot of these kids that we see there, some of them are quite fluent readers, but that higher level of comprehension isn't there. I'd be surprised if it was there with Tania and the language doesn't help. See there's no language coming from home either. She's not socialising or talking at home, she's just wandering the streets basically.

On the whole, Deidre found that the NLLIA Bandscales were sensitive to the different backgrounds of the ESL students, reminding teachers of the need to take into account factors such as whether the children had a literate family context or whether they had specific learning difficulties.

Giving feedback

Unlike her experiences in mainstream schools, Deidre has found that her colleagues at Greenvale are eager for information on the children she is working with:

> *I think nearly all asked could I write some sort of comment to go with the student's report. 'Just write what you've been doing' they said, that's all, 'just write what you've been doing and where you think the student's at'. Because it's so individual, they are more willing to involve anybody who's got anything to do with the child. I mean they're probably so conscious themselves of every detail that they relish more detail from other people too. The mainstream teachers elsewhere they just are swamped with 30 kids rather than 8.*
>
> *So the reports here are very very detailed. I mean they're a single sheet or whatever. They're not graded they're all just written in prose according to the student's individual education program and they encourage the staff to be positive. 'This is what the student can do. This is what they're doing.' Really homing in on the specific thing that they're doing, and as I said they are far more willing to get comment from all specialist staff and staple that to the back of the report. They'll actually ask you 'have you got it? Can you write it? Even if you write it on a bit of scrap paper we'll type it up, just give us a scrap.'*

Coming from a Special Education background, many of the teachers are accustomed to diagnostic assessment which feeds back directly into the teaching/learning program and are constantly on the lookout for information which might better inform their judgements.

They are also acutely aware of the parents' desire to know in detail about the progress of their children and how they might contribute to their learning at home. Deidre herself often arranges to talk with the parents, sometimes with the assistance of an interpreter, and demonstrates activities that they might use when interacting with their children. She encourages the parents to participate in classes during school time so that they can see what their children are capable of doing and feels that this is much more valuable than written comments on a report. For those parents unable to come to the school during working hours, Deidre sometimes arranges to visit them at home and spends some time working with the child in the home context.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Overall, from Deidre's brief acquaintance with First Steps, the Early Learning Profiles and the NLLIA Bandscales, she feels that they all have something to offer. The fact that they were not specifically concerned with trying to assess the language of children with disabilities was of no great importance. Certainly they wouldn't provide the detailed information needed to develop individual programs on specific areas of language, but they had other merits.

In particular, they made a much-needed link to the mainstream. Using these frameworks, one could see that even in mainstream terms, these children were still achieving. Even Deidre's colleagues showed a great interest in the various frameworks

> *Even the Speech Therapists are interested in the Scales because of the basic level that it gets to. And that's why they homed in on First Steps because again it got to a low level. That's what they liked. And actually Jovan's teacher is very keen, with the ESL students, she's very keen to start getting things translated, bilingual. She wants to look into that next year, particularly for reports and notes to parents because she said she's finding that a big issue. Not so much with the kids because they can't read English or within the language anyway, but the parents. I've phoned Sydney and all sorts*

> *of places trying to get computer programs. They don't exist and if they do they cost a fortune. But she's very keen on that ESL aspect.*

The teachers have been making a deliberate effort to go beyond the 'Special Ed' instruments and to make use of more mainstream material, particularly with the 'higher functioning' children. The school has, for example, just completed a professional development program on using the First Steps reading materials:

> *And the staff are quite thrilled because it goes down to such a basic level that they say 'Oh, look, our students are on this, they're doing it'. Because all the other documents don't cater for such a basic level. But when you look at First Steps Reading, the starting point talks about pre-reading behaviours and turning pages and all that and they say, 'Oh look, they can do it, they can do it, yes, yes'. Even if it was just chanting rhymes. 'Oh, we do that'. So that was good. So they're trying to use more mainstream things like that.*

> *And it was interesting when we had the meetings after school with First Steps, some of the teachers were saying, 'Well, I do that in my classroom, but I didn't realise it was that'. We do it at a modified level, but they were doing a lot of things that they could see coming out of First Steps and they could see that with a normal child the progress would be quicker, with their students it may take 5, 7, 10 years for them to get from one level to another, but they could see that they were at least on the right track. So they're going to persevere with the Reading. We figure that's our best bet. The Oral Interaction they might look at, but it's a bit above where we're at and the Writing is for the most part right out of the ballpark.*

So while Deidre laments the lack of assessment instruments which adequately deal with the issue of identifying the language needs of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds who also have learning difficulties, she welcomes the insights provided by the mainstream and ESL frameworks into language development in general.

THE QUEENSLAND CASE STUDIES

Maree at Andelu

Erika: Visiting Teacher

Laura at St Cecilia's

Minh at Lachlan Street

Maree at Andelu Campus Ichuru State School

Catherine Hudson

The School Context

A cloud of red-brown dust billows out behind the old, ex-army jeep as Maree bumps along the Ichuru Road, past the wild dogs and the termite mounds, picking up and letting down passengers as she goes. She comes to a halt in Apwei, the community between Ichuru and Andelu, to talk to Jonah's relatives about attendance. Attendance is her passion. Using the *Home Language Program*[1] (described below under The Classroom Context; and for a full description of the genesis, development and implementation of the Program see Report listed in References at the end of the study), Maree has found, by means of a rigorous system of assessment in both Torres Strait Creole and English, that her children are successfully acquiring early literacy. However, absenteeism remains her bugbear - accounting as Maree can demonstrate to a worrying degree, for the number of children being *'caught'* in the Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net in her school. (The Queensland Diagnostic Net is a process for assessment and intervention to support children's literacy and numeracy development during the early years of schooling in Queensland. Children are mapped for their progress in literacy using the developmental Continua for reading and writing developed by First Steps, and observations of children's literacy behaviour are validated with specifically designed assessment tasks. Children who are identified as requiring intervention are commonly described by teachers as being 'caught' in the Net).

Maree arrives at the well-ordered Andelu community, drives down towards the coconut palms and the calm blue sea, turns left at the beautiful little red, white and green painted Anglican Church of St Gabriel and halts under the mango tree at the Andelu campus of Ichuru State School, where the children are playing in the adventure playground before school. There are 80 students at the Andelu Campus and 250 students at Ichuru Primary eleven kilometres away. The Andelu community has a population of 300 and is 11 kilometres from Ichuru, the nearest town. Ichuru, which has a population of 1000, is at the tip of Cape York and about two days drive from Cairns on unsealed roads.

Tall, cheerful, immensely resourceful and energetic, Maree speaks in the language and tones of the literacy expert. Maree has responsibility for teaching literacy to two composite classes of Years 1/2 and Years 2/3. At night she takes care of her young family, corrects the children's work, works on her own thesis and writes up her personal journal for the literacy project (the Home Language Program developed in her classes). She also entertains the visiting ESL adviser and talks late into the night on the phone with Northern Queensland indigenous and non-indigenous literacy experts about the pressing needs of the area. With them she shares a pedagogical philosophy drawing on Halliday, post-modernism, bilingual theory and critical literacy.

Tomorrow Maree will take the pre-schoolers into her classroom with her normal composite classes, because the calls on the Aboriginal Primary Coordinator, the pre-school teacher, to attend meetings are very great. In her lunch hour, she will also endeavour to fix the photo-copying machine with the help of the visiting

Headmaster. She does not know it yet, but tomorrow an excavator will also arrive to dig up the area next to her classroom to prepare for an undercover area (during the last few weeks she has been watering this area with the children as part of her current unit on Plants). At the end of the lunch hour, as the humidity rises and the rain begins to fall, she will stand with the Headmaster on the verandah of the staffroom/photocopying/reading intervention room opposite her classroom, discussing her part in yet another project. She will then walk the long way back to her classroom through the heat and the rain, avoiding the noisy front-end loader. She will not be phased! Her only concern will be the number of children who have returned to the Andelu campus after lunch and are sitting on the floor, legs crossed, ready for the afternoon's lessons in reading and writing.

The Andelu school was moved from Andelu twenty years ago and brought into Ichuru. This was part of a centralisation program. Maree relates that the community feels that in that period *'nobody learnt anything'*. There was a historical tension between the Andelu community and Ichuru, because the Ichuru people are Islanders and the Andelu were the original Aboriginal people. Transport was extremely difficult (Maree has destroyed two cars getting to school). The road, which is unsealed, could be covered in water at any time. As a result attendance was very low. Maree discusses the way the people of Andelu also blame the teaching methods, and compare them unfavourably with those of the missionaries who they feel were more successful in teaching literacy, despite their lack of modern technology. The community have told Maree that they call the generation who went to school in the time that the Andelu school was moved to Ichuru, *'the lost ones - the lost generation'*. These children reached the end of school age without literacy skills. The community campaigned for the return of their own school in Andelu. They have a vested interest in the programs being run within the school and have been encouraged in this by the Regional Education Office.

The Home Language Program has been developed and implemented at the Andelu Campus since it began in April 1995, with Maree as Chief Project Officer. The program is not a bilingual program in the sense of the maintenance and development of Torres Strait Creole. Rather, literacy is taught through the use of Torres Strait Creole, the home language of the students. The program was a community initiative. The School, the Department and the Community worked together, with expert consultancy on Torres Strait Creole, to develop the program. The children in the program are seen by the elders to be *'the future of the community'*, and the community want the children to learn English.

The *Home Language Report* (see References) details the rationale for the program. In the case studies discussed in the Report, elders of the community discuss their inability to understand what *was going on* in class until, as in one case study, year 10. They simply could not understand what the teacher was saying. From this data, it became clear to those involved that it is was little wonder that the children could not learn to read and write.

At the same time, the Education Department started to require the Junior Primary Schools to carry out validation for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net and to plot all Junior Primary Students on the Reading and Writing Developmental Continua (based on a slightly adapted version of First Steps Continua). Oracy is not assessed on the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. Before the Home Language Program began, every child in Maree's class was identified in the validation for intervention support. *'Whole schools in the Cape were "caught" in the Net'*, she points out. It was felt that this was because the schools were neglecting to teach to the ESL needs of the children, among other reasons. When children are identified in the Net they are then funded for 'intervention', this generally takes the form of extra reading and writing lessons, drawing on the help of parents or

casual teachers. At the Andelu Campus, Maree states, the Home Languages Program *is* the intervention.

The Classroom Context

There are twenty-two children in Maree's class, *'though the numbers change a bit'*. Torres Strait Creole is the children's first language. Because of the mix with the home Aboriginal language, their Creole varies from that in the Torres Strait Islands. The variation is sufficient to keep the Islander teacher from feeling comfortable teaching the children in Creole.

Maree explains that the children would not normally see members of the family reading novels or books, though form filling seems to be relevant. She points out that most fathers would work for the CDEP (the Community Development Employment Program), with the mother staying at home. For those who have literacy skills and are motivated or trained, there are so many jobs that they cannot be filled and that breaks down the amount of community help that the school would like to have in the classroom.

The Torres Strait's visiting ESL adviser is keen to point out that the situation is more EFL (English as a Foreign Language), than ESL (English as a Second Language). This is an important distinction. The EFL context is one in which the children are not immersed in the language in all aspects of their lives. An analogy might be made with students learning French in a school in Australia. In the ESL context, on the other hand, students are thoroughly immersed in the language, as in the case of a Vietnamese child in a mainstream classroom in an Australian city. In this remote community English is used purely in the classroom. Torres Strait Creole is used at home and in all transactions. Maree feels that though the children watch a lot of TV, it is watched for visual impact and the language is by-passed.

> *The children come to school with very little English, if any at all, and until the last two years they have had great problems in acquiring early literacy.*

While the children come to school with very little English and very little opportunity to use it in their community, their problem is compounded by the superficial similarities between the English and Torres Strait Creole:

> *It's confusing because Torres Strait Creole has so many words similar to English. People presume that well, you know, it's close enough to English, the kids should be able to understand. But they have a lot of trouble understanding and a lot of phrases that we would use thinking that they were normal basic sentences, aren't to the children because they don't understand the structure of the sentence.*
>
> *This will sound funny but some phrases in Creole are the reverse to how we would say them, so the way we say them actually puts a totally different meaning to the sentence as they've heard it. Now I had a sentence written today, let me see, Jonas wrote that sentence about putting manure in the soil. But the way he put it to me was a statement, but to him it was a question. Now what he had written in Creole is the equivalent of saying, 'Manure is good for the soil', but it was to him a question....You've got to understand the inflections and that sort of thing.*

When the children first get to school, their attitude to learning is such that:

> *They just soak it in. They are so open to reading books and to role playing writing and that sort of thing. They're really keen to get into it. And they actually get really grumpy if you seem to be*

> *playing too many games or something and they demand 'hard work' because they want to get down and be seen to be doing school work.*

Before Maree began the Home Language Program, she saw these very positive classroom attitudes alter to an attitude of defeat as the children experienced failure in their first experiments with using English, due to the differences between languages. Maree points out that the attitude became one of:

> *'I can't do it, I'll just give up, and that's that, I can't do it'. I think that is related to the fact that every time they wrote something it was wrong. It was wrong because it didn't have the 'have' in it or the 'are' or 'this is', or those words we require to make a complete English sentence. But the words are totally foreign to the children, they don't know them at all.*
>
> *And so every time they wrote a sentence or even if I was to scribe it for them, like getting them to tell me what to write down for their picture or something like that, it was always wrong. So the kids might ask me to write, 'I go store'. Now for me to write that in English, first of all I would have to work out, 'Are you going to the store, have you been to the store, who's going', all that sort of thing, because that's what we require to make it an English sentence, but they were actually quite correct in their original three word sentence. So if you get them to re-read that sentence, their chance of success is minimal, absolutely minimal.*

Using Torres Strait Creole in the program she is able to write exactly what they say and they are able to read it back correctly, thus gaining in confidence and maintaining their positive attitude to literacy and learning in the classroom.

> *They had absolutely increased confidence straight away. So then that goes on to their writing. They know that if they have a go at writing, there's not going to be words crossed out of it everywhere. It will just be a matter of correcting spelling or whatever, because the language they're using is the language that they are expected to write, and that's really made a difference. They are prepared to have a go whereas before they really weren't. They were really scared to write because well they didn't see any use in trying if they were always going to get it wrong.*

Maree's classroom is a very vibrant affair and, apart from the tropical shutters on both sides and the considerable heat, it could be the classroom of any teacher in Queensland who is following the Queensland English Syllabus (1994) philosophy of context based language use. There is an aquarium and an enormous collection of exotic sea shells on one table from a past unit of work. At present the unit of work is on Plants and there are big pictures of plants hanging in the air, books of flowers, seeds growing in little bags, seeds growing in egg cartons and bulbs on a table which the children are taking pleasure in adding to every day. Every morning the children race into class and go straight to the seeds to see how much they have grown over night. At every spare moment, the children energetically dig up the school grounds and surrounding land for bulbs to add to the 'bulb table'.

The difference between Maree's classroom and that of other teachers in Queensland lies in the word banks on the board in both Torres Strait Creole and English, and in the human figures labelled in English and the home Aboriginal language which they are learning from an elder of the Andelu Community (one session a day). The usual murals of the days of the week and the calendar are duplicated in English and Torres Strait Creole.

Maree shares an open classroom with Kate, an indigenous teacher who takes the composite classes for Maths. In addition there is an indigenous Teacher Aide,

Josy, who assists in writing in Torres Strait Creole and in classroom translation activities, and takes the reading intervention withdrawal program using the Sunshine Books.

The Home Language Program is based, Maree says, *'on social context planning, but all of the writing activities and the reading activities that happen in the classroom happen in both languages'.*

The Home Language Program draws not only on the Queensland English Syllabus (1994), but on the document Perspectives on Literacy Development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (Department of Education, 1991) [For detail of the Program's Principles and Planning see the Report, ibid). Maree points to these documents and calls them *her 'bible'*. Planned context-based units of work follow a series of purposeful literacy events, teaching spoken and written genres through modelling, negotiation and independent construction where appropriate. Maree draws on the real-life experience of the community and writes each new genre with the children first in Torres Strait Creole with the help of Josy, and then translates the text into English.

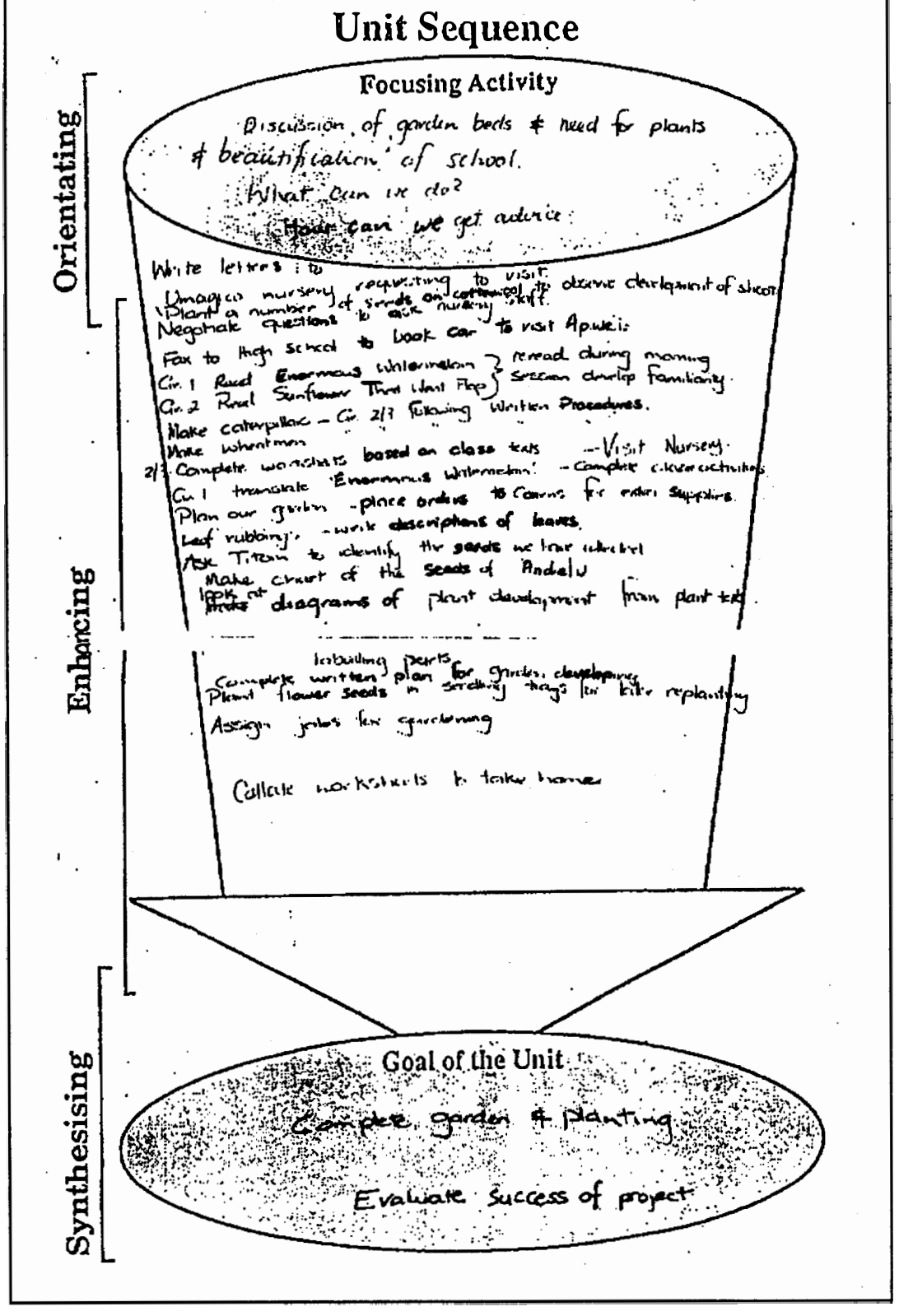
> *It was a member of the Andelu community who inspired this procedure when he said, 'Whenever I have to write a speech or I have to write an article, or anything that's important, I always do it in Creole so I can understand it, and then I translate it'. So that's exactly the philosophy that we follow as bible in the classroom. If it's a modelled writing activity, or a negotiated writing activity, there is interplay with me and the children while we work out how it should be said, the language that should be used in it , things like spelling and punctuation within the Creole piece of writing. But then they are translated into English, and then we look at the patterns that are different between the two languages and how they vary.*

Maree endeavours constantly to provide a model of Standard Spoken English in all her teaching and always to begin with the purpose of the text. The text will not be translated if it is appropriate for it to stay in Torres Strait Creole, eg. questions to the Nurseryman on their excursion to buy plants for their garden. The children will discuss appropriacy in both languages:

> *One of the biggest problems is that often children and adults think that they're speaking English when they're actually speaking in Creole, and so by being able to articulate which is which, then we're actually helping the children overcome some of the problems that they have with language in general.*

The planning of the Plant Unit is typical of that currently used all over the State in State and Catholic Schools. The Unit Sequence moves through Orientating, Enhancing and Synthesising Activities (Sample 1):

Sample 1: Overall Sequence of Maree's Plant Unit for Gr 1,2,3 (Science incorp.), Term 4, week 1,2,3



Objectives are divided into Attitudes, Processes, Skills and Knowledge. Genres and Assessment are noted as can be seen in Sample 2

Sample 2: Objectives of Maree's Plant Unit.

Holistic Goals	Integrating Device	Assessment/Evaluation
For the children to be involved in a cooperative task with community benefits	Planning a Garden at the school	Collection of work samples to mark against continuum Observation of chn's contribution to class work

Resources		Literary	Genres	Non Literary
Seeds	Non fiction text	poetry	procedural	information food
Seeds grow	Plants & flowers	stories	texts	diagrams of plants
Seeds & Plants	fiction texts about flowers			letters of request
	Enormous watermelons			fax order form
	Sunflower went flop			

Attitudes	Processes	Skills	Knowledge
Engagement in a group activity. Enhancing and expressing reactions based on discovery of plant facts & development of garden. researching & using info to plan development of garden. Negotiates strategy for garden.	Making decisions about garden based on organising and clarifying information. Negotiating with group re - garden plan. problem solving issues of planning and acquisition for garden. evaluating the success of the plantation.	Deploying and interpreting the generic structure of a • letter of request • fax • plan of attack • poem • information text Development of vocabulary relevant to plants and gardens. development of individual dictionaries as writing reference • Clauses related to mode and medium • Pronunciation-words ending in 'E' • Punctuation - • full stops, commas • Composing and comprehending spoken written language. • Composing and comprehending visual language diagrams	Developing understanding language in use to share meaning variations in language between Creole and English. relationships between texts & plants & gardens

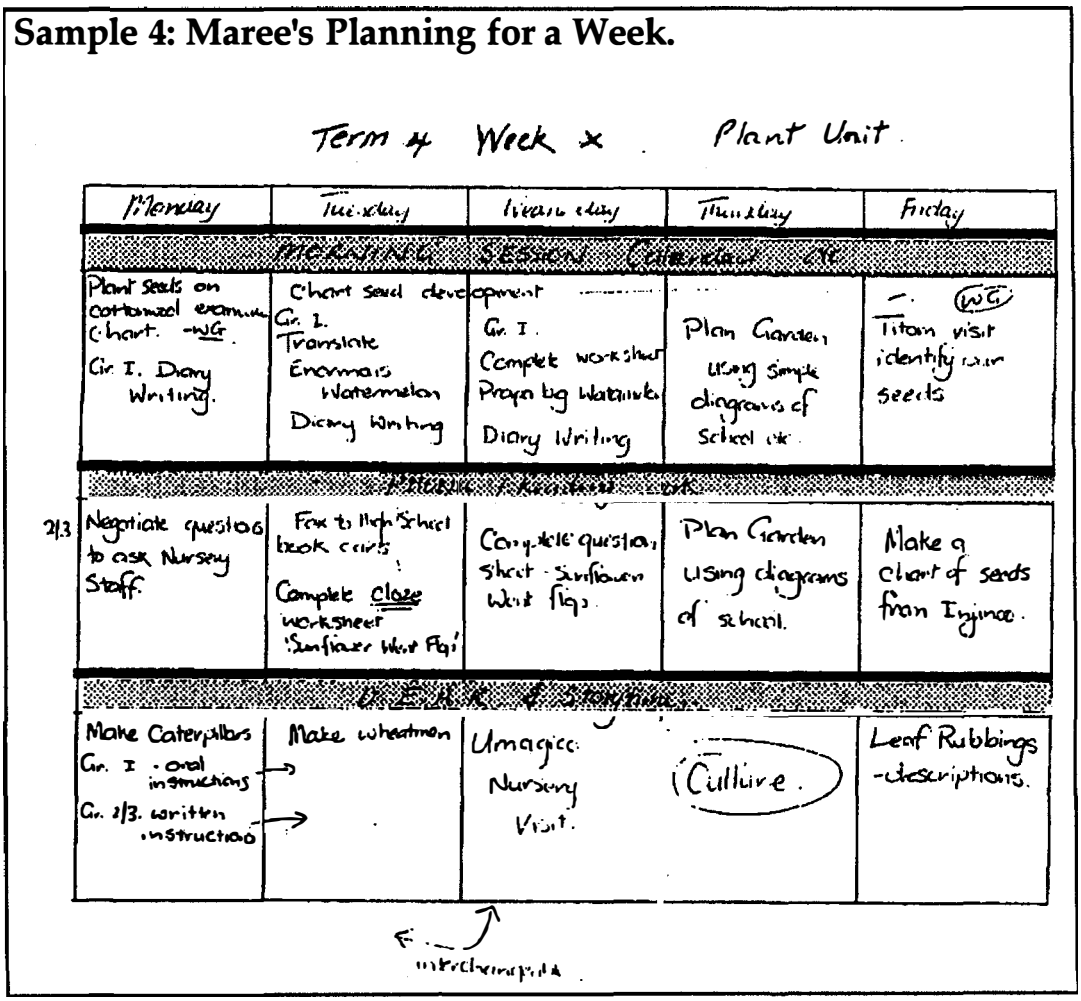
Maree's Plant Unit includes four pages of planning, divided into Activities, Spoken and Written Language to be Developed, Catering for Individual Differences, Focused Learning Episodes, Integration and Assessment:

Sample 3: Maree's Overall Planning of the Plant Unit one of four pages

Activities	Spoken & Written Language to be developed	Catering for Individual Differences	Focused Learning Episodes	Integration	Assessment
Negotiate questions to ask nursery staff Identify approp. lang & info. required	Identification of components of a question. Developing vocab	WGA	What Wanem Has why - question marks Punctuation of sentences	Science understanding of plants	Appropriateness of questions developed
Fax to High School to book cars to visit garden	Generic structure of a fax	WGA	Formal construction of E		Contribution and appropriateness of finished fax
Group Reading Gr 1 Enormous Watermelon	Develop rhythm of E identify patterns Comprehending W. lang	WGA	Joining in repetition		Note chn ability to participate in reading
Group Reading Gr 2/3 Sunflower/flop	Develop word recog comprehending w lang.	WGA	Spelling reading using meaning and phonics	Needs of plants - science	Ability to read book & identify words
Gr 1 Group translation of En. Watermelon	Understanding of E differences to C	WGA	sequencing and language differences		Observe chn's ability to translate texts
Gr 7 Complete Cloze worksheet 'Proppa Big watamelon'	Reading for meaning skills Comprehending written language	Read sheet as a group complete individually	recall language & spelling	Drama - Act out story	Collect chn's sheets for accuracy
Make caterpillars with wheat seeds	Gr 1 oral instructions 2/3 Written instruct	Task discussed WG Completed individually	procedural steps	Science - seeds	Look at finished product to assess following of instructions

Maree also records her weekly planning as can be seen in Sample 4.

Sample 4: Maree's Planning for a Week.



The most noteworthy thing about life in Maree's classroom under the Home Languages Program is that the whole day is almost entirely devoted to literacy activities. The children excel in sport, Maree says; they do not need it timetabled into the school day. Extra-curricular activities do not seem to exist: no choir, no recorders, no timetabled drama. The children who attend are extremely motivated and voluntarily stay throughout breaks to finish diaries and stories in either language. Such is the energy about discussing texts, appropriacy and difference that Maree is constantly reinforced in her dedication to the Program. The excitement during storytime and the quiet reading period after lunch is tangible.

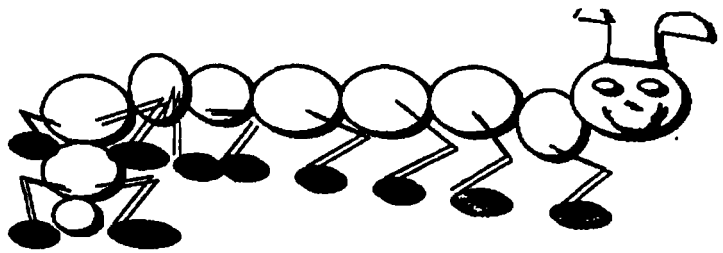
The children sing 'literacy songs' with actions early in the day, and sing and dance in the home language 'Culture' period. Indeed, dance is the 'carrot' the Elder offers to make the children concentrate during this period. This is all part of the Elder's teaching methodology. For anything up to an hour the children practise home language and listen to stories, sing stories and dance to songs. They are glued with attention from beginning to end and beg for more. This means that on Culture day they are operating in the classroom with the same extraordinary energy in *three* languages.

The children learn science and social studies through integrated literacy activities. Basically the children learn language and literacy all day, and amazingly they do not seem to tire.

A summary of the activities in one week of Maree's teaching will give the idea of how she implements her units. Maree organises her class in the following way. Normally all children are together for the first half hour in the morning. Years 2 and 3 then divide for Maths. The composite Year 1/2 group swaps with the Year 3 group for the middle session for Maths with the team teacher. Appropriate activities in literacy are thereby planned for each group. In the afternoon session all combine to do extension work for the unit, often in integration with other subject areas. Maths is also focussed on the unit content as much as possible.

The children begin the day with the usual discussion about attendance numbers, day, month, weather etc in both languages. A concentrated literacy lesson then begins the week's activities: negotiating questions in Torres Strait Creole to ask the Nursery staff when the children visit Apwei Nursery to buy plants for the garden they are planning as part of the Plant Unit. The children spend this lesson sitting on the carpet in the corner, with Maree seated at her standing board and attached butcher paper sheets. This is followed by the Year 1's making egg carton Caterpillars for their seeds, the Years 2/3 following the written instructions in Creole.

Sample 5: Instructions for making egg carton Caterpillars for seeds in Torres Strait Creole.



Po Meiki Katapila.

Wanem Yu Nid.
Eg katon
Wit sid
Soiyal
2 Peipa sekal
2 Paip Klina

Wanem Yu Go Du.

1. Kati da eg katon po meiki da bampl said kam alp.

2. Puti peipa sekal po ai po katapila.

3. Puti paip klina po antena po katapila.

4. Puti soiyal insaid we eg katon.

5. Puti lelbet sid antap soiyal.

6. Puti lelbet wata antap da sid.

7. Putem de weya sani pleis.

Wachi da eya blo katapila go gro!

Since all the best plans go astray with staff absence, both composite classes go on the next day to translate 'Enormas (sic) Watermelon' from Torres Strait Creole into English, though Maree had planned to divide the class for different activities. The children then write a joint text, a fax to the Headmaster in Ichuru asking for use of the School Bus to go on the Nursery excursion. The Headmaster faxes back his approval. The children read a story as a group and have a story read to them by Maree. Each afternoon the children read books quietly and have a story. This involves much lengthy and engaged literacy discussion with Maree.

The children go to the Nursery in the middle of the week to buy plants and the next day write recounts of their visit in the language of their choice, 'having a go' by themselves from their bilingual word lists first before asking for teacher or aide help. Three or four of them stay behind during lunch to finish their writing. The child who has returned after much absence is very resistant to writing his recount. These recounts will later be published in Torres Strait Creole and in English in books for classroom use.

The culminating activity of the week is a spoken discussion in English about planning a school garden. Together the children build spoken utterances over a double period, each helping the other as they discuss and argue about where the plants should go. Maree fills in a large butcher paper plan of the school, as they argue and discuss where each plant should go. For some this is a very difficult activity, for Tony a student who spent a year in a school in Cairns and has a greater ease with spoken English it is much easier. At varying times the children go out to their reading intervention activity work using the Sunshine books with Josy, the aide.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Maree is a trained mainstream teacher. She is not a trained ESL teacher, although she has had a great deal of contact with the Peninsula ESL advisers and has read a great deal of ESL literature for the Home Language Project and her study. She has had twelve years experience, mainly as a pre-school teacher, but for the last eighteen months has been teaching in the primary school. She brought to Andelu experience in indigenous education at Mornington Island and at Aurukun. Maree feels that one of the most important influences on her work has come from the linguist Anna Shnukel on understanding language difference. She is not familiar with any ESL assessment frameworks, though expresses an interest in the area of ESL expertise.

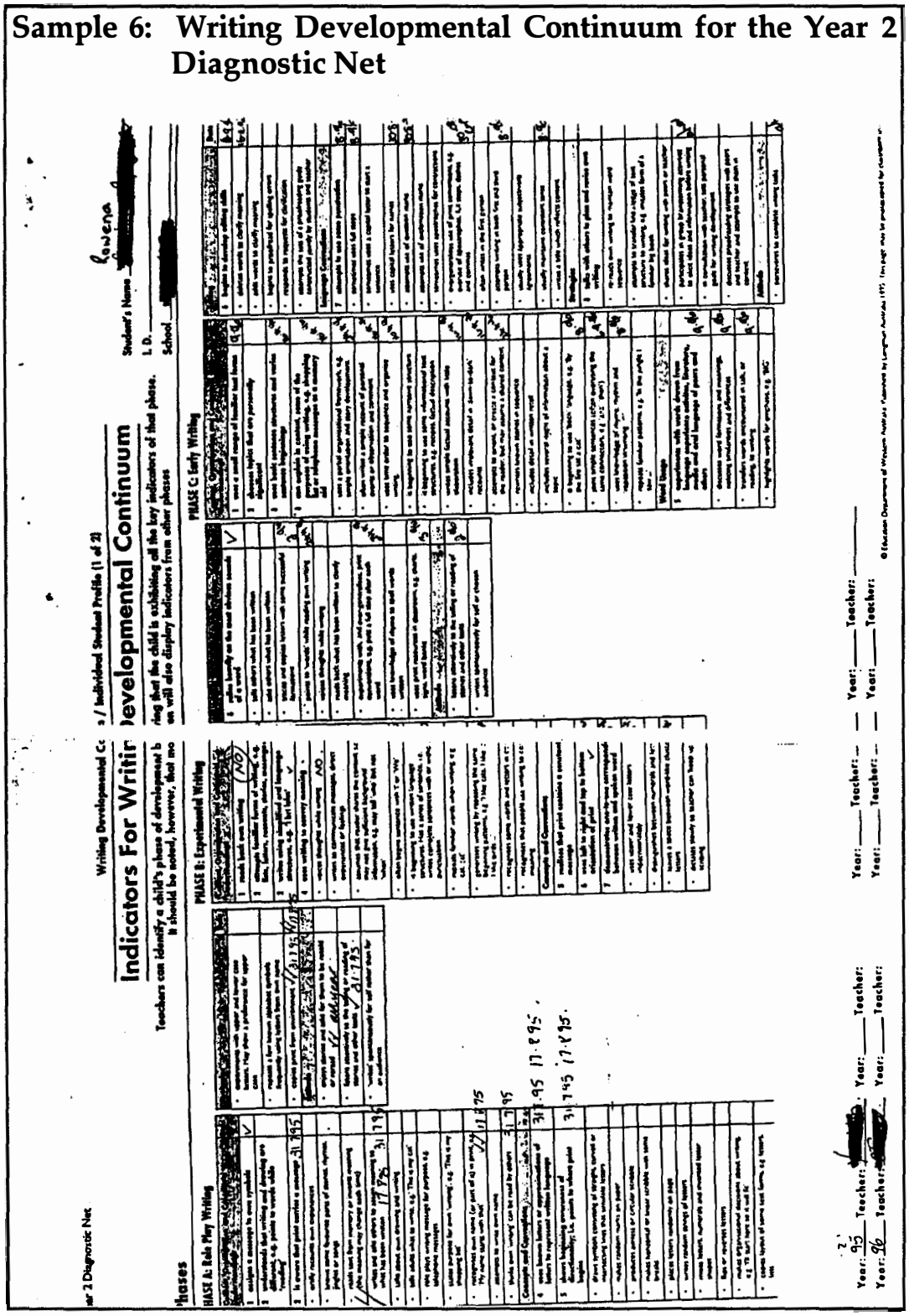
The framework she is using is the Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net described in 'The School Context'. In this children are mapped onto the Developmental Continua for Reading and Writing adapted from First Steps. A few words only have been changed for the Queensland adaptation. An example of the long term mapping of one of Maree's students can be seen in sample 6 and 7. Maree tends to describe the reading and writing performance of the children in terms of the phases and indicators described on the Continua.

Although her teaching involves a great deal of the spoken mode, her assessment of speaking and listening is informal and based on continual observation as shown in her unit objectives (see Sample 2). She is aware of development and can discuss each child, but the focus of her assessment is on reading and writing.

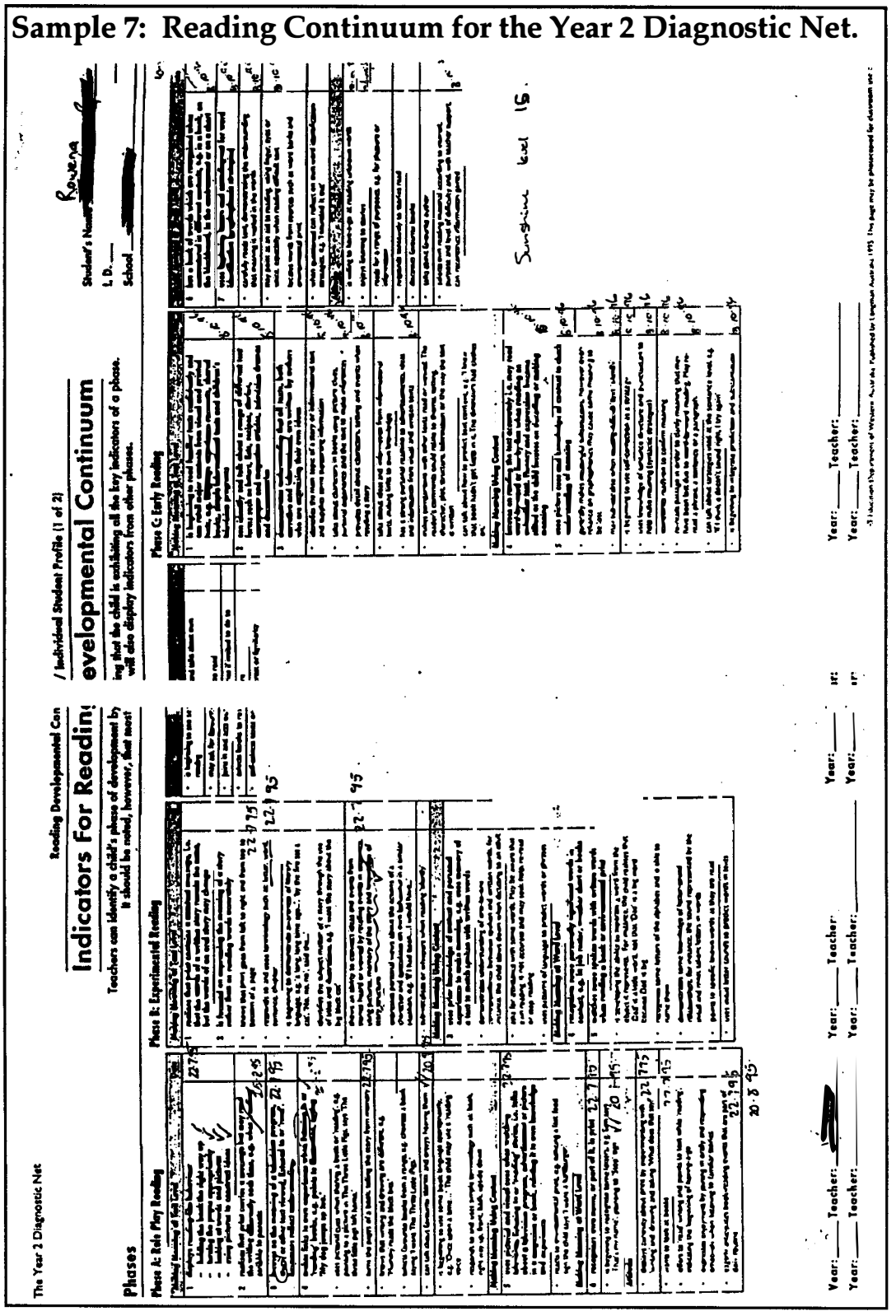
Twice a term she 'maps' the reading and writing Continua for each child from Years 1 to 3 (see Samples 6 and 7, Mapping of Rowena on the Developmental Continua). The difference between Maree and other teachers is that she maps in both English and Torres Strait Creole. She uses exactly the same framework for both languages. This involves observing and analysing the child's work in terms

of the indicators, marking and dating the indicators in varying highlighters to show time of development. For example, March might be in green and April in mauve. All indicators in bold must be highlighted for a child to be said to have reached that phase.

Sample 6: Writing Developmental Continuum for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net



Sample 7: Reading Continuum for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net.



Once a year there is a validation activity for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Process. These are formal assessment processes with the procedures and materials provided by the Education Department. The rest of the time Maree maps the child on the writing Continuum according to the work samples collected in ordinary planned teaching activities. Maree states that she finds this a valuable assessment activity in monitoring student progress and guiding her teaching:

> *I find the Continuum a really valuable assessment tool for seeing where children are going, seeing what gaps are in my teaching, seeing development in literacy skills. Every two months or so you grab a whole pile of samples and work off against them (the indicators). I find it really valuable in that respect.*

Maree maps the students in both languages. Maree does this for three grades. She is supported by a key teacher who visits regularly. The key teacher is stretched over three grade two classrooms and only performs this role part time.

Maree has also tested each child for the level of Sunshine Reader to find out whether they are at an appropriate level. She also observes group reading, comprehension and strategies in normal classroom activities to get ongoing data about the children's progress in reading on the Continuum.

Maree discusses her assessment of the performance in writing and reading of her students Rowena, Tim and Tony. Rowena has extremely limited exposure to English outside school. Maree is wondering if she might have hearing difficulties. Rowena was identified for intervention in the Net in 1995 and came into Maree's class for the Torres Strait Creole program. The task for the Net in 1995 was the retelling of the story *Mrs Goose's Baby* and Rowena's attempt can be seen in Sample 8 below.

Sample 8: Rowena's Writing Task for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation

Rowena's text has only three words, 'Mks Goos bady', beautifully written as Maree points out. Maree explains that even though the words are separated and it is not role play like, it has to be classed as Phase A, Role Play Writing, because it is not long enough. There is no completed sentence to read back, no message .

Sample 9: The Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation Recording Sheet for Rowena's Written Task, see Sample 8 above.

Literacy (Reading and Writing Phases A, B, C)
Validation Recording Sheet

(5 of 5)

Role Play Writing

Source of information	Key indicator	Comments (✓ if observed)
Analysing writing	A4— Uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language. ✓	
Discussion	A1— Assigns a message to own symbols. ✓	
	A5— Shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins. ✓	
Individual Student Profile	A2— Understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to words while reading. ✓	[redacted] often refuses or won't read the work
Reading validation tasks	A3— Is aware that print carries a message. ✓	

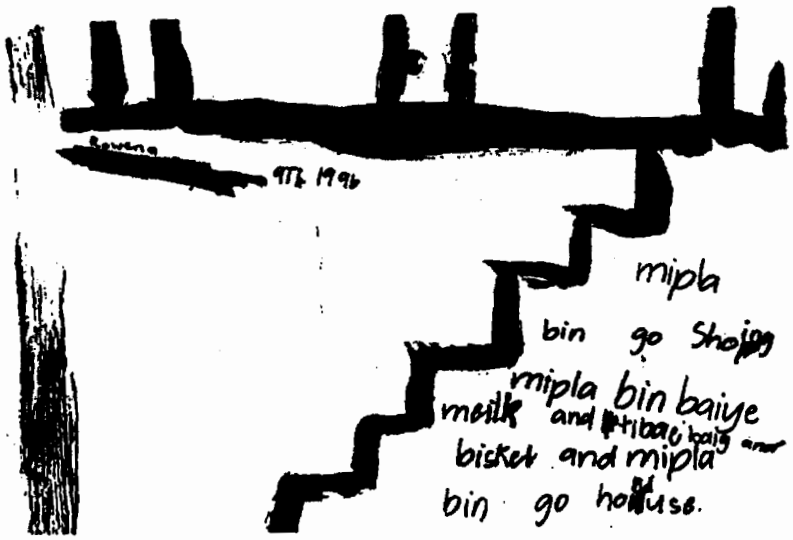
Additional comments

[redacted] on this ocassion did read her work. This would have to be the first time she has done so.

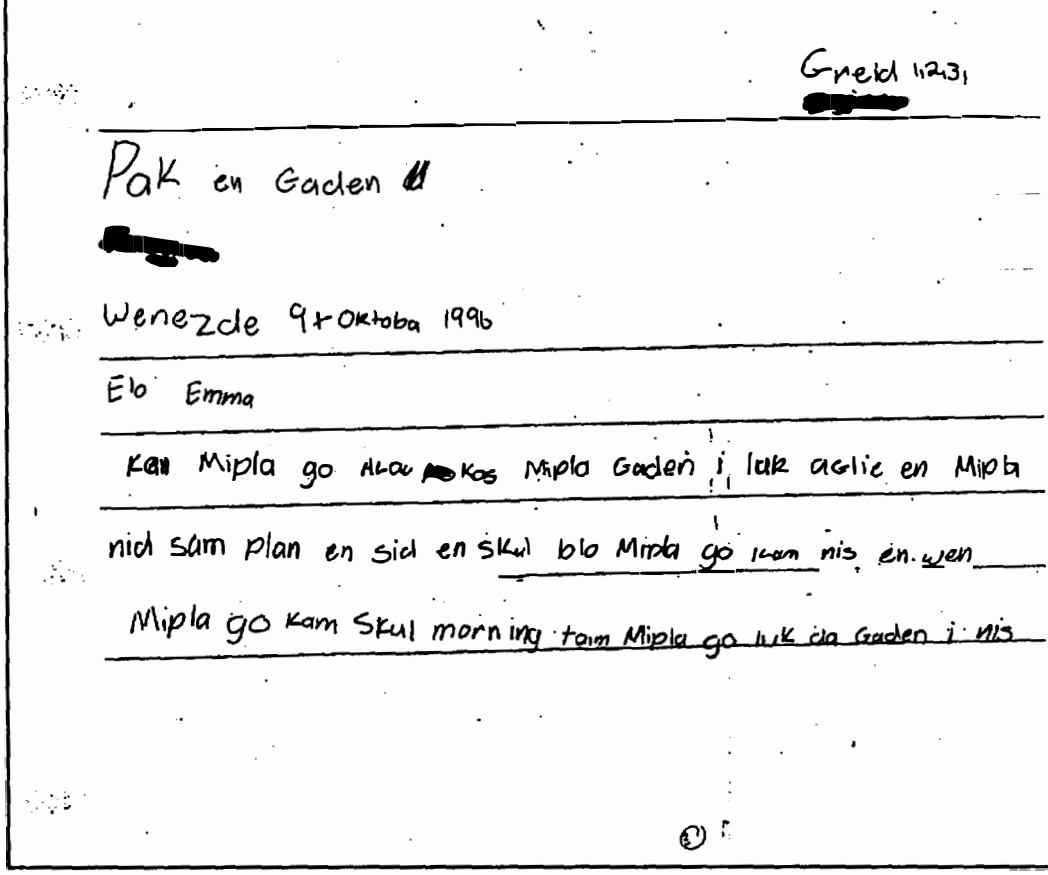
When Reading and Writing validation tasks are finished, attach Reading Response Sheet and child's writing to these recording sheets for future reference.

When Rowena came into the class, Maree explains that her writing was still limited, though her attendance was good. Her whole exposure to English, Maree states, was in the classroom since she lives with her grandmother who does not speak English. When Rowena joined the Torres Strait Creole class she did a painting and showed progress by writing a complete sentence about going shopping as can be seen in Sample 10.

Sample 10: Rowena's text about shopping written in Torres Strait Creole



Sample 11: Rowena's Letter to the Apwei Nursery in Torres Strait Creole



Maree points out that it is written in Torres Strait Creole and spelt very well:

> *Yes, it is good. Self-correcting. She has gone from writing three words to self-correcting (self-correcting is an indicator from Phase C, Early Writing, so for Rowena, validated in Phase A, Role Play Writing, this is a big jump). My analysis is that everything she did she got wrong and to cope with that she just did not do anything. Last year she would not try. So she spent two years refusing to do anything and then within one month she learnt to write a very long sentence. So you see the development* there.

Having illustrated the progress Rowena made after being in the class for one month at the beginning of the year, Maree goes on to show what Rowena is doing by October and explains that Rowena has moved two phases on the Continuum from Phase A, Role Play Writing to Phase C, Early Writing. The text Maree uses for illustration of this point is a letter written in October, to the Nursery during the Plant Unit to the Nursery, a *whole page* in Torres Strait Creole. As in Sample 11 on the previous page.

> *Now what we have here is an entire letter that does not have a single mistake. She spelt morning in English. The whole genre is there. She did not get around to finishing it.*

Maree goes on to 'speak aloud' her mapping of the text on the Continuum according to the indicators. She indicates that the text fits into Early Writing and mentions that Rowena is also now being mapped to be an Early Writer in English (refer to Sample 6, The Year 2 Diagnostic Net Writing Developmental Continuum). Maree discusses Rowena's performance by matching features of the writing to the indicators on the Writing Developmental Continuum. She begins by taking the first section of Phase C, Early Writing on the Continuum, *'Content Organisation and Contextual Understanding'*:

> *'Small range of text forms' , 'personally significant' topics ; 'basic sentence structure'; instead of full stops she has put capitals to keep going; she has used capital M every time she spelt Mipla, so she has got that name thing; information is explained in context, the reason for her writing; she uses 'partial organisational framework' (referring to the greeting, Elo Emma), it's not a 'story' so that does not fit; she knows that it is Emma and Emma works at the nursery; she got a lot done in the time; 'time order' does not apply, this is all for writing recounts 'attempts to orient', 'includes several items of information'; she 'is beginning to use book language' and 'joins simple sentences' (Maree refers to Mipla Gaden I luk aglie) - that to me is book language, and at some point it looked ugly to me or it might be that it is Maree language, "The garden is really ugly". When I read that I just laughed. I thought she is taking that straight off Maree. A lot of this (referring to the indicators) is for story writing.*

Maree explains later that this means there is a misfit for her students, since the written narrative genre is not one she uses very much with them. Maree then moves on to the second section, *'Word Usage'*:

> *'Experiments with words drawn from language experience activities'; she does it all the time; 'transfers words', 'highlights words for emphasis', not much 'editing' and that's because this is her language; when we get the kids to write we expect them to write in English; now she has 'proofread for spelling errors'.*

Maree goes to *'Language Conventions'*.

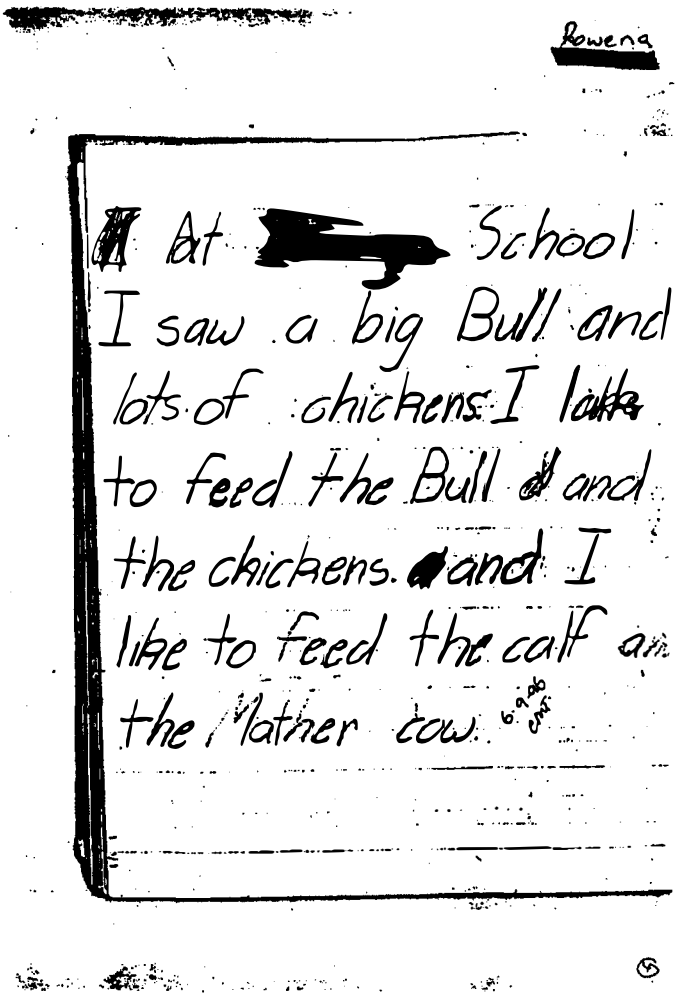
> *Uses punctuation, writes in the first person, not writing about anyone yet though.*

Maree moves to *'Strategies'*.

> *She 'talks others' and says, 'Do I have to write the same as the other kids'. Absolutely 'participates' all the time.*

The last text by Rowena that Maree discusses is a slightly earlier text written in English in September.

Sample 12: Rowena's recount of an excursion to the Ichuru School Farm



This is a recount of an excursion to the farm at Ichuru school. In her analysis Maree is clearly working within the Writing Developmental Continuum indicators for Early Writing, eg. developing punctuation, but she is superimposing assessment criteria for those ESL features she has identified for her teaching: the 's' on *'lots'*, use of past tense. She seems to be creating an additional framework based on her understanding of the differences between the two languages:

> *'At Ichuru school I saw a big Bull and lots of chickens. She had the 's'. I laik (like spelt in Creole) to feed the bull and the chickens. and I like to feed the calf and the Mather (experimental English spelling) cow'. The English. 'I laik to feed the Bull and the chilckens. Creole does not have the past tense. So we have here a beautifully written, perfectly written text* (referring to penmanship). *We have an*

> *experimental full stop, developing punctuation, spelling almost near perfection. There are no plurals in Creole. It is Early Writing even though it is low. I work on the s's. I am looking for plurals. In their reading I am looking for ed's. These do not exist in Creole. She has developed tremendously. She has come from Phase A to Phase C in English and Creole. I am extremely happy with her accomplishments.*

Maree is also very happy with Rowena's development in reading. She indicates her development as dated on the Continuum from Phase A reader in August 1995 to Phase C reader in October 1996 (see Sample 7). Maree states that Rowena's performance during the August 1995 validation was *'abysmal'*. Maree takes the reading records from Rowena's folder and discusses them.

Sample 13: Rowena's Validation Recording Sheet from the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Literacy Validation

Literacy (Reading and Writing Phases A, B, C) (1 of 5)

Validation Recording Sheet

Name: [redacted] Gender: female DOB: _____

Teacher: [redacted] Year: 95: 2 Date: 31-2-95

School: [redacted]

Reading phase mapped prior to validation: A Reading phase indicated by validation: A

Writing phase mapped prior to validation: A Writing phase indicated by validation: A

Conducted by: [redacted] Signature: [redacted]

Child to write own name here: Cristina

Role Play Reading

Source of information	Key indicator	Comments (✓ if observed)
Reading	A1 — Displays reading-like behaviour. ✓	
	Does the child: • hold the book the right way up • turn the pages appropriately ✓ • read left to right ✓ • look at words and pictures ✓ • use the pictures to construct ideas ✓ • know what a word is ✓	
	A5 — Uses pictorial and visual cues when listening to stories. ✓	
	Does the child: • attend to the pictures/photographs ✓ • relate interpretations of the cues to his/her experiences	
Discussion	A3 — Focuses on the meaning of the story. ✓	
	Can the child: • retell a section of the story (using the pictures/ photographs as an aid) ✓ • recall significant information ✗	
	A4 — Makes links to own experiences when listening. ✓	not strong very quiet little girl is very hard to get talking used words
	Does the child: • tell how this story relates to things that have happened in his/her life	
	A6 — Recognises own name in print. ✓	
	Does the child: • recognise own name (written by self) ✓ • recognise own name (written by teacher) ✓	
Individual Student Profile	A2 — Realises that print carries a message but may read writing differently each time. ✓	

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net Literacy Validation

Rowena is placed in Role Play Reading and is thus 'caught' in the Net. The teacher doing the validation has clearly had difficulty even in the Role Play phase with the Discussion section where Rowena had to retell, recall and 'tell how'.

Sample 14: Rowena's Reading Response Sheet from the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Literacy Validation

Literacy validation — Reading (Phases A, B, C)

Reading Response Sheet — Mrs Goose's Baby

Name: [redacted]

Record of reading	Reading analysis (Key Teachers and Education Advisers)				
Text	SM	SY	AM	GP	Comments
One day Mrs Goose found an egg	✓	✓	✓	✓	used pictures.
and made a lovely nest to put it in.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mrs Goose sat on the egg	✓	✓	✓	✓	
to keep it safe and warm.					
Soon the egg started to crack open.	✓	✓	✓	✓	— relied totally on picture.
The little bird inside was					
pecking at the shell.					
Mrs Goose's baby was very very small	✓	✓	✓	✓	
and fluffy and yellow.					
Mrs Goose took her baby out					
to eat some grass.					
But her baby didn't want to eat grass.	✓	✓	✓	✗	— picture.
She ran off to look for					
something different.					
Mrs Goose took her naughty baby					
to the pond.	✓	✓	✓	✗	picture.
The water looked cold and grey.	✓	✓	✓	✗	picture
Poor Mrs Goose!					
Her baby would not swim!					
The baby grew and grew and grew.					

after - point.

At this point you can: allow the child to keep reading; read the rest together; or read the rest to the child.
After reading ask, 'If you were telling someone about this book, what would you say happened in it?'

Early Reader Recall (Tick if recalled)	✓	Prompt Questions (only if not recalled)	Response
Mrs Goose found an egg.		How does Mrs Goose get the egg?	✗
The baby didn't look like Mrs Goose. The baby didn't do what Mrs Goose did.		What did Mrs Goose do that the baby didn't do?	grass
The baby was a chicken.		Why didn't the baby look like Mrs Goose?	✗

SM = Semantic; SY = Syntactic; AM = Author's meaning; GP = grapheophonic; ✓ = Yes; X = No

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net — Literacy Validation

As can be seen from Sample 14, Maree points out that *'Rowena did not read for meaning. The teacher had to tell Rowena everything. She did not have any strategies, syntax. She read aloud, so missing the ending she misses out there'.*

Maree explains that Rowena has progressed and is now at level 15 in the Sunshine readers and has achieved 97% accuracy:

> *She is sounding out words to try and solve the next word with tricky spelling like 'huge'. All of the skills they like to see in phase 3*

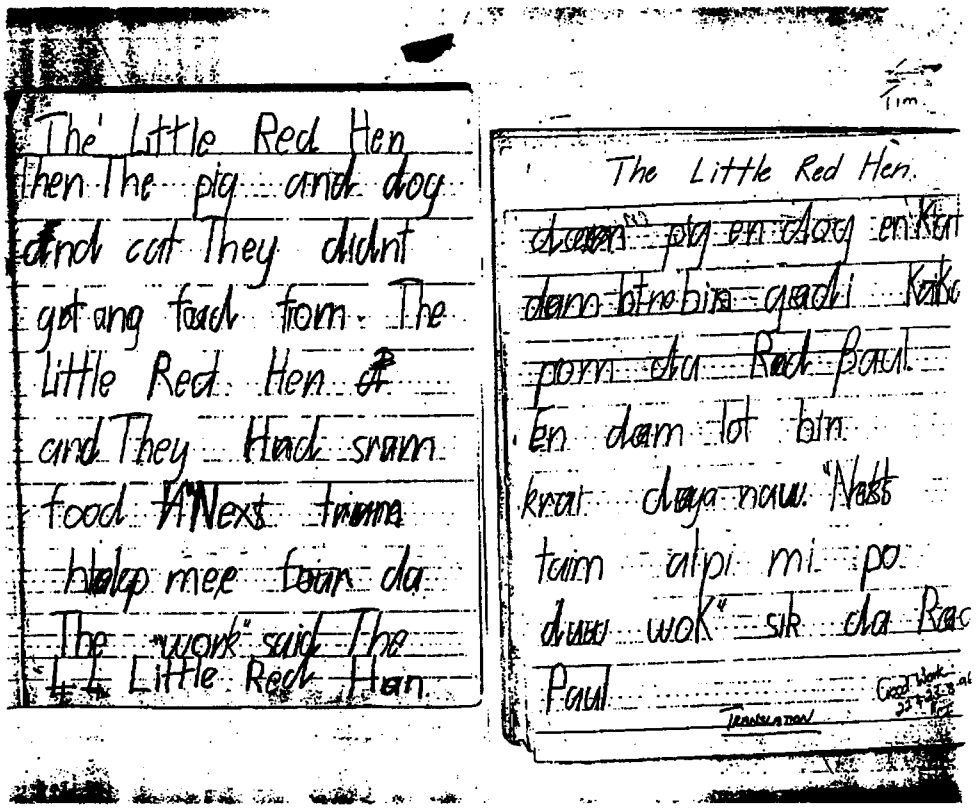
> *readers. I am happy with her reading. She has got to her level with three terms of the Creole Program intervention, and other reading intervention (support beginner reader for 2 weeks, a whole year of reading texts, building confidence and self-esteem. It gives her the confidence to have a go.*

Maree points out that in her monitoring of Sunshine Reader 15, the word she could not attempt is 'bleated' and that is to do with language difference. It is a word she has never heard in her life. Maree feels that Rowena is now ready for chapter books.

Maree thinks that in Torres Strait Creole Rowena manifests well above average in her performance in the group. *'Although she does not contribute in English as confidently as she could, when she says anything it is appropriate and even though she works in Creole, she understands the task in English'.*

Tim is a Year 3 student Maree discusses as a student who chooses to write in both languages. At the beginning of the Home Language Program he was a Phase B writer (see Sample 6). Maree explains that he did not get 'caught' in the net. His work was a mix of Torres Strait Creole and English. *'Tim likes to write in Creole because he is proud of Creole'.* Maree shows his texts to illustrate his growing understanding of the differences between the languages after the intervention of her Program.

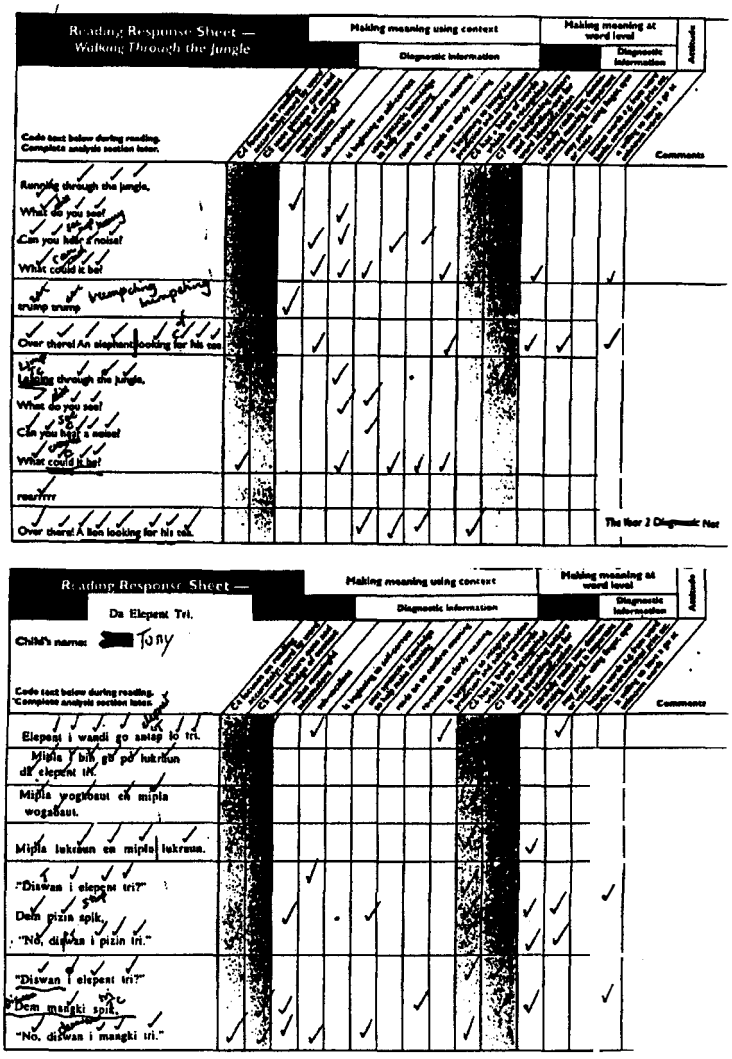
Sample 15a & 15b: Tim's initial The Little Red Hen text in English and Tim's subsequent translation of The Little Red Hen into Torres Strait Creole.



Tim translated the text into Torres Strait Creole immediately after writing it in English and worked on the spelling in both texts as can be seen in Samples 15a and 15b. Maree points out that: *'There is lots of experiment and risk taking there. He has worked on this by himself, totally independent. He has experimented with capital letters and names in a big way'.* Like Rowena he is on the early writing Continuum in both languages.

Tony is a Year 2 student who spent Pre-school and Grade 1 in Cairns. His mother uses English. He is a Phase C Reader on the Reading Developmental Continuum in both English and Torres Strait Creole, but is stronger in Torres Strait Creole. Maree states that, *'Creole is his first language'.* His results on the reading Validation have been included to show how Maree has adapted the Reading Response Sheet in English to use it to carry out her validation in Torres Strait Creole.

Sample 16: Tony's English Reading Response Sheet in from the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation and Tony's Torres Strait Creole Reading Response Sheet adapted from Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation

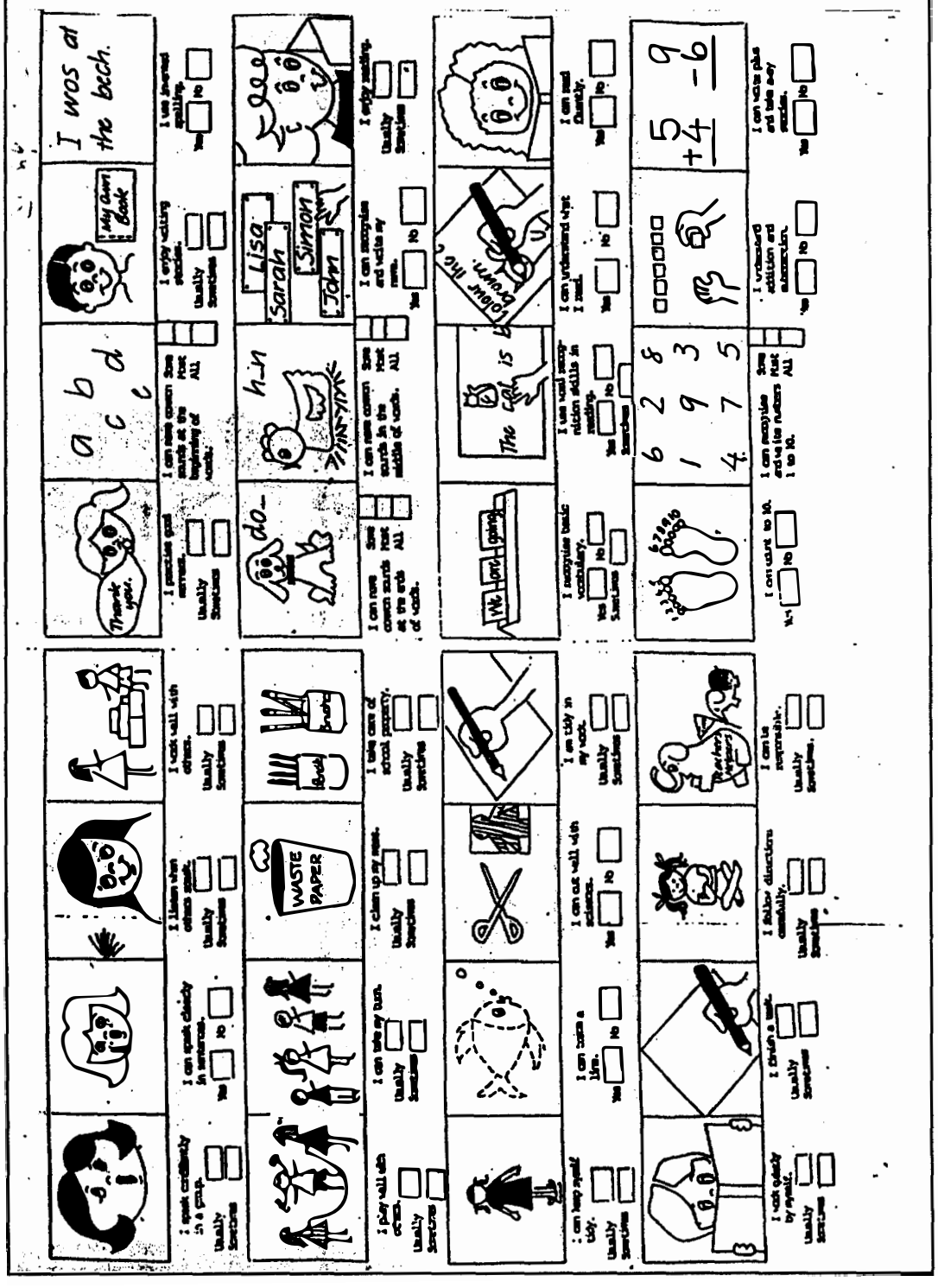


He is clearly developing well in both languages. The endings are a problem for him as he reads aloud in English, as are words like *'wading'* (not shown in Sample 17b) which he is not familiar with in English.

Reporting to Parents

Maree is not happy about the reporting documents. The school's Report is highly visual and she feels a little over simplified, *'They have done all the visuals and forgotten about saying anything about the kids'*

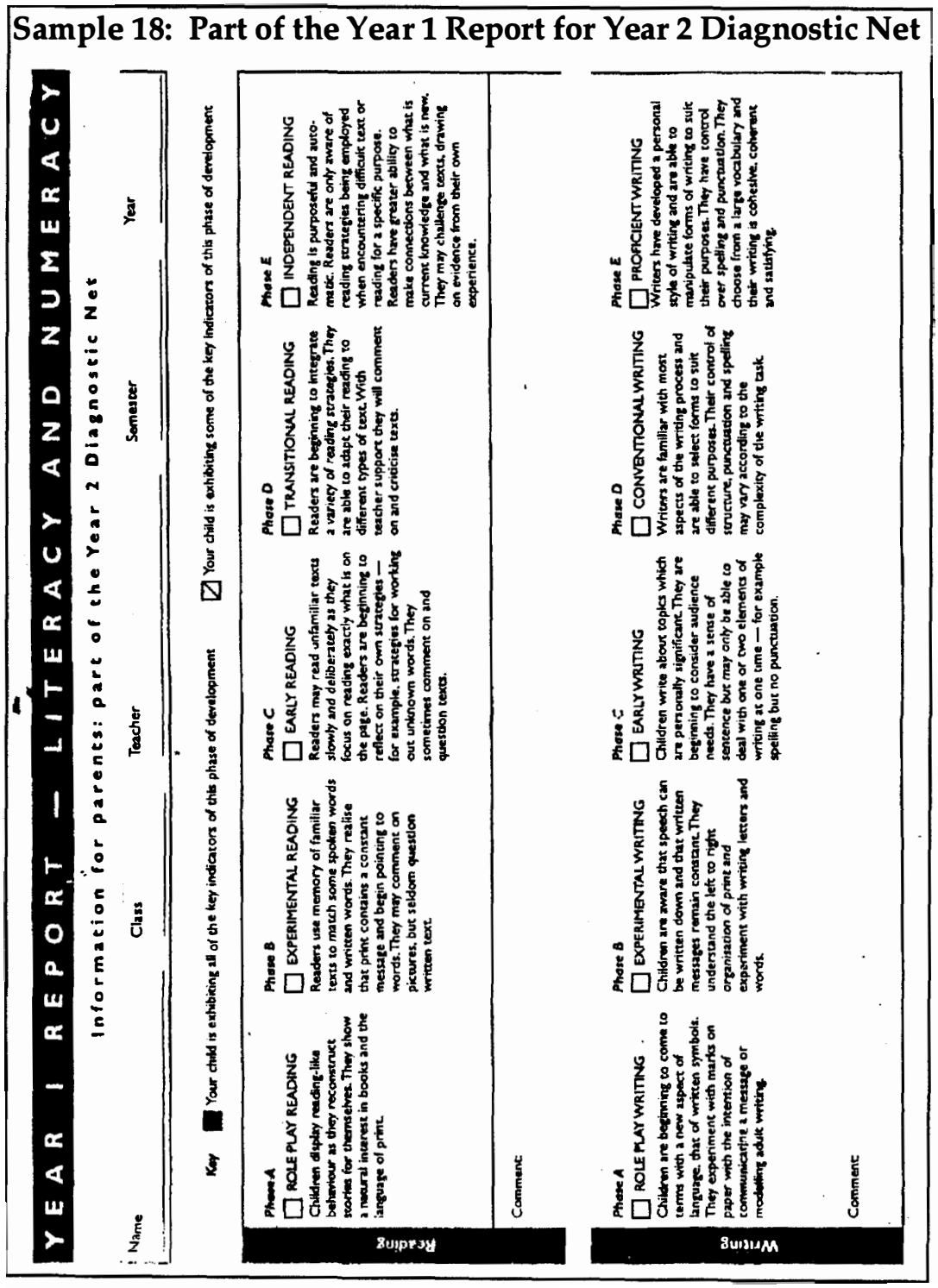
Sample 17: Report used at Andelu Campus



Maree explains that the Department's reporting document for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net is not appropriate for the parents:

> *'It is so academic most parents from mainstream would not understand it. All you can do is give the parents the report that is given. You do not have an option. As a teacher you are flat out understanding it. The parents get all these bits of paper. You say this is the reading and this is the writing and this shows where your child is on the net in Grade 1 and by the time she is in Grade 2 she needs to be in this level. She needs to go through two levels by May. I have to say this to the parents. It makes little sense to any English speaking parents, let alone a parent with a non-English speaking background.*

Sample 18: Part of the Year 1 Report for Year 2 Diagnostic Net



YEAR 1 REPORT — LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Information for parents: part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net

Name: _____ Class: _____ Teacher: _____ Semester: _____ Year: _____

Key: ■ Your child is exhibiting all of the key indicators of this phase of development ☑ Your child is exhibiting some of the key indicators of this phase of development

Reading

Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	Phase D	Phase E
☐ ROLE PLAY READING Children display reading-like behaviour as they reconstruct stories for themselves. They show a natural interest in books and the language of print.	☐ EXPERIMENTAL READING Readers use memory of familiar texts to match some spoken words and written words. They realise that print contains a constant message and begin pointing to words. They may comment on pictures, but seldom question written text.	☐ EARLY READING Readers may read unfamiliar texts slowly and deliberately as they focus on reading exactly what is on the page. Readers are beginning to reflect on their own strategies — for example, strategies for working out unknown words. They sometimes comment on and question texts.	☐ TRANSITIONAL READING Readers are beginning to integrate a variety of reading strategies. They are able to adapt their reading to different types of text. With teacher support they will comment on and criticise texts.	☐ INDEPENDENT READING Reading is purposeful and automatic. Readers are only aware of reading strategies being employed when encountering difficult text or reading for a specific purpose. Readers have greater ability to make connections between what is current knowledge and what is new. They may challenge texts, drawing on evidence from their own experience.

Comment:

Writing

Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	Phase D	Phase E
☐ ROLE PLAY WRITING Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or modelling adult writing.	☐ EXPERIMENTAL WRITING Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant. They understand the left to right organisation of print and experiment with writing letters and words.	☐ EARLY WRITING Children write about topics which are personally significant. They are beginning to consider audience needs. They have a sense of sentence but may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time — for example spelling but no punctuation.	☐ CONVENTIONAL WRITING Writers are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to select forms to suit different purposes. Their control of structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task.	☐ PROFICIENT WRITING Writers have developed a personal style of writing and are able to manipulate forms of writing to suit their purposes. They have control over spelling and punctuation. They choose from a large vocabulary and their writing is cohesive, coherent and satisfying.

Comment:

Maree explains the difficulties she has explaining to many of the parents that their children *are* progressing using the Department's Report. If the child is below the level the parents might say,

> *'Oh, that is not very good is it? But they don't really understand what it is all about. All they know is that I'm saying that the kid's a failure. You do not know what they are doing with those thoughts when they go home. I try to just reinforce that they he made progress, but sometimes I do say to them, 'If it was in Creole then they would be up to here'. Then they say, 'Why waste time doing that?' and then others say, 'Oh great, she does know how to read then, but she does not know how to in English'. Some parents can isolate the difference, while others can't.*

With the help of the Home Language Program, Maree now only has to explain that the children are below the expected level to a handful of parents. She is able to show through her records that in most cases where children fall below the expected levels the reason is lack of attendance. The fact that she has mapped in both Torres Strait Creole and English has increased her confidence to say to most parents that their children are learning to read and write.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Maree's reflections on the assessment framework and procedures she is using are wide ranging. In each interview she returned to the subject with increasing depth. Her position is full of paradoxes. In one sense the shortcomings of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Process, as experienced in the indigenous Cape schools, have provided a strong motivation to push forward with the Home Languages Program and all the extra work entailed in teaching, assessing and publishing texts in Torres Strait Creole. On the other hand there is her firm feeling that the whole process runs against her sense of equity in education. She has strong reservations about the validation exercise. She feels that it does not take account of the second language background of her students, and that the process itself sets her children up for failure. Maree discusses her dilemma over the intervention funding. She explains that though she wants:

> *good results in the Diagnostic Net Validation to prove what a great program we've got going, if we didn't have good results we'd get more intervention funding. It is a real Catch 22 situation.*

As stated earlier in the case study, Maree found the *'Continuum an extremely valuable assessment tool'.* It enabled her to map development, to see where the children were going and see the gaps in her teaching of literacy skills as a whole - not just those tasks on the Net validation exercise. She appreciates that the process requires her to keep on-going samples of writing and records of reading development. On the other hand, she has concerns about the lack of sensitivity in the Continuum to a low or non literacy background in her students.

Children are expected to pass at Phase 3 (Maree draws attention to the Indicators in Phase C: Early Reading. She takes the two indicators in bold under Making Meaning at Text Level [see Samples 17 and 18]. *'2. can identify and talk abut a range of different text forms such as letters, lists, recipes, stories, newspaper and magazine articles, television dramas and documentaries. 3. demonstrates understanding that all texts, both narrative and informational, are written by authors who are expressing their own ideas'.*

> *To many of the children, lists, recipes etc are things these children have never sighted until coming to school. This is very difficult to overcome as the Net validation is in June in the second year in school. So that means that in 18 months these kids are expected to recognise these different genres. These two aspects (the indicators quoted*

> *above) are going to be very difficult for children of a non literate background. It would be better later. I teach to this, but not in 18 months.*
>
> *In the validation this particular area is covered by asking the children a question such as (after a story) 'Can the reader see the connection between other books they have read?' For a lot of children this is one of the first books they have seen. What I am saying is what we are doing helps them to be better in English but the results disappoint the parents.*
>
> *It is too early. In 18 months we are expecting them to have the skills to read this. So maybe if they could read in Creole we may get a true picture. They have competency in Creole, not in English. They work hard and listen to me in a language which is not their first language. They show skills at the right level but the Net does not give a clear picture of them.*

Interestingly Maree does not focus on the difficulty the children have in talking in English about the texts despite their need to do so in the Net Validation, but on their lack of familiarity with written texts. Maree's frustration with the indicators in the Writing Continuum was evident when she was discussing Rowena's work. She explained that so many of the indicators assumed that the children were writing narratives, *'not a genre that I call on them to write very often.* This makes it difficult for her to indicate performance in the genres she finds more appropriate for her students.

In the last interview Maree articulated another concern that she had been thinking about the night before.

> *In the Continuum and the validation task there is nowhere you can say anything about the children's development in oracy. Somewhere on the Continuum we need space to show oral language skills. It's all interrelated and this would make it a more valuable thing to measure. You could look at their literacy skills and see that these are not the problem. Maybe they don't have the language to contribute to the writing task in the first place.*

Maree is not happy with the validation exercise in itself.

> *The area of validation is actually the be all and end all of the net. You can map the children, that continues all their junior primary life, but it is what they do in validation. That's what is counted by the Department and the validation is done in English.*

The Home Language Program has made all the difference to results in the writing validation, the reading can still be uncertain because of the process itself. The children are only expected to reach Phase B in the written task, but are expected to reach Phase C in the reading validation:

> *To be a Phase B writer you need to have the major sounds of a word. So if you have the major sounds of a word, the word endings don't necessarily need to be there. As long as they have a fairly good English form to their sentence then that is enough to make them Phase B writers, which means they are not 'caught' in the Net.*

Maree states that the writing task itself is difficult for her students, because although the task is contextualised in class when the task is done all the supports are taken away. The Torres Strait Creole has helped because the spelling is totally phonetic and the children are used to working for sounds. This helps them when they try to find the key sounds in a word.

> *They've built up good confidence and self-esteem, skills through working in their own language, so it's actually in writing that we've really been more successful. And it's expected that if children are, for instance, C readers, they'll be a B writer and that normally they will be a phase behind in the writing. But most of my children are actually on a par, which I think is because when they're expected to write in English the Creole helps them more. The reading has got a few more traps.*

ESL features will not keep a child from reaching Phase B in writing.

> *Most people get 'caught' for reading in our classroom. Now Ichuru Primary which has exactly the same structure of students still has its children being 'caught' for writing. I think that's because those children haven't the chance of succeeding in their writing, so they haven't developed to the same risk-taking level.*

Maree explains that if her children stay in the Role Play writing phase, it is because of lack of attendance.

> *When I mapped the children I thought I would have six children who would not be 'caught', but then I ended up with four. Still that's 400% better than last year as every child was 'caught'. I look at the big picture that Aboriginal and Islander schools failed the net as a whole school.*

While Maree feels that the Program is vastly helping the children with the writing validation, she feels that the reading has *'more traps*' that the Program cannot as easily address due to the fact that minor mistakes due to differences in language radically affect the student's outcome. In the reading validation the children read a story out aloud. Miscues and errors are counted, eg. missing endings, and perceived mistakes will count towards not being successful. If they choose the Torres Strait Creole form of a word it will tell against them (see Sample 14 for the very technical system of marking).

> *The validation is very right and wrong. If the children are reading and if an 'f' is missed off the end of the word, or an 'ed' or an 'ing' that is a wrong word and it is considered an error, and yet they are not part of Creole. We're expecting a perfectly syntactically correct sentence that they've picked up from reading the book, but because they've left off an 'ed' or 'ing' or something like that that's counted as an error. That to me is biased against their language skills and I have a bit of a problem with that.*

> *It 's difficult enough for the children to make meaning from the sentence and use that as a cue in their reading, without being expected to put in the 'endings'. They might just be getting used to recognising 'ed' and 'ing' on the end of a word, but the language that comes before and after that word is difficult enough without expecting them to have that which is so unfamiliar to them right as well. With the Grade 3s now I 've got children whom I can ask 'What's the sound on the end?' sort of thing, but prior to that you're asking a lot of the kids to overcome language barriers as well as cuing systems in their reading.*

> *By and large in cases where there is a Creole form and an English form that is very similar the children would use a Creole version of the word. That means that using the Net they have made a mistake and that is counted. The children , I believe, can read a whole lot better than the scores show and we have actually proved that because as well as testing them in English we also did an unofficial test in*

> *Creole with the same conditions. It was based on a translation of an alternative Net book (see Sample 16b).*

When Maree tested the students in Torres Strait Creole for reading, eight were not 'caught' in her Torres Strait Creole versions of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net validation process.

> *Their level in their first language is higher than in their second language. If they were Phase A readers then they were Phase A, but if they were phase B or C then some children would only be Phase B because they were not making meaning from the sentence or if they were making the mistakes I pointed out a minute ago. Those children don't make it to Phase C on minor meanings. This concerns me because I don't think it is fair.*

Finally Maree is concerned because all that matters is what children do on the validation day and so many things can impact on performance, for example shock at having the supports taken away!

Clearly Maree's pedagogical response to the Net is a radical one. The Headmaster urges that the Home Languages Program needs to be trialed for another five years, a sentiment with which Maree would agree. Finally Maree reflects on the way the results of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net have highlighted the need to recognise the second language background of the students in the Cape. She draws attention to the better results achieved when the first language is used to *'enhance literacy'*.

> *There is this whole thing of equity in education. I suppose if children get 'caught' in the net then OK. Then the school gets funding and you can employ teacher aides to teach them reading, which is all very helpful, which people see and that's great. But still there is the old who passes and who fails and it doesn't matter how the Department say 'No, you don't pass and you don't fail and it's not a reflection on....." When you are looking across the Cape and across the Torres Strait so many schools are 'caught' in the net. Whole schools are 'caught' in the Net. So why are whole schools 'caught' in the Net?"*
>
> *It can be to do with teaching, or it can be to do with Literacy background. Or it can be children are not being given the chance to express their real skills because English is the language the children are expected to perform in, whether it is their first language or not.*
>
> *It is supposed to be an evaluation of literacy skills. If tested in their own language it can show that they have greater skills than if they are tested in English. Now the fact remains that we have a large percentage of children who were "caught", but the reasons are a whole new category -reasons like attendance, hearing problems, attitude and others things that are beyond teaching control.*
>
> *But what we can be helping is the children in the development of their skills, competency and confidence in literacy. If we can show here that the kids can do this if they are allowed to do this in their own language then this should be an impetus for the Department to be looking at the use of first language to enhance their literacy.*
>
> *Basically, what I am saying is, 'I want the Department to take notice of our results'.*

Maree is concerned about the need for the recognition of literacy background and oral development in the Reading and Writing Developmental Criteria used in the Year Two Diagnostic Net. She also uses her knowledge of the differences between English and Torres Strait Creole to superimpose indicators for second

language features on the Continua when she assesses the children's writing and reading in English. She is very concerned that the children's progress in literacy in the State Framework is only shown in English , whether it is the children's *'first language or not'*. Maree has responded to the Assessment Framework being used in her system by establishing a new teaching program involving teaching literacy through the use of Torres Strait Creole. She has also established an additional assessment framework to assess the students' progress in Torres Strait Creole, adapted from and compatible with the State's framework. She has done this to overcome the mismatch between the lack of progress as shown in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation, and her knowledge of her students' real progress in literacy through her continuous assessment of their performance in both English and Creole.

Reference

Dept. of Education Qld. 1991. *Perspectives on the Literacy Development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students*

Erika: Visiting Teacher

Catherine Hudson

The Context of the Visiting Teacher

Erika is a visiting teacher and as such is in many ways her own 'school context'. She carries her teaching philosophy, her experience, her professional development and her understanding of the policies of the Brisbane Catholic Education system with her as she travels from school to school in her working week. In 1996 she worked in three schools and by the end of the year in four.

When Erika was a child her parents migrated from Holland, and she experienced what it is like to be very bright and to be learning in a second language in a Junior Primary Classroom. She knows at first hand the frustration of not being able to perform at the level of her native-speaking peers, and she has a special concern about the effects on young ESL learners of the misinterpretations and interventions of well meaning mainstream teachers and learning-needs specialists, who are not informed about ESL.

The ESL Primary Service in Queensland is typified by the visiting teacher model in both Catholic and State Systems. Brisbane has only one ESL intensive centre, Milpera Special School, and that is reserved for secondary students. There have been moves made in the past to set up intensive centres for primary students and there continue to be moves as reviews highlight the need for such institutions. However, the rationale has been that parents did not want their young children to travel long distances from home. The 'visiting teacher' has seemed to be the appropriate option. Logistically there is a sense in this. Brisbane spreads out over many kilometres and there are not the huge areas of migrant density that one finds in Melbourne, for example. However, debate continues about the huge difficulties of a teacher operating in a number of schools and about the efficiency of the model altogether.

Erika visits four quite different schools. St Monica's is in an inner-city suburb; it has 12 ESL children in a total school population of 180 (from a low socioeconomic group). St Joan's and St Ursula's are in the eastern suburbs; the former has 16 children in a total population of 300 (mainly from a high socioeconomic group) and the latter has 30 ESL children in a total population of 500 (across a range of socioeconomic groups). St Theresa's is in the outer southern suburbs; it has 2 ESL children in a total population of 300 (across a range of socioeconomic groups).

The Classroom Context

The school that is the focus of this study is St Joan's, where Erika spent the largest portion of her time when the study was carried out. St Joan's was using the Early Years Diagnostic Net process to assess the Literacy of its Year 2 students. In the State System this process is called the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. The Primary students are mapped onto the Reading and Writing Developmental Continua which are based on the First Steps Continua with a slight adaptation of a few words. Observations of the children's literacy behaviour are validated with specifically designed assessment tasks ('the validation'). Oracy is not assessed in the Early Years Diagnostic Net. Children who are identified as requiring intervention are commonly described by teachers as being 'caught' in the

Net. In terms of First Steps, a child is 'caught' if she/he is in Phase A, Role Play Writing or Phase B, Experimental Reading. When children have been identified through the use of the continua as requiring support, intervention strategies are put in place to assist these children. This may take the form of in-class support or withdrawal for one-to-one or small group support.

Erika spent many years teaching in Victoria and brings with her what she sees as a progressivist view of ESL support: that ESL children should be supported in the mainstream classroom rather than in withdrawal. In Victoria she had taught at one school full time for the five years before she came to Queensland. There, she very rarely withdrew children. Except for the New Arrivals when they first came to the school, *'just to settle them in'*, she found that they could quickly cope in the classroom with her support. This was due she feels to the fact *'that the staff were ESL informed'* and there *'was a holistic view of education in the school'*.

Erika worked mainly in the mainstream classroom at St Joan's. She states that *'I think that's where I should be going most of the time'*. A typical day with Erika would cover work in two schools. In the morning at St Joan's she begins with a Reading Recovery withdrawal lesson with Steven. Next, Erika goes into the Year 2 mainstream classroom with Miss Cannon for a forty minute lesson. This is Steven's classroom. One of the students Erika discusses in this study.

The room has the children's work covering every available space. There are pictures of vocabulary words from the Unit on boards and the days of the week and a poster of numbers with animals is on the blackboard. The tables and chairs are organised trapezium fashion into six groups. On the side there is a climbing frame where children may go to the top platform for silent reading. There is a wet area with painting easels. Plants are growing on the window ledges for the children's science experiments and there is a dress-up corner.

The children are doing a unit on Fairy Tales. The children sit on the carpet around the teacher with her easel and butcher paper, as she models 'the genre'. The focus today is the features of the 'orientation'. The children are to write their own Fairy Tales. Towards the end of the lesson Steven does not seem to be listening. He is looking at the floor and fiddling with his shoes. Miss Cannon says, 'Steven, are you looking at me?' Erika observes Steven's behaviour.

Erika has a special table. She explains that she has a mixed group, half ESL/half non-ESL, so that the non ESL children can give the ESL children well modelled sentences. Steven is always in this group. The children ask, *'What are we going to write about*?' and then there are questions such as *'How do you spell it*?' Erika answers, *'What sounds can you hear*? *Have a go! Giant. G. G.'* After thirty or so minutes the children have two or three sentences. Erika comments that Steven loved doing it. *'He thought a lot, didn't know what to start with'*. Steven walks over to the vocabulary board to get a clue to get going.

In period three, Erika goes to Sylvia's (another of the children discussed in this study) classroom to do reading and writing. Again Erika takes a small group of children, not all ESL children, *'who may need to take it a bit slower.'* Erika feels she has a very good relationship with both the teachers in this classroom and she works with them as a team. There is a mixture of two groups from Year 2 and three teachers including Erika. This allows the teachers to divide the class up into three. After this lesson, Erika writes up some anecdotal notes on the spot, and leaves to go to her next school.

As seen in the morning described above, Erika does in fact withdraw *'a few individuals who are not "succeeding" in the classroom'*:

> *It is not really just the ESL background causing their lack of success in the classroom, even though that does play a part, but it is more*

> *that they cannot cope with the reading and writing, and that gets back to the Year 2 Net and the pressures being put on teachers. So I see my role as supporting the children and teachers with the reading and writing. Considering the students' ESL background, I feel I am able to make sure that they know what they are doing, and are able to use appropriate reading and writing strategies and therefore experience success in the classroom thereby enhancing their own self-esteem. The bottom line is 'when' to initiate 'appropriate' action.*

What Erika means by this is very interesting. She feels that because of the Early Years Diagnostic Net Process, performance is being judged inappropriately in terms of 'success' on the Net, rather than in terms of the typical development of second language literacy. In other words, Erika does not see a good fit between the expectations of the Net Process and the expected development of ESL students. She thus sees withdrawal in this context as a necessary, but inappropriate strategy.

The typical withdrawal lesson differs from normal lessons in that there is no daily routine as in the normal classroom. In a two-week block there may be two lessons with only a day between them In a withdrawal group the children sit around the table and the agenda is 'talk'.

> *I take Steven and the other kids out and I'll go through and talk about the story. We don't read it. I say, 'What do you think is happening here?' and while we are talking about the story I give them the main ideas and make sure they have the ideas and any new language and concepts they will encounter in the text in their heads, then off they go reading and that's what they need. The children need to feel they're succeeding. The choice of texts is also very important with ESL as well as ESB children. The choice varies with each child and you need to know all the child's strengths and weaknesses with reading and writing and extend them from where they are.*

Sample 1: Sylvia's Individual ESL Program

Wk 1 of program. 46

Lesson Plan:- SYLVIA

Date:	New Text	Re-reading	Writing Task	Comment
15/7/96	The Smile (L5) - Discuss pictures (who are these people? What are they doing)	Packing my bag (L5) Read well.	I was practising being Miss on Sunday at my dad's club.	• Read well. • Spacing - writing • Capital for Sunday full stop • Hearing sounds in words.
18/7/96	Where is Miss Pool? (L5) - (When your teacher is away where could she be?)	Our teacher Miss Pool (L6)?	My uncle is getting married on Saturday and I am going to be a flowergirl and my dress is nearly ready.	• Re-reading Self correcting Check spacing Hearing initial + final sounds.
19/7/96	I'm bigger than you (L5) (Rooster/Goose (Discuss size tall/taller Big Bigger Biggest	Where is Miss Pool? (L5) Pool school Read well. Monitoring dead.	It is my cousin's father's birthday. ('s) use of.	Spacing. Hearing some medial sounds f/th confusion Prompted full stop. Discussed "oo" sound

Erika is in fact a Reading Recovery teacher as well as a qualified ESL teacher and she uses Marie Clay's Reading Recovery skills to develop her student's literacy skills. If a child is withdrawn this would only be on teacher request, as happened with Steven, because the teacher felt he was not progressing. Apart from discussing texts, self-drawn or textual illustrations, the children might do tasks like finger painting which Erika relates to matching and naming. The program differs according to the assessed needs of the learners. In Sample 1 on the previous page Erika has mapped out an individual program including Writing tasks for Sylvia.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Erika feels that without an ESL-informed approach to assessment, the performance of young children is called a problem when it is not a problem. She believes that panic alerts are raised that do not need to be raised and that interventionist approaches are taken that do not need to be taken and may very well be counterproductive.

She has a fear of non-ESL 'special needs' junior primary assessment tools being used to identify perceived problems in ESL children, and real concerns about the appropriacy the Early Years Diagnostic Net being used so early in the ESL children's schooling. Drawing on a number of frameworks, she has produced her own system of ESL Reporting to meet the particular needs of the visiting ESL context, and to provide information about her ESL students to classroom teachers to counter-balance the information being provided in reports from what she sees as inappropriate assessment processes.

She has about twenty years experience as a Primary Teacher, seven of these as an ESL teacher with a Graduate Diploma in ESL. Erika brought to Brisbane experience working with an ESL assessment framework and an ESL Reporting System. When she worked in Catholic Education, in Melbourne in the early 90s, Erika worked with the scale for ESL Primary children written by Hilary Hester and developed at the Centre for Language in Primary Education (CLPE), London, UK. When a new arrival came to the school, Erika would fill in a form together with the new arrivals teacher and class teacher using Hilary Hester's primary scale.

Hilary Hester's Stages of English Learning seems be the first scale ever to have been written for primary ESL school students and was a great inspiration to the writers of the NLLIA Primary Bandscales. It is a four-point scale which sets the language performance of the primary students into its context. Rather than being an outcomes framework, it is developmental (many 'ing' words) and emphasises process. In Melbourne, Erika also worked with The New Arrivals Language Record adapted by Catholic Education Office Melbourne for the CLPE's Primary Language Record. This was adapted yet again in the ESL Bandscales volume and called The Summary ESL Profile, a section of which Erika now uses for her reporting.

Catholic Education, Brisbane has tended to take an exploratory rather than a prescriptive approach to ESL assessment frameworks. At the same time it has been right at the front of current innovations. One of the writers of the NLLIA Bandscales was a Brisbane Catholic Education Primary teacher. Both ESL advisers in Catholic Education prepared materials and presented Primary workshops in the first NLLIA Bandscale professional development in Sydney in 1994 and went on to inservice their own Primary Teachers. The tendency at the policy and advisory level has been to be as well informed as possible and to explore the possibilities of using one of the ESL frameworks, the NLLIA Bandscales. At the ESL level there was concern, particularly as the State developed the Year 2 Diagnostic Net based on First Steps and the SPS (Student

Performance Standards) in English. Catholic Education has been able to maintain a high level of professional development for its ESL teachers and teachers have been encouraged to explore the Bandscales to see how they work in their different contexts.

Assessment permeates all actions that Erika takes in her role as visiting teacher. As a result she uses a number of formats and frameworks to assist in making her work manageable and efficacious. Erika's role involves her making decisions about what students to support, what level of support to give, and when to recommend full responsibility by the classroom teacher. High expertise in ESL assessment is one of her essential skills.

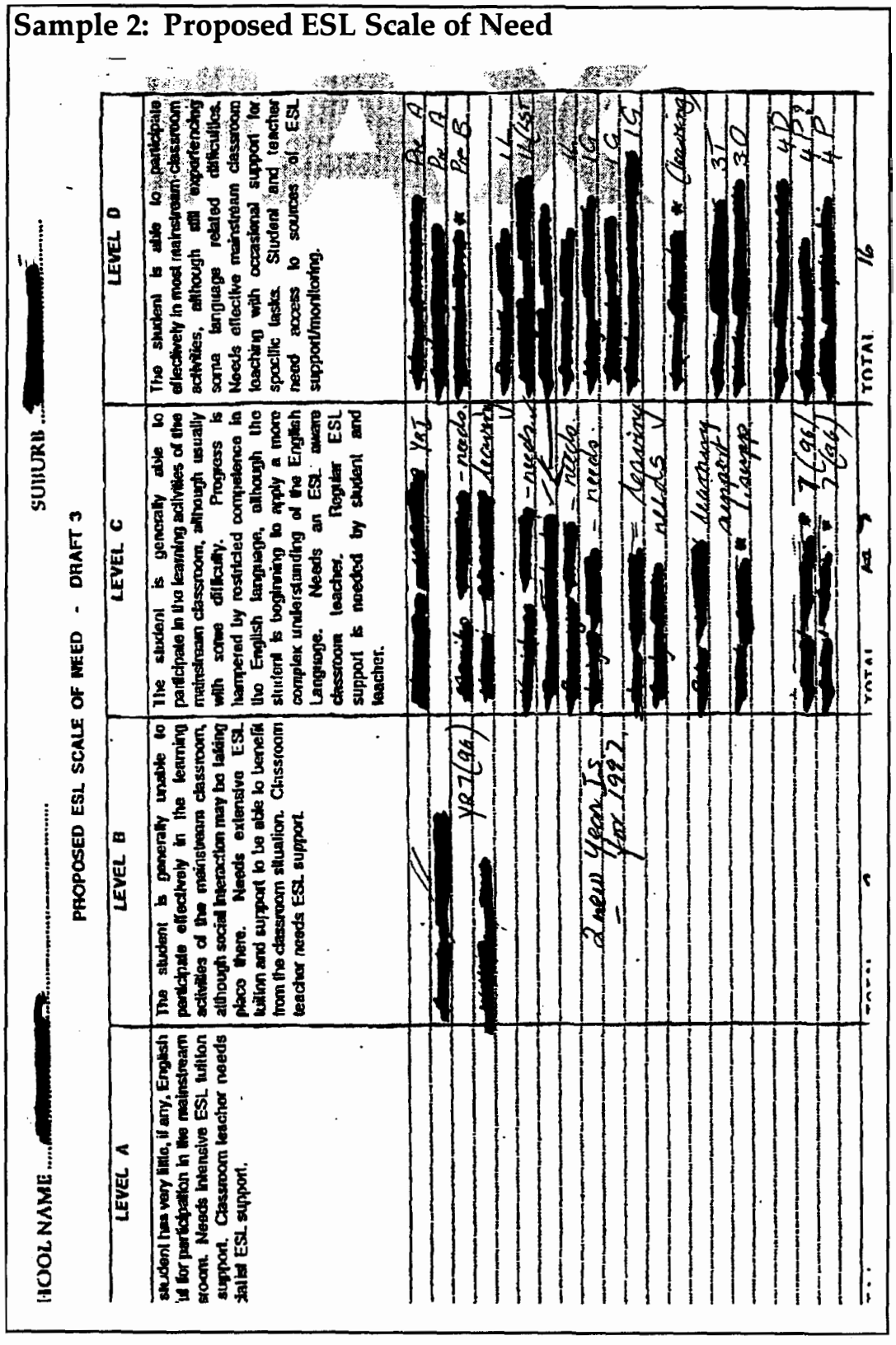
While she has neither the structure and security of the planned mainstream curriculum, nor the advantages of teaching a class of students daily, she has independence and, in a sense, room for some control over the decisions she will make about her professional work. Erika copes with the short amount of time she has available in each school by having a thorough system of assessment from entry to exit, which keeps her in touch with the ESL needs of her students.

The first stage of her assessment begins with the list of schools and students she will have for the upcoming year. Erika teaches full time and the number of hours per school varies according to the amount funded; School 1 has 4.5 hours, School 2 has 6.5 hours, School 3 has 15 hours, School 4 has 1.5 hours.

> *I feel that, with the hours being as they are, you really need to know which children you will be supporting, otherwise you arrive at a new school and you're told that the school has all these children needing ESL support. This happened this year. There were fifteen extra children the school wanted me to look at and possibly work with, but with the time given to that school it was not possible. Yes, I could check out the students' needs (and they all had needs), but I could only take the high priority children.*

Erika decided to take advantage of a needs-based proficiency scale drafted by Catholic Education, Brisbane in 1996. The system devised drafts of a *Proposed ESL Scale of Need* - a four paragraphed scale of need rather than a description of development and ESL teachers placed their students on the appropriate level for support funding. Erika asked the Primary Adviser for copies of the completed scaled lists for the schools she had been appointed to for the upcoming year. Before school finished she went and had 'a look' at the children and found there were about four pre-schoolers.

Sample 2: Proposed ESL Scale of Need



SCHOOL NAME [redacted] SUBURB [redacted]

PROPOSED ESL SCALE OF NEED - DRAFT 3

LEVEL A	LEVEL B	LEVEL C	LEVEL D
student has very little, if any, English id for participation in the mainstream sroom. Needs intensive ESL tuition support. Classroom teacher needs ialist ESL support.	The student is generally unable to participate effectively in the learning activities of the mainstream classroom, although usually with some difficulty. Progress is hampered by restricted competence in the English language, although the student is beginning to apply a more complex understanding of the English Language. Needs an ESL aware classroom teacher. Regular ESL support is needed by student and teacher.	The student is generally able to participate in the learning activities of the mainstream classroom, although usually with some difficulty. Progress is hampered by restricted competence in the English language, although the student is beginning to apply a more complex understanding of the English Language. Needs an ESL aware classroom teacher. Regular ESL support is needed by student and teacher.	The student is able to participate effectively in most mainstream classroom activities, although still experiencing some language related difficulties. Needs effective mainstream classroom teaching with occasional support for specific tasks. Student and teacher need access to sources of ESL support/monitoring.
		Yr 1	Pre A
	Yr 2 (94)	needs Learning	Pre A
		needs Learning	Pre B
		needs	14
		needs	14
	2 new Year 1's for 1992	needs	16
		= learning needs	16
			Checking
		learning support Language	37
			30
		7 (96) 7 (96)	4P
			4P
			4
		TOTAL	16

I thought, well hang on, give the pre-schoolers a chance. Some of the children on the list were learning support needs and looking at them, I thought, 'No, this is not OK. They may have an ESL background, but I don't feel that it's an ESL'ness. I feel the learning support factor overrides their ESL background.

As can be seen in Sample 2, Erika has begun to make annotations according to language needs and possible groupings (including those she will direct to the

learning support teacher). This means that she now has a guide to the students with more intensive needs and can plan the level of support she will provide.

Erika then proceeds with initial diagnostic assessment. This includes the preparation of a Bilingual Learner Profile and initial assessment across the four modes.

Sample 3: Bilingual Learner Profile for Steven

yr (1) 95
(2) 96

Bilingual Learner Profile

Name Steven Known As: Steven

School _____

Sex M Position in the family 1 (2) 3 4, (older sister + younger brother)

Date of Birth 23·3·89 Date of Enrolment 95

Country of Birth Australia

Other family members/caregivers Parents

_____

_____

Length of time in Australia (Parents 10·10·85)

Religion R/C

Reception of Sacraments: Which? Baptism

Language/s spoken at home Arabic / English

No of years learning English _____

Competence in mother tongue: speak. read. write _____

Speaks Arabic at home

_____

Educational Background:

Pre-school C. H. State Country Aust

No of years of school _____ Country _____

Schools attended _____

_____

_____

Last month/year of schooling before arrival in Australia _____

Country of origin of father Lebanon

Country of origin of mother Lebanon

On the Bilingual Learner Profile she includes information about home languages, religion, educational background, competence in mother tongue. Erika feels that this is a very important stage, since if teachers do not have a knowledge of the language and literacy background of the child they may panic when the child does not seem to be up the level of the other students, and put the child through a process of inappropriate assessment and intervention.

Erika feels this happened to Steven, who in October in Year 1 was referred by the Special Needs teacher to the System's Speech and Language Therapists for an Assessment because his mainstream teacher felt he had *'difficulty following*

instructions' . Steven's *'receptive and expressive language skills'* were then formally assessed using the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals - Preschool (the C.E.L.F.-P). Erika feels that one of the keys to what she believes was this unnecessary assessment was the fact that the mainstream teacher and Special Needs teacher thought that Steven had an Italian background, whereas in fact he had a Lebanese background and Arabic was spoken at home. Indeed, the mistaken information about Steven's background appears on the Speech and Language Therapy Report. Erika feels that correct knowledge about the background might have prevented panic about the slower track Steven was taking in Year 1. Erika points to the summary of the Speech and Language Report with wry amusement: *'Steven has a mild to moderate language delay. It is recommended that he receive programming in the following areas: 1. Grammatical skills - pronouns and 2. Listening skills'.*

Erika's concern here is that with proper profile information and ESL consultation it would have been clear that Steven was right on track as an ESL child and should not have gone through what must have been a worrying process for him and his family. She believes they must have wondered, *'Was there something wrong with him*? By Term Four of Year 1, the teacher requested withdrawal and Erika provides her lengthy anecdotal notes of lessons with the Year 1 Steven who at the time of withdrawal was presenting as lethargic and distracted.

Erika uses the Bilingual Learner Profile not only to collect essential bio-data but also as a tool to assess speaking and listening. She collects the information for her profiles by talking to the students individually.

> *I get some background information from the children and even though they are telling me their background, I'm getting some input already. They are just talking to me the same as I'm talking to you. I'm getting a feel for where they are coming from and what their language ability is, just through talking to them.*

Erika also gives them a reading and writing task at the year level expected of them, because she feels that this is how success is measured in the mainstream classroom.

> *I usually get them to do some reading for me and some writing. Often the reading usually isn't too bad, but this can vary from child to child. Sometimes, depending on where they are at in the writing, they can be a little bit hesitant, so I just don't push the writing too much at this point. That's fairly basic...The tasks tell me, this child needs help with this, this child needs help with that.*

In addition she discusses the needs of the children with the classroom teacher and gets her view about where they are in the classroom and any additional background information that might feed into her decisions about grouping and support. This initial assessment is recorded in anecdotal notes and is used to assist Erika in making decisions about groupings and levels of support in each school. In Sample 4 we see Erika's Initial Assessment of Pascal, one of the students she discusses further down in this section.

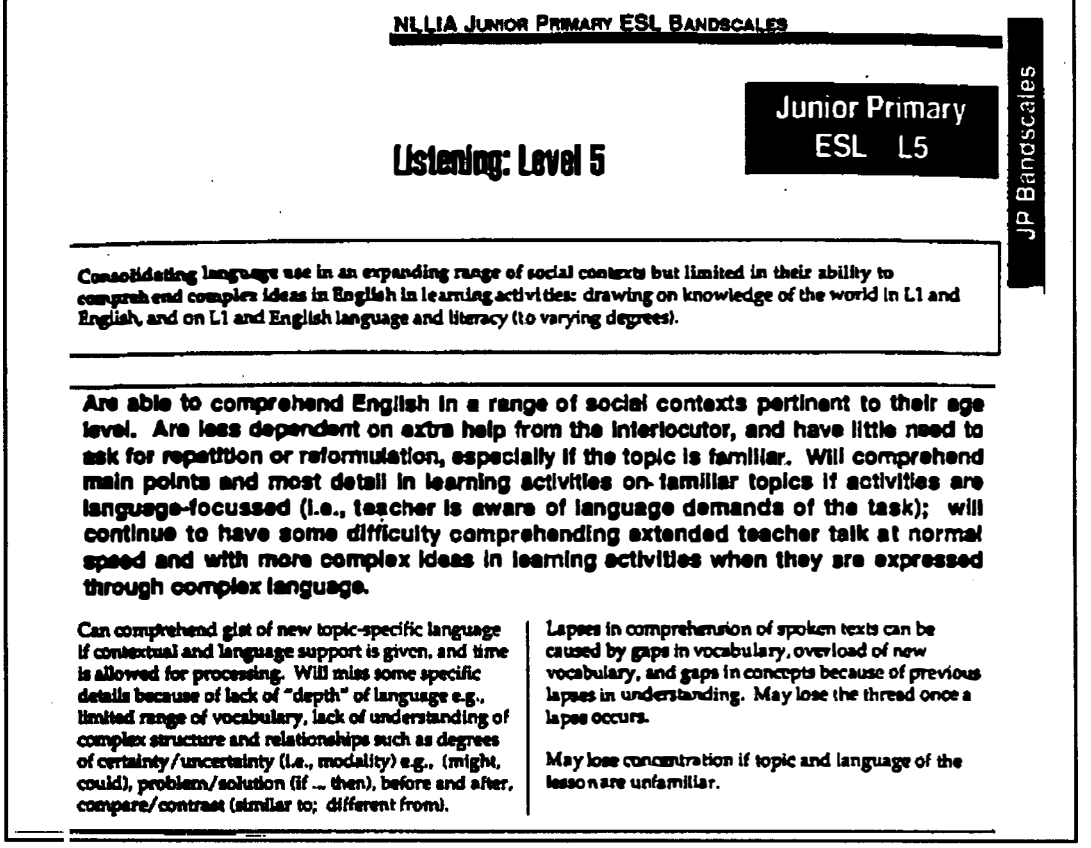
Sample 4: Erika's Initial Assessment of Pascal

INITIAL ASSESSMENT - PASCAL 17.2.94

Pascal responded well to questions asked.
He showed some colour confusion (orange green black yellow)
Has directional movement but no one to one matching as yet.
Was able to write his name.
Support in classroom at this stage.

Once Erika has decided on groupings and levels of support., she uses the NLLIA Bandscales for ongoing assessment of her ESL students' performance. Although Erika seemed to have access to bits and pieces from a number of ESL frameworks, e.g. the Victorian ESL Companion document, she prefers not to use 'outcomes-like' statements. Erika is using the NLLIA Bandscales in a way that she has developed to work for her (we have already seen that she had received inservice from Catholic Education Brisbane on using the Bandscales). Erika states, *'Once I get to know the child a little bit, I decide that this child may be at a particular level, and I photocopy the level and give it to the classroom teacher'.* An example of the Junior Primary Bandscales can be seen below in Sample 5.

Sample 5: NLLIA Junior Primary ESL Bandscales, Listening: Level 5



NLLIA JUNIOR PRIMARY ESL BANDSCALES

JP Bandscales

Junior Primary ESL L5

Listening: Level 5

Consolidating language use in an expanding range of social contexts but limited in their ability to comprehend complex ideas in English in learning activities: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to comprehend English in a range of social contexts pertinent to their age level. Are less dependent on extra help from the interlocutor, and have little need to ask for repetition or reformulation, especially if the topic is familiar. Will comprehend main points and most detail in learning activities on familiar topics if activities are language-focussed (i.e., teacher is aware of language demands of the task); will continue to have some difficulty comprehending extended teacher talk at normal speed and with more complex ideas in learning activities when they are expressed through complex language.

Can comprehend gist of new topic-specific language if contextual and language support is given, and time is allowed for processing. Will miss some specific details because of lack of "depth" of language e.g., limited range of vocabulary, lack of understanding of complex structure and relationships such as degrees of certainty/uncertainty (i.e., modality) e.g., (might, could), problem/solution (if ... then), before and after, compare/contrast (similar to; different from).

Lapses in comprehension of spoken texts can be caused by gaps in vocabulary, overload of new vocabulary, and gaps in concepts because of previous lapses in understanding. May lose the thread once a lapse occurs.

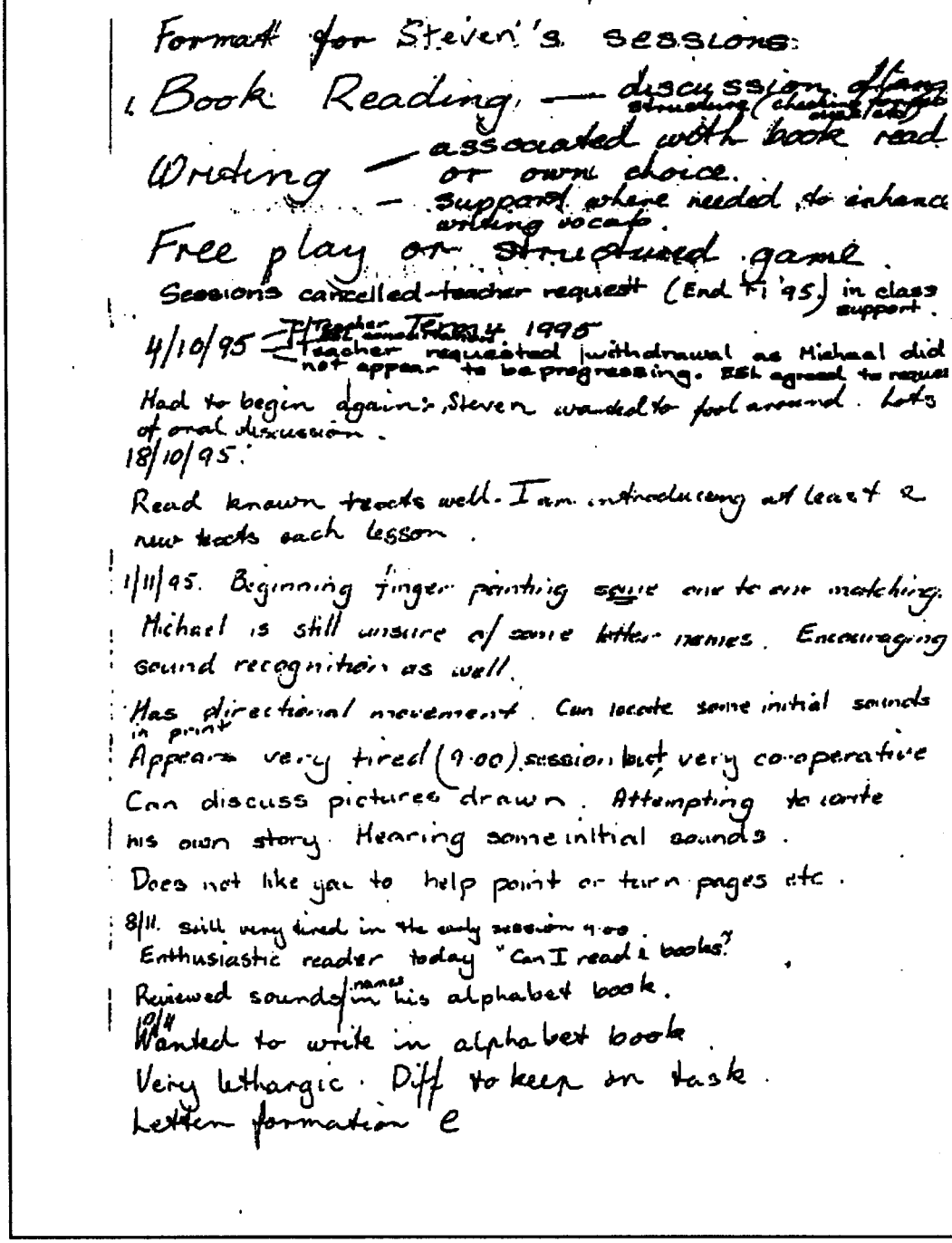
May lose concentration if topic and language of the lesson are unfamiliar.

In some cases Erika might give to the teacher only a copy of one of the relevant modes, but in others she gives the teacher a copy of all four modes. Erika feels that teachers accept this readily and do not complain about 'too much paper'. She believes that they find it useful in their reporting and Erika makes sure that she *'hits them with it at the right time'.* In this way Erika is able to very quickly share her early assessment with the classroom teacher. She sees this 'to and fro-ing' of little notes and records about the children's progress as an important part of her role. However, Erika notes:

> *I find this initial reporting to the mainstream classroom teacher can only work effectively if there is a sense of trust and respect between the classroom teacher and myself.*

As Erika works with the children she fills in anecdotal records about task, attitude and language performance as can be seen in Sample 6.

Sample 6: Erika's Anecdotal Records of Steven's Sessions



Format for Steven's sessions:

1. Book Reading — discussion of story, structure (checking sight/text)
   Writing — associated with book read or own choice.
   — support where needed to enhance writing vocab.
   Free play or structured game.

Sessions cancelled-teacher request (End Ti '95) in class support.

4/10/95 — First individual session. Teacher Term 1 1995
Teacher requested withdrawal as Michael did not appear to be progressing. ESL agreed to request
Had to begin again: Steven wanted to fool around. Lots of oral discussion.

18/10/95.
Read known books well. I am introducing at least 2 new books each lesson.

1/11/95. Beginning finger painting some are to over matching.
Michael is still unsure of some letter names. Encouraging sound recognition as well.
Has directional movement. Can locate some initial sounds in print
Appears very tired (9.00) session, but very co-operative
Can discuss pictures drawn. Attempting to write his own story. Hearing some initial sounds.
Does not like you to help point or turn pages etc.

8/11. still very tired in the early session 9.00.
Enthusiastic reader today "Can I read a books?"
Reviewed sounds/names in his alphabet book.
10/11
Wanted to write in alphabet books.
Very lethargic. Diff to keep on task.
Letter formation e

At the end of each semester Erika records each student's Bandscale level in each of the four modes on the Summary of Progress format which was published with the NLLIA Bandscales in the NLLIA Observation Guides and Report Formats section. The comments she uses to fill in the format are selected from the Bandscales.

Sample 7: Erika's End of Semester Report on Steven used for Teachers - format from the Summary ESL Profile Report published with the NLLIA Bandscales.

NLLIA OBSERVATION GUIDES & REPORTING FORMATS

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Steven 1995

To compile this summary, please refer to:
. ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers;
. the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
. student self assessment.
Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING — 5

Is able to comprehend English in a range of social contexts pertinent to his age level. Can comprehend gist of new topic-specific language if contextual and language support is given and time is allowed for processing. May lose concentration if topic and language of the lesson are unfamiliar.

C 2 SPEAKING — 4

Is able to communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations. Can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic. Extended discourse will be fragmented and approximations to standard forms will be evident.

C 3 READING — 1

Can recognise and name some letters and words which he encounters frequently and for which the meaning is given. Can recognise his name. Exhibits reading-like behaviour, choosing a book, sitting and looking/listening to a book, turning pages correctly, studying pictures.

C 4 WRITING — 1

Has literacy understandings and skills which parallel the literacy understandings and skills in English of native-speaking peers of his age group.
Uses drawing as an initial form of self-expression.

C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Steven will need teacher and contextual support to access new language. He needs to develop confidence in reading, writing and speaking

[redacted] 45

Reporting Formats

Erika has selected one page only from The Summary Profile Report and she explains why she did this:

> *I thought well, OK, I would like to, apart from my other recording, have it on one sheet. As you can see it is only this one sheet. I don't fill in the back. I just haven't the time. I just sort of say, these are the things that I've really noticed with this particular child this semester.*

The NLLIA Summary ESL Profile Report is an adaptation of New Arrivals Language Record developed by Catholic Education Office Melbourne (which itself is an earlier adaptation of the Primary Language Record from the Centre for Language in Primary Education in London) In Australia this work was first adapted with permission from the CLPE by Catholic Education Office, Melbourne in collaboration with Hilary Hester (CLPE) and called the New Arrivals Language Record. When adapted again in the volume containing the NLLIA Bandscales, the *Report* includes little boxes for Bandscale levels. While many have found this Summary ESL Profile Report dauntingly long, Erika has selected a page that is practical for her to use.

The teacher is given a photocopy of Erika's single sheet which she might refer to for teaching, writing reports and reporting to parents. The sheet is not used for reporting to parents; the teacher has her own Parent Teacher Interview Notes.

By the end of the semester, Erika has reported to the teacher at least twice, the first time orally with a photocopy of the relevant Bandscale level, and then with her single Report Sheet:

> *I found, if you are withdrawing, sometimes you see things that the classroom teacher doesn't see and often the classroom teacher will write things in her report and it might conflict a little with what you see. So I say to the teachers' 'Well look, use this if it's useful for you, use these comments in your report'...I try to get my reports out before the teacher reports are done so it really helps them. That's how I see my role, not as an extra reporting person. I would like to see us use a joint system of reporting.*

Erika fills in her Summary of Progress sheet at the end of each semester:

> *I find that it's useful because it also shows me whether the children are progressing or not.*

Erika decided to go ahead with a system like this after professional development in the Bandscales given by the ESL advisers in Catholic Education, Brisbane and also because she felt the ESL teachers need a form of consistent reporting in ESL:

> *I still go back to the ESL Bandscales book if I'm not sure, because I don't know the scales that well. I think this child's a 3, but let's just check. I 'm still developing my expertise in this area.*

The Summary of Progress report is also used for cross reporting to the new teacher as children pass into the next year.

Sample 8: Parent Teacher Interview Notes used at Erika's school

[redacted]

PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEW NOTES

STUDENT: Steven LEARNING GROUP: FM

SEMESTER: 1, 1996 TEACHER/S: [redacted]

CURRICULUM AREAS:

LANGUAGE. Reading ... mapped on continuum - experimental reading. Willingly chooses to read without being prompted. Has difficulty decoding unknown words. Needs much more one on one teaching. Writing ... finds it difficult to express ideas in writing. Role play writing.

MATHS Shape Size Position Pattern. Concept Number: enjoys mathematics games and pursuit. Quick and accurate, with use of concrete material

SKILLS:

Enjoys "hands on" experiences.
Always strives to do his best.
Has difficulty expressing his ideas.
Is able to plan jointly with other group members, but at times had difficulty working with others.

ATTITUDES:

Shows an enquiring mind.
Has difficulty listening to others.
Displays a positive attitude to all areas of learning

FOLLOW UP:

[As appropriate]

ESL – [redacted] – intensive programme 2nd Semester, 1996

Support-a-reader.

SIGNATURE: [redacted] DATE: June, 1996.

Reporting between Schools

When children move to other schools, Erika's Report varies according to the level of ESL support they have been given. If the children have an NESB background, Erika may support them incidentally but not to the extent of her New Arrivals or General Support children. With these children Erika feels it is not 'ESLness', or a need for learning support, *'it's just that these kids need extra time'*. She sees these children as not really coming onto the ESL scale. In this case she does not pass on her Summary of Progress reports, but rather, if the child is moving schools, sends a letter which she sees as a kind of *'reference'* to guide the new teacher.

Sample 9: Erika's reporting between schools used when a child has an ESL background, but comes under neither the category of New Arrival nor General Support

25-11-96

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

[redacted] has been working with me this year to develop his reading and writing skills.

When he began this year(5-2-96) [redacted]

- knew most of the alphabet names and sounds
- (confused u/y e/i g/j)
- could write his name and I a to
- could hear most initial sounds and some final sounds
- could recognise I my to is no
- His reading was rated at Level 2 instructional(Reading Recovery Level)

[redacted] is no longer withdrawn for writing, but has continued to be monitored daily for reading.
He is now reading Level 14 independently but may choose between 14-16 depending on text. If [redacted] feels comfortable with a text he has no trouble with it so it is imperative that he take home material which is at his level. [redacted] still lacks confidence with reading and needs to further develop the strategies for making meaning from text. He does not read for meaning if the text is too advanced.

The support program has focussed on introducing the content of the story through prior discussion of pictures and prediction of story line as well as allowing [redacted] to read the story on his own. This method has enabled me to monitor the strategies he is using effectively and prompt those he needs to develop further.

[redacted] (ESL Teacher)

She does, however, send her on the Summary of Progress report if the child has been receiving intensive ESL support.

Assessing Individuals

Erika's discussion of the three students Pascal, Steven and Sylvia gives an idea of how she goes about making judgements about her students. Erika explains that Pascal, a Year 3 child, was born in Australia, but spoke Polish at home. She believes that before he came to school he would only have spoken Polish and Polish continues to be the only language spoken at home. Pascal went to Poland for three months in Year 2 and missed the Early Years Diagnostic Net process which was done quite late at that school. Erika feels that if it had been done in April or May as at the other schools Pascal would have been *'caught'* in the Net.

To Erika, Pascal is *'very ESL'*. Because he had only spoken Polish he had *'trouble with his sounds'*. Early on, Erika states, his classroom teacher identified a problem with his reading. He could not read the words for the comprehension. As a result Erika explains that the Learning Support teacher gave Pascal a 'Learning Support' test, the Waddington Diagnostic Reading Test. Erika discusses his results on the test, which was given in May of his first year at school. In the end, Erika points out that Pascal came out of it well within the range for his age. His age was seven years and one month and he scored in the range between six and nine. However, Erika points out that the test was quite inappropriate for his needs. With pictorial contextual support, she explains, Pascal gets full marks on matching a picture with a word, e.g. picture of fish, with 'fish'. However, in the next section of the test when he has to circle the missing word from the end of each line of the Nursery Rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty' (*Humpty Dumpty sat on the [wool what well which wheel wall will]*), Pascal answers every question incorrectly and the examiner stops the test at that point:

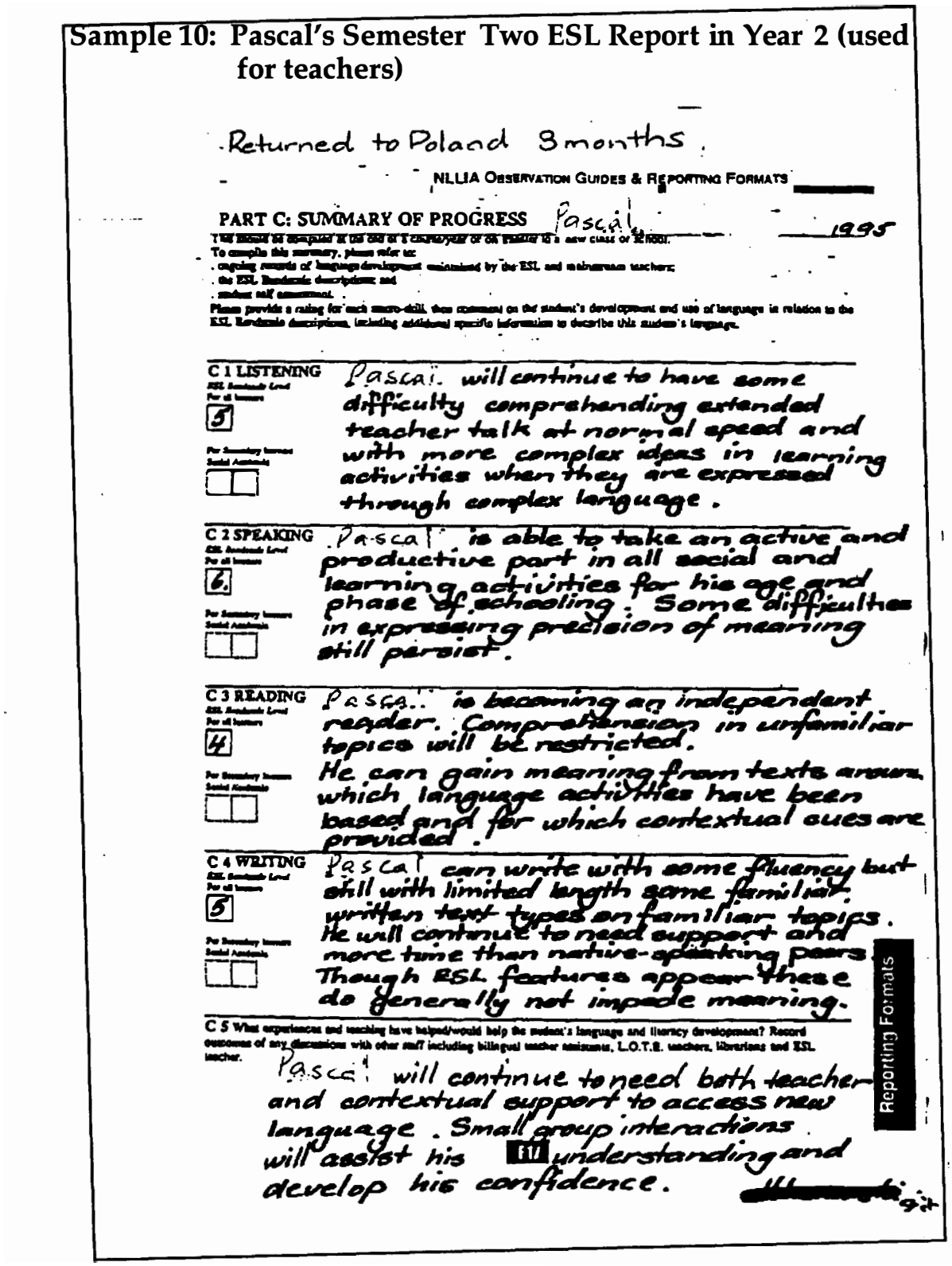
> *With Humpty Dumpty, which Erika thinks he would be familiar with, he has circled 'wool' for 'wall' in Humpty Dumpty sat on the .....He couldn't read that and he's just had a go at it. Thought well OK 'wool', maybe that means wall. The English sound system would not have been developed. He wouldn't know how to spell wall, he wouldn't be able to recognise the word 'wall', so he's had a go at it. Humpty Dumpty had a great.....I just felt that this was not fair to the child.*

This kind of Special Needs testing worries Erika a lot because it is not based on an understanding of the second language learner. She feels that Pascal has second language needs, not special learning needs (see The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching). On the other hand, she states that, unlike the Visiting ESL Teacher, the Learning Support teacher is *'the only constant person to support anyone who's having problems'*. Erika was the seventh ESL teacher in the last four years.

In Erika's 2nd semester ESL report on Pascal she notes that he returned to Poland for three months. Erika points out that his listening level 5, speaking level 6 and writing level 5 are reasonably high ESL levels in the Bandscales Year 2, reflecting the fact that he was born in Australia. However, she notes a plateauing tendency between the 1995 and 1996 reports, where the levels remain the same, including level 4 for reading (See Sample 10).

Erika notes on the report at the end of Year 3 that Pascal's 'reading' (which was the reason for ESL referral) is still *'limited by the amount of vocabulary so far encountered orally and in reading and should be closely monitored.'* She recommends in the report that he *'will need continued teacher and contextual support if he is to access new language'* (See Sample 11) .

Sample 10: Pascal's Semester Two ESL Report in Year 2 (used for teachers)



Returned to Poland 3 months.

NLLIA OBSERVATION GUIDES & REPORTING FORMATS

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Pascal 1995

To compile this summary, please refer to:
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. the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
. student self assessment.

Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING
ESL Bandscale Level
For all learners: 5
For Secondary learners: Initial Acrolects:

Pascal will continue to have some difficulty comprehending extended teacher talk at normal speed and with more complex ideas in learning activities when they are expressed through complex language.

C 2 SPEAKING
ESL Bandscale Level
For all learners: 6.
For Secondary learners: Initial Acrolects:

Pascal is able to take an active and productive part in all social and learning activities for his age and phase of schooling. Some difficulties in expressing precision of meaning still persist.

C 3 READING
ESL Bandscale Level
For all learners: 4
For Secondary learners: Initial Acrolects:

Pascal is becoming an independent reader. Comprehension in unfamiliar topics will be restricted. He can gain meaning from texts around which language activities have been based and for which contextual cues are provided.

C 4 WRITING
ESL Bandscale Level
For all learners: 5
For Secondary learners: Initial Acrolects:

Pascal can write with some fluency but still with limited length some familiar written text types on familiar topics. He will continue to need support and more time than native-speaking peers. Though ESL features appear these do generally not impede meaning.

C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Pascal will continue to need both teacher and contextual support to access new language. Small group interactions will assist his [redacted] understanding and develop his confidence.

Reporting Formats

Sample 11: Pascal's Semester Two ESL Report in Year 3 (used for teachers)

In class support T4
monitored reading T1-4)

NLLIA Observation Guides & Reporting Formats

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Pascal 1996

THIS SECTION to complete at the end of a school year or on exiting to a new class or school.
To compile this summary, please refer to:
. ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers;
. the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
. student self assessment.
Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [5] For Secondary learners Social Assistants: [ ]

Pascal is able to comprehend English in most social situations. He is able to comprehend most extended and peer talk in academic learning activities on familiar topics if contextual support is available, though will lack 'depth' of comprehension of more complex discourse.

C 2 SPEAKING ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [6] For Secondary learners Social Assistants: [ ]

Pascal can express his ideas and opinions on new and familiar curriculum topics as long as the content is well grounded. He is able to explain ideas to others though there are still difficulties in expressing precision of meaning.

C 3 READING ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [4] For Secondary learners Social Assistants: [ ]

Pascal can acquire information from texts on familiar topics but still needs teacher guidance and visual support. He is still limited in his comprehension by the amount of vocabulary so far encountered orally and in reading.

C 4 WRITING ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [5] For Secondary learners Social Assistants: [ ]

Pascal control over the writing process is growing. He will still need tasks to be clarified and need teacher guidance. He tends to write about what he knows and avoid language and topics with which he has difficulty.

C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Pascal will need continued teacher and contextual support if he is to access new language.

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Reading and writing will need to be closely monitored again next year.

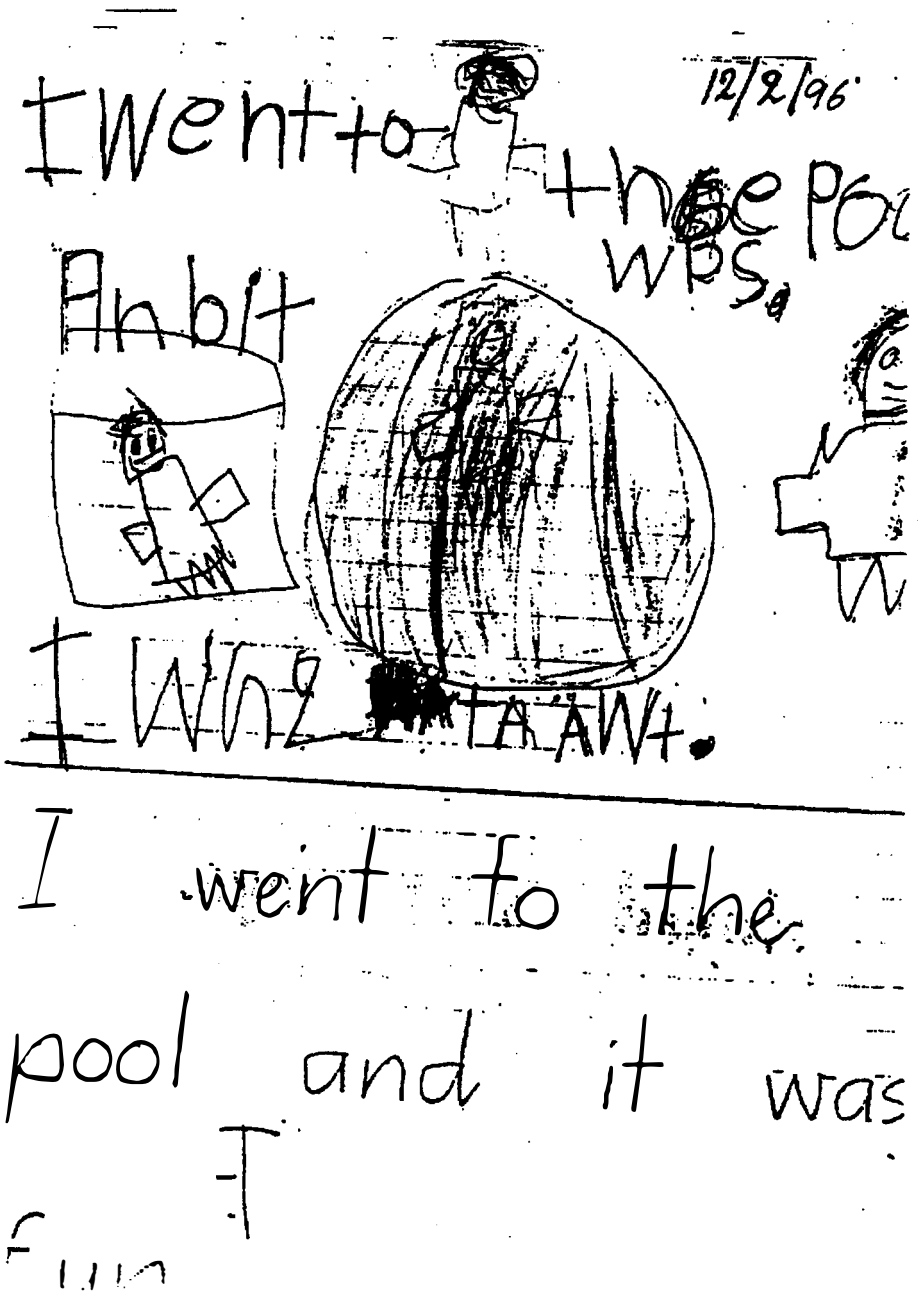
Reporting Formats

Steven is the student who has been described earlier in the Classroom Context, the one who was reminded by the teacher to pay attention and who enjoyed the writing activity with Erika and walked around the room to find suitable vocabulary for his text. He was also described as being referred to a Speech and Language Therapist for assessment in October of Year 2, an assessment which Erika felt was quite unnecessary. Erika has been seen to be supporting him in the mainstream classroom and by Term 4 of Year 2 she was requested by the mainstream classroom teacher to give him additional support in the withdrawal group.

Erika explains that Steven was 'caught' in the Net in reading and writing. Using the Phases in the Early Years Diagnostic Net Developmental Continuum (based on First Steps), Erika states Steven was just coming out of Role Play Writing at the beginning of Year 2. Commenting on his reading she adds that *'In the readers*

there were so many concepts, so many words that he may not have come across because of his ESL background'.

Sample 12: Steven's story about going to the pool



Steven, Erika points out, came to school without being able to communicate. He could hardly *'not'* get caught in the net, and yet she says that should not have been a worry. Erika explains that he had suffered at school from having a big sister with a *'bad name'* and he had few social skills:

> *He didn't know how to get on socially with people. He really didn't. The children nearly got to the stage where they did not like him. He was aggressive and you could see it was all built up inside of him, just waiting to come out, but he didn't know how to get it out.*

Erika worked on Steven's listening and speaking when he was referred to her in Year 1. By the end of the year she has placed him on Level 5 in Listening and Level 4 in speaking on the Bandscales. Before she took him, *'he used to get up for*

the morning talk and he'd stand for ages and not be able to think about what he was going to say. You could see him collecting his thoughts'. Erika felt that the reading and writing would come. She feels that all the reading and writing *'stuff'* in the Early Years Diagnostic Net should be:

> *put on hold. It will come. We shouldn't panic straight away. Give the children time and a language-rich environment.*

She illustrates what she feels is the soundness of her judgement by pointing to the difference between Steven's end of year ESL report in 1995 and his mid-year report in 1996 (See Sample 13 and 14). In 1995 Erika places Steven on Level 5 for listening, 4 for speaking, and 1 for both reading and writing. By mid 1996 Steven has moved from 1 on the Bandscales to 3+ for reading and writing.

Sample 13: Steven's End of Year ESL Report in Year 1, 1995

NLLIA Observation Guides & Reporting Formats

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Steven 1995

This record is completed at the end of a secondary year or on leaving a NSW school or class.
To compile this summary, please refer to:
. ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers;
. the ESL Bandscales descriptors; and
. student self-assessment.
Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscales descriptors, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING — ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [5] — For Secondary learners Social Assessment: [ ]

Is able to comprehend English in a range of social contexts pertinent to his age level. Can comprehend gist of new topic-specific language if contextual and language support is given and time is allowed for processing. May lose concentration if topic and language of the lesson are unfamiliar.

C 2 SPEAKING — ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [4] — For Secondary learners Social Assessment: [ ]

Is able to communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations. Can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic. Extended discourse will be fragmented and approximations to standard forms will be evident.

C 3 READING — ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [1] — For Secondary learners Social Assessment: [ ]

Can recognise and name some letters and words which he encounters frequently and for which the meaning is given. Can recognise his name. Exhibits reading-like behaviour, choosing a book, sitting and looking/listening to a book, turning pages correctly, studying pictures.

C 4 WRITING — ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: [1] — For Secondary learners Social Assessment: [ ]

Has literacy understandings and skills which parallel the literacy understandings and skills in English of native-speaking peers of his age group. Uses drawing as an initial form of self-expression.

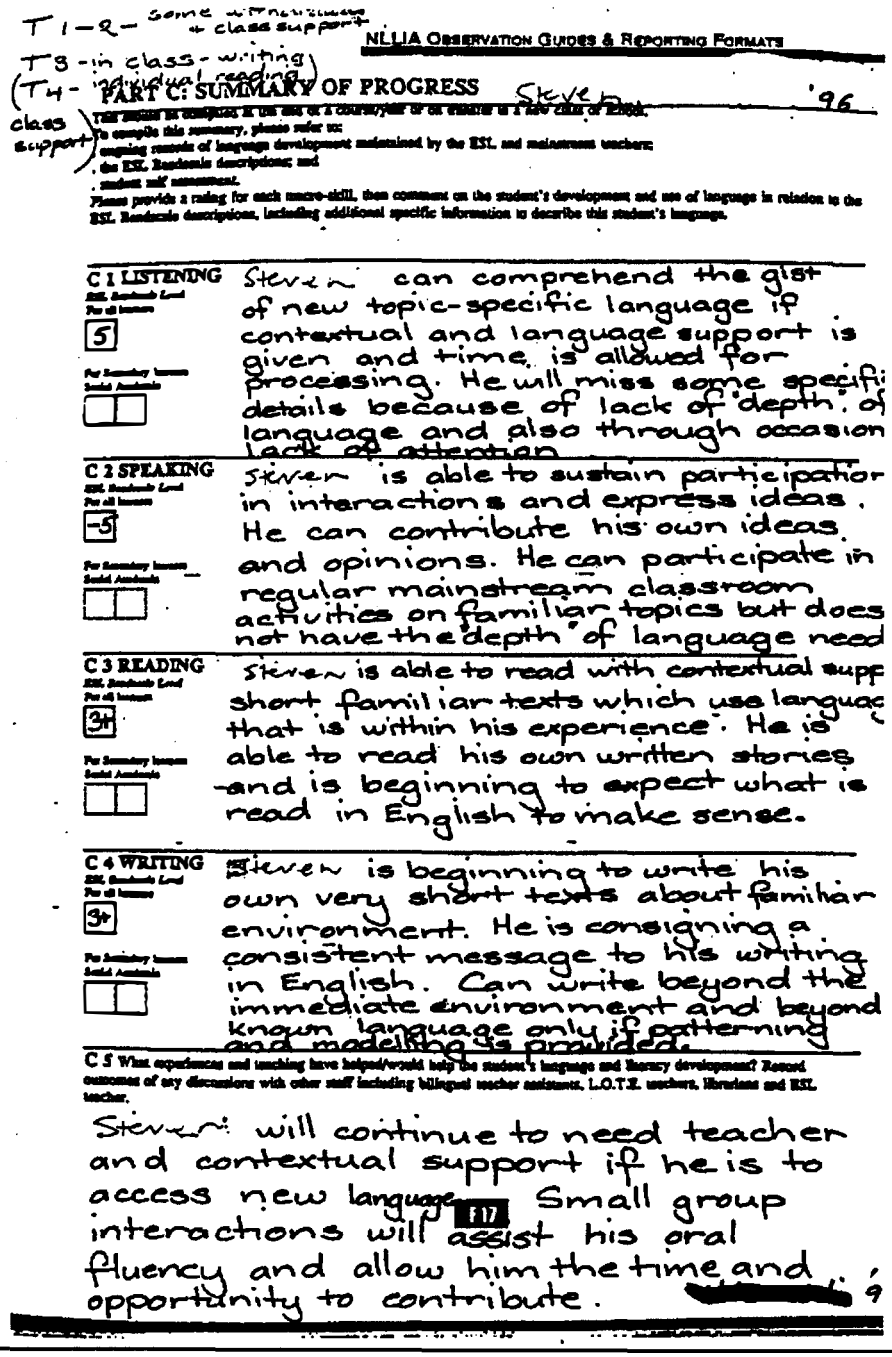
C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/could help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Steven will need teacher and contextual support to access new language. He needs to develop confidence in reading, writing and speaking

[redacted] 95

Reporting Formats

Sample 14: Steven's Mid Year ESL Report in Year 2, 1996



T1-2- some withdrawal + class support
T3 - in class - writing
(T4 - individual reading)
class support

NELLA OBSERVATION GUIDES & REPORTING FORMATS

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Steve '96

To complete this summary, please refer to:
- ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers;
- the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
- student self assessment.

Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING — ESL Bandscale Level: 5 — Per cent known: — Secondary Learners ESOL Assessment:

Steven can comprehend the gist of new topic-specific language if contextual and language support is given and time is allowed for processing. He will miss some specific details because of lack of depth of language and also through occasional lack of attention

C 2 SPEAKING — ESL Bandscale Level: 5 — Per cent known: — Secondary Learners ESOL Assessment:

Steven is able to sustain participation in interactions and express ideas. He can contribute his own ideas and opinions. He can participate in regular mainstream classroom activities on familiar topics but does not have the depth of language need

C 3 READING — ESL Bandscale Level: 3+ — Per cent known: — Secondary Learners ESOL Assessment:

Steven is able to read with contextual supp short familiar texts which use languag that is within his experience. He is able to read his own written stories and is beginning to expect what is read in English to make sense.

C 4 WRITING — ESL Bandscale Level: 3+ — Per cent known: — Secondary Learners ESOL Assessment:

Steven is beginning to write his own very short texts about familiar environment. He is consigning a consistent message to his writing in English. Can write beyond the immediate environment and beyond known language only if patterning and modelling is provided.

C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Steven will continue to need teacher and contextual support if he is to access new language. Small group interactions will assist his oral fluency and allow him the time and opportunity to contribute.

His speaking has moved from 4 to 5 and his listening has remained at 5. However, his listening had already made a huge leap to 5 the year before, when she started working with him and he had just been tested for listening difficulties. Erika says she is still worried about him, because he could be seen by a new and inexperienced teacher as a behaviour problem and he is not. However, she feels that 5 for listening and speaking on the Bandscales is not high.

Erika's comment on the 1996 ESL Report is really a message to the new teacher to let Steven have small group experiences in an ESL withdrawal group. She is fearful that this young, inexperienced teacher is not ESL informed.

Erika discusses Sylvia because she is another NESB child who was 'caught ' in the Net. Sylvia's parents are Portuguese and although she was born in Australia, she spent 17 months in Portugal in Years 1 and 2. Erika explains that she benefited greatly from a small ESL withdrawal group, contributed orally and then began to read. In Sylvia's 2nd Semester ESL report (Sample 15) Erika has placed her on Level 4 for Listening, Level 5 for Speaking, Level 1 for Reading and Level 3 for Writing. By the end of Year 2 (Sample 16) Erika has placed her on Level 6 for Listening, Level 6 for Speaking, Level 6 for Reading and Level 4 for Writing.

Sample 15: Sylvia's End of Year ESL Report in Year 1, 1995

195 NMD

NLLIA Observation Guides & Reporting Formats

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Sylvia

To compile this summary, please refer to:
. ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers;
. the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
. student self assessment.

Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING Sylvia can comprehend social English in familiar contexts. She requires intense concentration to comprehend fully and is likely to lose comprehension with high background noise present. Needs time for processing of language

ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: 4
For Secondary learners Social Assessment:

C 2 SPEAKING Always takes time when answering in a large group. Occasionally does not respond. Has difficulty expressing depth of ideas which require more complex language.

ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: 5
For Secondary learners Social Assessment:

C 3 READING Sylvia is still new to reading in English but has knowledge of book language and an understanding of some basic conventions of print.

ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: 1
For Secondary learners Social Assessment:

C 4 WRITING Sylvia is now beginning to take risks with her writing. With teacher support she will become more confident. She still confuses i/e sounds in writing.

ESL Bandscale Level For all learners: 3
For Secondary learners Social Assessment:

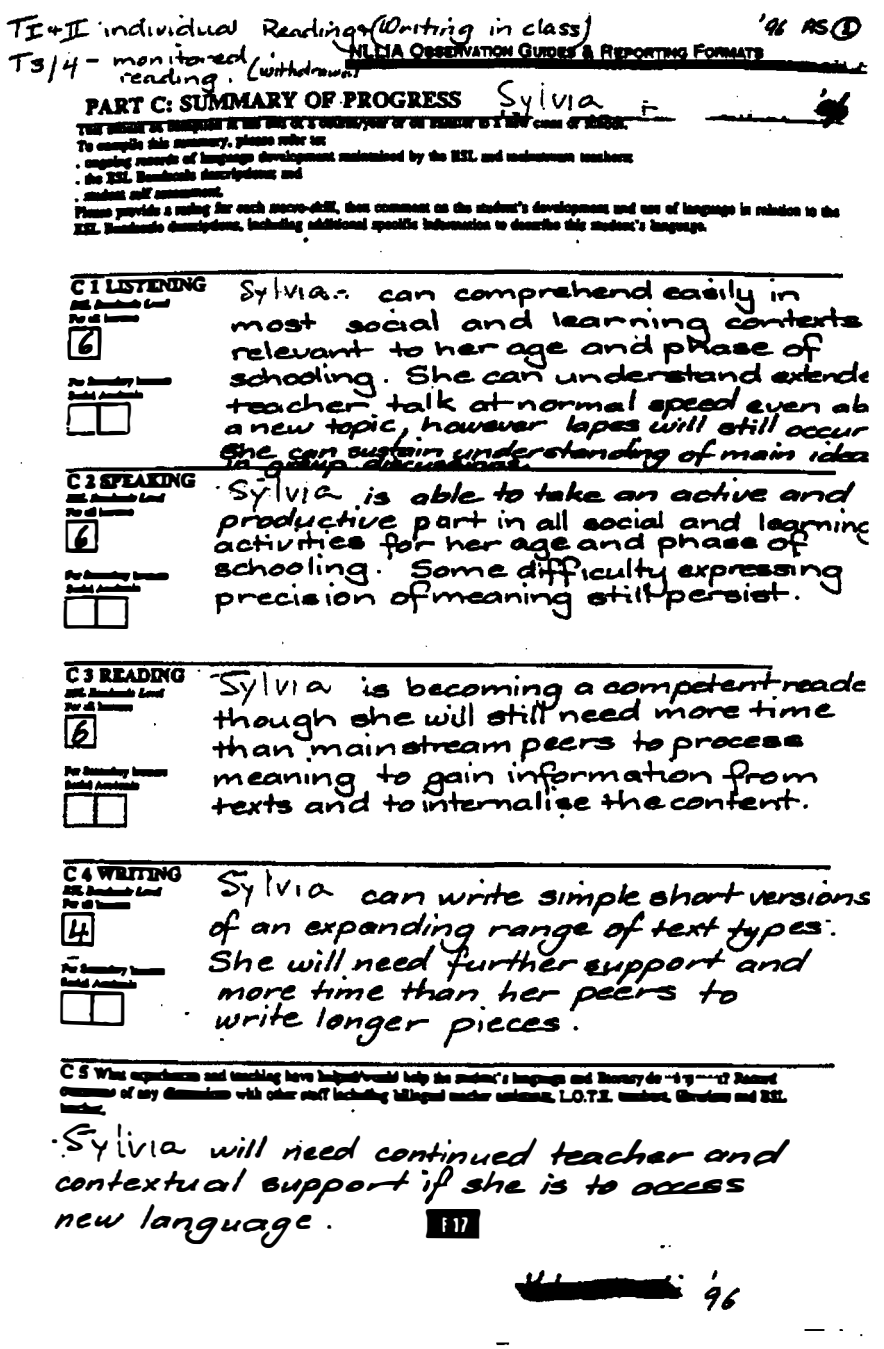
C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Sylvia is becoming more confident in her use of English. She will need more time than her native-speaking peers [illegible] to access and respond to information.

[illegible] '95

Reporting Formats

Sample 16: Sylvia's End of Year ESL Report in Year 2 1996



T1+II individual Reading (Writing in class) '96 AS①
T3/4 - monitored reading. (withdrawn)

NLLIA OBSERVATION GUIDES & REPORTING FORMATS

PART C: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS Sylvia

To compile this summary, please refer to:
. ongoing records of language development maintained by the ESL and mainstream teachers
. the ESL Bandscale descriptions; and
. student self assessment.
Please provide a rating for each macro-skill, then comment on the student's development and use of language in relation to the ESL Bandscale descriptions, including additional specific information to describe this student's language.

C 1 LISTENING
6
Sylvia can comprehend easily in most social and learning contexts relevant to her age and phase of schooling. She can understand extende teacher talk at normal speed even ab a new topic, however lapses will still occur She can sustain understanding of main idea in group discussions.

C 2 SPEAKING
6
Sylvia is able to take an active and productive part in all social and learning activities for her age and phase of schooling. Some difficulty expressing precision of meaning still persist.

C 3 READING
6
Sylvia is becoming a competent reade though she will still need more time than mainstream peers to process meaning to gain information from texts and to internalise the content.

C 4 WRITING
4
Sylvia can write simple short versions of an expanding range of text types. She will need further support and more time than her peers to write longer pieces.

C 5 What experiences and teaching have helped/would help the student's language and literacy development? Record outcomes of any discussions with other staff including bilingual teacher assistants, L.O.T.E. teachers, librarians and ESL teacher.

Sylvia will need continued teacher and contextual support if she is to access new language.

F 17

'96

Erika points out that Sylvia has improved in all skills, but particularly on reading, where she goes from Level 1 to Level 6. Interestingly, Erika selects *'needs more time'* in her selection of comments from the Bandscales for reading and writing. She is no longer worried about Sylvia.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Significantly, Erika does not carry round with her records of the Early Years Diagnostic Net Continua. When asked why she does not carry round this documentation with her, she succinctly answered, *'Basically because I thought the classroom teacher should have that information'*. Again she feels that *'all that stuff should be put on hold with ESL children.'* The children simply need more time.

> *I want to tell the teachers, 'Well OK they've been caught in the net, but look at all the things they can do and let's take them from there and lead them further; not look at them and say, look at all the things they are not doing yet, but they will be doing those in the future. It takes time, it's like wait time, you know, when children come and they don't speak for ages and ages and all of a sudden it all happens. Give them that opportunity, make them comfortable every step along the way. Always be positive. You have to with ESL children. If you are withdrawing them they think there's something wrong with me. I have a learning problem and it's not true.*

Clearly in spite of Erika's feelings that withdrawal is a method of ESL support that should be used very sparingly, she *is* withdrawing children and sometimes against her better judgement. Erika believes that there is a connection between the pressure on the classroom teachers produced by the Early Years Diagnostic Net process and the number of children being referred to her for withdrawal. All the examples of the children in this study were referred to her because of what Erika sees as teacher 'panic' about the 'net'. Children are being perceived as at risk because of an imposed framework. Although Erika says about the classroom, *'I think that's where I should be going most of the time'*, she believes that there has been a big move towards withdrawal in her work in Queensland as opposed to her work earlier on in Victoria. Though children might be progressing quite well on an ESL scale of development, they are seen as *'not succeeding in the classroom'*, as having learning problems. She then feels that when they are withdrawn in these circumstances, the children will feel there is something wrong with them:

> *It will all happen (second language literacy development) but the appropriate support bit may it be a classroom whatever, needs to be there to help that child, but not to make the child feel that I can't cope. They need to be told that they can do many things and then we need to extend that knowledge.*

The risk to Erika is even greater when the ESL child is not only identified as needing 'withdrawal' due to lack of success with reading and writing, but sent off to take the tests learner support teachers use.

According to Erika, withdrawal might sometimes be an appropriate ESL strategy that children *'don't mind'*, as it was in one of the schools she visited this year. In this school there were a lot of ESL children and the teachers were very in tune with ESL. There the children knew *'that they were going to get extra help with their English and they didn't feel that they didn't understand and they couldn't do it'.*

At this point, however, Erika is clearly perturbed about the pedagogical implications of the Early Years Diagnostic Net Process.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Erika uses the four-point *Proposed ESL Scale of Need* with caution, though as pointed out she has begun to use it to plan her levels of support. She bears in mind the school and the levels of support available in each context. In a school where the teachers have a high level of ESL professional development she is not so concerned about the levels. The teachers will not panic. However at *'another school'* she might need to put a child back further on the scale because *'the classroom teachers would need more help!'*

Erika's system of assessment and reporting is self-devised and very comprehensive, reflecting her belief that the Visiting teacher needs to communicate as fully as possible with classroom teachers about the needs of young ESL learners. She has the confidence to be creative with the framework

because as we have seen she has been dealing with scales and ESL reporting frameworks for a long time. What Erika particularly liked about the use of the ESL framework that was used in her school in Melbourne was the way the new arrivals teacher sat down with the class teacher and ESL teacher and they all filled it in together (this was referred to in detail in this study at the beginning of Assessing the Children's Achievements). She would like to do the same thing in her schools with the Bandscales:

> *With the Bandscales I would like to sit down and rather than just me filling it in and saying, 'This is what I think and what I've seen', I'd like to ask classroom teachers, 'How do you feel about that'? It tends to happen at the end after I've already filled it in. The teachers tend to let me say what I think and not contradict what I say. The classroom teachers have the background information of the Bandscale Document I gave them earlier, so it would be good if we could jointly fill it in. I think it might help me. I see us as partners in this child's education.*

The big issue for Erika in using the ESL frameworks is capturing the progress of an ESL child in a framework which describes what she sees as 'ESLness' rather than English first language literacy development or Special Learning needs. She finds the use of the Early Years Diagnostic Net inappropriate with very young ESL learners and feels as we have seen that it should be put it *on hold*. Her great concern is the inappropriate use of special learning frameworks rather than ESL frameworks with ESL children, as shown in the discussion about Pascal and Steven.

> *I am very concerned that 'ESLness' is confused with remediation. The sorts of things that the Learning Support teachers do with ESL children worries me. You think this child can't comprehend and it is showing up in the comprehension tasks, but hang on, they are learning another language. And you know, some of the tasks Learning Support teachers set for them are for mainstream English speaking background students. So I suppose that would be my biggest concern.*

This year the funding for ESL in Catholic Education, Brisbane went into the general literacy 'bin'. There were large cuts in ESL funding. In 1997 Erika is visiting many schools as a result of the cuts. She feels it is a terribly difficult situation for her professionally, but she does not want to leave the children. She would like to make a stand for the importance of ESL for ESL junior primary children, or the necessity of 'time' and for the importance of not allowing State first language literacy frameworks to panic teachers into using inappropriate and harmful intervention.

Laura at St Cecilia's School

Catherine Hudson

The School Context

St Cecilia's is a Catholic Primary School on the border between two Brisbane suburbs: one inner-city, transient and unit dominated, the other settled, leafy, middle-class. On entering the school, one walks past the large church where the flowers are being arranged and onto the traditional black asphalt playing ground surrounded by classrooms in various 'older' architectural styles. The school is small enough for everyone to know everyone. Groups of parents, who are obviously welcome, sit under the trees on the long benches and offer pleasantries to the staff. The staffroom is small, and the central table manages to hold the entire staff at lunchtime. Information about students and lessons is passed, crossing classes and age groups. Laura, the ESL teacher, finds this an excellent place to do her liaison work with the mainstream teachers.

The population of the school is falling. At present there are 140 students, about a third of whom are ESL students. Generally the ESL students are from a lower socio-economic background. In the past the area housed a hostel for new arrivals and many have stayed on in the area. Migrants still come to the area before moving on to other places. The ethnic population is varied. There are Spanish-speaking students from El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia and one from Spain. There are students from Vietnam, China and Iraq and there is a sizeable Polish population.

The school sees itself as being very much in tune with ESL needs. The use of the first language is encouraged in speaking and reading. Children can be seen at ease using the first language in the playground and where possible bilingual resources are used. Planning for ESL is taken for granted and the ESL teacher is a valued member of the staff. Following Brisbane Catholic Education policy, the children receive ESL help on the basis of need rather than length of time in Australia. At the time of the study the school had a full-time ESL teacher and a part-time Spanish bilingual aide.

The Classroom Context

As a full-time ESL teacher Laura works at two levels of support: in the mainstream classroom and with a withdrawal class. She team teaches with the mainstream teachers across year levels most of the day. She and the mainstream teacher plan together and work cooperatively. Laura also takes small withdrawal groups for two periods a day. These include new arrivals and anyone with needs she has identified. In this way Laura is able to follow up on the work done in class. In withdrawal time she is able to work with such children as Joseph *'to give him a bit of a boost'*. Laura points out that children with Joseph's background of trauma miss out on a great deal of the formal learning in a mainstream classroom for a long period of time. Joseph is just finishing Year 2. At Easter time the year before, Joseph's family migrated from Iraq. His father was a chef in an urban situation. Because they were Christians, Joseph and his entire family were put in gaol when Joseph was a tiny baby. From there they went to a refugee camp in Turkey. When the family arrived in Australia, Laura explains that:

> *Joseph had had virtually no education or stable family background. Although his family were literate in Arabic (that was good for him), he had only had three months at pre-school. I think it was in Turkish, anyway, because it was in a Turkish refugee camp. When he arrived he did not speak or comprehend any English; he learnt to say Hello in the interview. During Year 1 he spent a lot of time learning to socialise, learning to find appropriate language and actions for just being with the children in the classroom. By Year 2 his socialisation was much improved and his understanding of those school concepts that children learn in Year 1 had really grown, but in terms of formal learning he then had to learn a lot of stuff that he might have earlier learnt in Year 1*

Laura returns quite often to this theme of a mismatch between the child's state of ESL development and the mainstream classroom program. She explains that part of the 'ESL'ness of her withdrawal teaching is to fill in what has been missed in the classroom when the children's oral proficiency is limited, or when there are special circumstances to do with concepts and/or the children's situation. Thuy is another student who comes up for discussion. Thuy is now in Year Two and came to Australia from Vietnam at the beginning of pre-school. Her family is literate and she has a brother in Year 7 who is very proficient in Vietnamese. When Thuy came to the school in Year 1 her pre-school experience stood her in good stead in terms of understanding the infrastructure of the classroom, following classroom instructions and in interactions in the playground. However, new topics posed a great problem for her. In spite of planning with the ESL teacher, assumptions tend to be made in the mainstream classroom about topic knowledge based on the Brisbane city child's experience, as in the Community Unit Thuy's class studied in Year 2. Laura feels that Thuy might have added to her Vietnamese experience as a young child, if she had had access to such programs as Play School when her family came to live in Brisbane. However, Thuy's access to information through the TV was unusual. She was not exposed to the TV programs or the English-speaking videos the other children in the class watched. Her family watched Chinese videos which were translated as they went along by their Chinese-speaking uncle into Vietnamese.

Laura would take time to fill in topic knowledge in the withdrawal group. Laura discusses the way she would work in the withdrawal group:

> *In the lesson on community members Thuy couldn't talk to the teacher about ambulance officers and police officers. She didn't have the knowledge of what those people did and what their names were. So in the withdrawal time with the group I did a lot of work identifying these people, identifying what they did where they worked and things like that. Sometimes demythologising them. Firefighters do not always climb tall buildings rescuing people. Police are not always there to chase around in fast cars catching robbers. They do some very mundane things as well, but are a great service to our community. I spent a lot of time demythologising from movies.*

Laura has some access to bilingual help through the Spanish bilingual aide and through books. In Laura's ESL room (an area partitioned from the year two classroom) there is a large stand filled with bilingual books. There is a collection in Spanish and Russian purchased some years ago and bulk loans of multi-lingual books are taken from the local library. These books are taken home by the children. The school has a policy (informal) of encouraging the children to maintain their first language.

Laura explains that the teachers at the school follow a genre based curriculum and plan according to the Queensland English Language Arts Syllabus (ELA). The Grammar underlying the syllabus is Systemic Functional Grammar. Planning

is done according to Orientating, Enhancing and Synthesising stages. Teachers plan units of work according to focussed Genres, Attitudes, Processes, Skills and Knowledge. The school has been developing Master Plans on the student free days. In this way the Curriculum Process at St Cecilia's School would be broadly identical to that being followed by a State school in, say, Cape York. Laura feels that there would be a weakness in the spoken genres at her school but that *'as a school in which the teachers are very well aware of ESL needs there is probably more talking than in other schools.'* Laura endeavours to be involved in planning the units of work for classes throughout the school at the beginning of every term.

An example of one of Laura's teaching days illustrates the way she is operating as an ESL teacher within two levels of ESL support. The day begins with team teaching with the Year Two class. The emphasis in many of the classes she is supporting reflects the schools focus on genre for the year. Laura and the mainstream teacher have a close partnership, due in part to the focus on Year Two brought about by the new State process for assessing primary literacy: the Early Years Diagnostic Net (see below under Assessing [ESL] Children's Achievements). The class is divided into two groups, each teacher taking half the class in mixed ability grouping. Today's lesson is a language lesson which is part of a unit on the narrative. The class has been doing a lot of reading and have deconstructed texts in order to understand the genre and the style of language. Laura's group goes into her room which is divided by a partition from the Year Two room. The group jointly constructs a story called The Two Dragons. At the end of the class Laura talks about the lesson with the mainstream teacher, saying that she will need an extra day to finish the writing process. The group will then go on to edit, illustrate and publish the story and then share it with the other group. The story will be shared with the school assembly and displayed for the parents on the Parent's Information night which is coming up.

The next lesson is another team teaching lesson, this time with Year 7. The mainstream teacher leads the class discussion as the children brainstorm about Heritage Areas in the world, while Laura scribes on the blackboard. After morning tea, Laura takes a withdrawal group of Year 3 children. The mainstream classroom is too small for two teachers and it is a large class. There is also a large ESL group needing extra support. The group Laura withdraws is an ability group, ESL and non-ESL , for an intensive spelling program. Next lesson she takes a Year 5 withdrawal group, triplets who are new arrivals from Colombia. They have been writing Aboriginal legends and today are in the editing process. This is followed by a team teaching lesson with Year 4. This time Laura scribes as the mainstream teacher leads a discussion deconstructing an animal report.

Laura takes lunch time playground duty and observes Joseph playing soccer with a group on the grassy area beside the library. She observes that he is *'totally socially involved'* and is admired for his soccer skills taking the role of game leader. Thuy is playing a sit-down game with a group of girls around the fort area. They are making mud pies and English is the shared language. Thuy and her brothers are the only Vietnamese speakers in the school. Laura has her lunch and talks to the other teachers about various students. She then takes the Year 2 withdrawal group, who are half way through the unit on Community Workers mentioned above. The children sit around a hexagonally shaped desk made up of single desks arranged together. The bookshelf with English and Bilingual books rests against the partition. The lesson begins with a game to develop memory skills and ability to follow instructions. The children have to close their eyes and remember what they saw on the tray (a ruler, rubber bands, paper clips etc) as Laura tries to empty the tray. Next they read a book about a fireman. Laura carefully watches how they go about the reading process and fills in checklists on two of the students. The children select bilingual books to take home. Tin-tin comic books are a great favourite with the Spanish-speaking students.

The day ends with Laura chairing a bi-weekly meeting with the Year 1, 2 and 3 teachers at the local coffee shop. Laura is their Key teacher for the Diagnostic Net (see below) and the teachers meet to talk over their concerns since this is the first year they have taken part in the process. Since it is late in the year Reporting is coming up and the teachers discuss the Parent Information evening that is coming up and how they will explain to the parents the information they will be getting in the Reports about the Net process.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Laura has been teaching for eleven years. She trained as a mainstream teacher and is not a trained ESL teacher. She has been teaching in Brisbane for the last four years, and has also taught in NSW, Victoria and in the Northern Territory. Laura feels that the three years experience teaching in the Northern Territory in an Aboriginal school were a very formative time for her. It was a bilingual school characterised by low academic achievement. The teachers worked very hard on developing the curriculum and evaluating the ways in which it did and did not fit with the children's needs. Laura was involved in the training of Aboriginal teachers and she states that the three years were a *'very reflective time, a big learning time'*. During the time spent in Melbourne (1991-2) , she taught in an inner city Catholic school in which 90% of the population were of Vietnamese background and 9% of Chinese or Timorese background. Laura was involved in the trialing of the Victorian Maths profiling in her school and so came to Queensland with a knowledge of the concepts underlying profiling .

As an ESL teacher in Brisbane, Laura has had some involvement with the Queensland professional ESL organisation QATESOL, attending their workshops. Last year she was funded by the organisation to attend the National ACTA/ATESOL conference and shared her experiences with other teachers by writing up accounts of the papers she found interesting in the QATESOL's professional journal (one of her accounts concerned Listening and the Bandscales). In Brisbane Laura has taught with highly trained ESL and mainstream teachers. Her last school had a high ESL population, an ESL informed Headmaster and a teaching team which included teachers who had had up to twenty years experience teaching children with multicultural backgrounds. The school is known to be very organised in terms of its teaching, and very innovative in finding ways to best help the children. The mainstream teachers work as a team with a full time ESL teacher.

Before Catholic Education followed the State system in setting up the Net Process, Laura was inserviced by Catholic Education in First Steps. The Net Process involves the children in Year 2 carrying out a reading, writing and numeracy task. The reading and writing tasks are mapped onto the Early Years Diagnostic Net Continua, based on the First Steps Developmental Continua. Oracy is not assessed. Children who do not reach Early Reading or Experimental Writing Phases on the Developmental Continua are said by the teachers to be 'caught in the Net' and become eligible for literacy intervention. Because Laura had a more detailed understanding of First Steps than teachers who had only been inserviced on the use of the continua, she was made Key Teacher in the Junior Primary section of her school.

Laura attended Catholic Education inservices in the use of the NLLIA Bandscales. Catholic Education teachers have been urged to explore the potential of the Bandscales in their contexts. When Laura came to St Cecilia's two years ago, the Bandscales had already been used in the school by Erika (see the case study Erika elsewhere in this volume. Note that at the time Erika had been at St Cecilia's she had not yet developed her reporting system using the Bandscales).

As an ESL teacher at St Cecilia's, Laura is involved in the use of a number of Assessment Frameworks. The school is using the Net Process for Years 1, 2 and 3 and the Student Performance Standards for Years 4 to 7. Laura has herself chosen, with the encouragement of the Catholic Education ESL section, to use the Bandscales. In addition in 1996, she completed the Proposed Needs Based ESL Scale that Catholic Education was using for the first time for funding purposes. This is a single-paged four-point summary of stages. Laura's role in the Net Process is one of supporting the teachers as Key teacher, rather than implementing it herself. She runs bi-weekly meetings after school to discuss problems and also supports in the Net Validation exercise. The Writing validation involves the mainstream teacher in setting the context for the writing task by building up the field over a period of a month. The children write a single text on a selected genre. The teacher analyses this text to support or 'validate' previous assessment and plotting of the performances of the child on the Net Writing Developmental Continuum. The Reading validation involves extensive observation, assessment and recording of each child's reading performance on one of the Department's selected books for the year. This performance is also plotted on the Net Reading Developmental Continuum. Laura might support the process by taking the rest of the class while the mainstream teacher carries out assessment tasks.

Laura's procedures for assessing her ESL students using the Bandscales do not involve formal assessment tasks. She gathers information by observing in the mainstream classroom and in incidental discussion with mainstream teachers. Laura gathers a great deal of information about her students' achievements through the normal activities the children perform in her withdrawal class. These activities are related to activities the children have been carrying out in their mainstream classes. Indeed Laura explains that she often organises her own units of work directly in response to the mainstream teacher's assessment of the ESL children's performance in the mainstream classroom.

The procedure Laura used in her Unit on Community Workers, mentioned above, may serve as an example. The classroom teacher reported that Laura's Year 2 ESL students had not understood the material dealt with in the unit on the Community and Community Workers. She had made this assessment based on their *'incorrect spoken responses and on their silence'*. Laura therefore organised a six week unit of work at the beginning of the term on community workers *'to explore those workers' roles more thoroughly in a small group situation'*. The children read books on such workers as police officers and firemen, filled in worksheets on the 'field' and wrote descriptions of the workers.

At the end of the six weeks she had *'a lot of material for assessment,* an example of which can be seen in Sample 1 on the following page. Laura analysed and assessed the written pieces, and completed checklists using the First Steps criteria on how the children went about their reading. She assessed their level of speaking and listening by informally observing their participation in the group.

Sample 1: A written task completed by Joseph in Laura's community workers unit of work

Using the Frameworks

Laura uses the NLLIA Junior Primary Bandscales with all the students who are receiving *'a fair bit of ESL help'* and describes the way she prepares her assessment records as follows. She has a folder with a plastic slip-in for each child. She begins with the school Enrolment Form which she thinks is very good. This allows her to record sufficient bio-data to prepare a picture which she feels will be useful for teachers following her. She then includes other checklists that she has

used along the way. She has very short 1-10 checklists on the four modes which she uses for initial assessment when her students first arrive (she would prefer not to include them in the case study). Laura describes them as *'Just something for me to tick off and flick through to show where the children are at when they first arrive. Then I go into the Bandscale work'.*

Laura records her assessments straight onto the relevant Bandscale text which she has adapted for recording purposes. On the top of the sheet she includes the student's name, school, year and the dates on which they have been assessed at the level. Using the process teachers use in mapping students on to the Net Continuum, Laura uses a different coloured highlighter each semester as she maps the students onto the scales. At the bottom of the text she has ruled lines to allow for writing added comments and these often go onto a following lined blank page. At times she adds comments to the text of the Bandscales (Beginning! JUST! Beyond this!), and sometimes adds a word to the text to make the text more accurately reflect her own observation of the level. The text is marked with asterisks and sometimes question marks which she refers to in her written comments below the text. The notes in the text are made in the same colour she has used to highlight the text, *'so it's quite easy to glance down and see when I've made a particular note by the colour that it's written in'.* Sample 2 illustrates how Laura has adapted the NLLIA Bandscales for recording purposes to track long-term second language progress.

Once Laura worked out the procedure and adapted the format, she reflects, it all became quite easy and saved her a great deal of time. *'The whole reason I started highlighting the Bandscales was because I was spending so much time basically rewriting the Bandscales, so that I could leave it* (the folder of children's records) *for someone else to pick up and work from.*

Laura illustrates the way she assesses using the formats by discussing the way she has recorded the progress of Joseph and Thuy. One of the interesting things about listening to Laura is that she talks about her students taking 'the long view'. Because she is the only ESL teacher she sees the same students over a number of years, and in addition she is able to refer to long-term monitoring through her 'mapping' on the Bandscales from the child's first arrival (Laura transfers the term 'mapping' from Net Process terminology). When she discusses the progress of Joseph and Thuy it is over their entire period in Years 1 and 2. Although Laura uses phrases from the Bandscales when she discusses where she has placed her students on the scales, she shows her well practised knowledge of the scales by changing the words in the text and adding commentaries explaining what it all means in terms of the students' classroom performance and background as in Sample 2:

Sample 2: Laura's adaptation of the NLLIA Bandscales for Recording Purposes and Long Term Monitoring of Second Language Progress

Student's Name: Joseph	Dates at this level	From: May 96	To:
School:	Year/class levels	Year 2 - [redacted] 96	

NLLIA JUNIOR PRIMARY ESL BANDSCALES

Junior Primary ESL S4

JP Bandscales

Speaking: Level 4

Extending the range of language beyond own immediate social environment and experimenting with learning through English: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are [redacted] in a growing range of social and learning situations with [redacted] interlocutor [redacted] contextual support. Can [redacted] a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic (e.g., on autobiographical information; describing past and present events). [redacted] information about a familiar item. Can [redacted] questions (What's that? What sort of ... is that? What happened then? Why are you doing that?), about an item being studied e.g., a classroom pet. [redacted] ago [redacted] and approximations to standard forms will be evident.

Will [redacted] help from the interlocutor, e.g., interlocutor [redacted] for learners to process thoughts and express themselves in English. May [redacted] with [redacted] from peers or interlocutor.

Language is [redacted] as they search through their English resource to express thoughts in English and as they search for appropriate language to convey more precisely the meaning they intend. [redacted] conveying meaning. (e.g., Yeah, but because I go to ... I want to go ... on Sunday I want to go to my ... my ... my friend's bir ... I think it's last week ... I got to go ... to my friend Sarah's birthday but I got to go to my new house and my mum say don't ... and my mum was angry to me.
(Ann, Age 8, Year 3, 8 months in Australia)

May choose to explore more complex ideas in L1 with L1 peers. (only sister available)

Will make [redacted] syntax and expression as [redacted] Will use a [redacted] (e.g., and, but, because). Awareness and use of tense is developing (e.g., we buy GiGi; Bun always ... um ... blow ... blew the candle). Use of prepositions is developing - inaccuracies occur because of generalisations in use of known prepositions e.g., GiGi fall on the swimming pool.

[redacted] abilities and concepts are widening [redacted] to express

Pronunciation in English is developing features of Australian English though this will vary depending on age and L1 and experience with English (i.e., older children may take longer to develop Australian-English pronunciation).

May '96 - Keen to express himself and frustrated if interrupted.
- Keen to participate in class discussions altho' errors in expression do occur.
- still has strong accent which could impede communication with non-attentive interlocutor. [redacted]

P.T.O.

Adapted by A Madsen (1995) From NLLIA ESL Bandscales (1992)

Joseph, you will remember from Laura's discussion above, arrived in Australia after spending some of his infant life in gaol in Iraq and later in a refugee camp in Turkey. He had had about three months in pre-school in the camp, which Laura assumes was run in Turkish. By October 1996 after being in Australia for about a year and half Joseph had moved through four listening levels on the Bandscales.

Sample 3: Assessment of Listening using NLLIA Bandscales

Student's Name: Joseph	Dates at this level	From: AUG 1995	To:
School:	Year/class levels	Year 1 - 1995 - OCT Year 2 - 1996 - May	

JP Bandscales

ESL DEVELOPMENT: TAPPING THE POTENTIAL

Junior Primary ESL L4

Listening: Level 4

Extending the range of language beyond own immediate social environment and experimenting with learning through English; drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to comprehend social English in familiar contexts (e.g., in general school context: in classroom interaction around activities, in playground interactions, on excursions etc.) with ease, with only occasional help given by the interlocutor. Are able to follow instructions within a classroom learning activity if explained and presented clearly (i.e., with clear steps, modelling of the task, logical sequencing of steps) though will often rely on further repetition of instructions on a one-to-one or small group basis.

Require intense concentration to comprehend fully. Are likely to lose comprehension with high background noise present (e.g., other children talking). May use strategies which give the impression that full comprehension has taken place (e.g., nodding, smiling, copying actions of others, silence) which can be misleading in learning activities.

Need time for processing of language experienced (e.g., before having to answer a question; during teacher talk; during class discussion). Have short concentration span if topic of lesson is unfamiliar.

Will lack precision in understanding e.g., will miss many details of the language they hear e.g., may not understand a wide range of prepositions e.g., between, below, beneath and will have difficulty with complex structures e.g., although ... how often ... etc. Are restricted by a limited vocabulary. *

* May '96 - many misunderstands shown when Joseph responds in class discussions. Making excellent progress despite limited vocabulary.

*Adapted by A Madsen (1995) from NLLIA ESL Bandscales (1992)

Laura points out that she mapped him at Level 2 in May 1995 and that by December 1995 he had moved into Level 5.

> *Joseph moved through the initial stages quite quickly. He then spent about a year at Level 4. He was now able to follow the instructions of most classroom activities. If the classroom activity was a repetitive one he'd be fine, he would cope quite well with that. If the classroom instruction was a new task it really had to be presented clearly for him to follow. He would have to come back to the teacher or me, for*

> *example, and ask for it to be explained again so that he was sure about what he was doing.*

Laura explains that the students *'tend to move slowly through a level before they basically have all of the descriptors and by that time you start to pick up some descriptors in the level above as well'.* Laura has highlighted and asterisked the descriptor 'will miss many details of the language they hear' as late as October 1996, a year after she first mapped Joseph onto the level. She explains that she had observed this in the mainstream classroom

In addition to moving through four Listening levels, Laura shows that Joseph also moved through four levels in Speaking over eighteen months. Although she first mapped Joseph on Level 2 Listening, Laura places him on Level 1 Speaking in May 1995 when he had been in the school for one and a half months (Joseph was mentioned earlier on as learning to say 'Hello' in the entry interview). Although she highlights 'silent period' in the scales, she notes in her comments that the silent period is ending and she glosses the highlighted 'Short one or two word utterances convey a larger meaning' with a comment that he is using many 1-2 word utterances. By August 1995 Laura has placed Joseph on Level 2. *He was beginning to use 'routine' social phrases and repeating things after you. When you asked him, 'How are you?', he'd say, 'Well'. He'd say 'Hello' back to you, things like that.* By October Laura places him on Level 3.

> *'The 'routine exchanges' had really grown. In 'face to face' conversations with familiar adults (which I think is very important in the Bandscales; it talks about familiar adults), he could have brief conversations, but he relied very much on the 'support' of the person that he was speaking to and 'contextual' clues and 'gestures' too. He was 'taking more risks' and attempting longer but 'fragmented' discourses. I've got a note down the bottom, 'He's taking some risks now'. He wouldn't have been doing that before. He was using 'L1' with his sister if he was unable to express himself in English. At that stage I was still taking them together for withdrawal lessons even though there is quite an age difference. So if he was having trouble, he'd turn to his sister and say something in his first language and hope that between the two of them that they could get the message across. There were no other children who were competent Arabic speakers in the school so they really did have to rely on each other.*

By May 1996, a year after Laura first mapped Joseph onto the Bandscales, she has placed him at Level 4 in Speaking, where he remained for the whole of the year. Laura explains that it is probably typical that he went through three speaking levels in the first year and then stayed in the same one in the second year. *'I think those first levels are the easier levels to go through. Once they get to 4, 5 and 6 they really do slow down'.* Laura has highlighted *'May wish to be given opportunity to express themselves without interruption or correction from peers or interlocutor'.* She has underlined the descriptor and refers to it in May 96, *'Keen to express himself and frustrated if interrupted'* and then again in October *'Keen to talk to attentive adults. Participates in class discussions irregularly. Is keen to express self and will only appreciate help from peer or interlocutor after he has made own attempt'.* She comments:

> *Isn't that a true step that they go through? They really like to think that they can do it and hate to be corrected. He would sit there and he'd block out what everyone else was trying to help him with. You know how little children all try to interpret for them. He'd want to say it himself and then he might accept that other people had something to add.*

Laura adds that by October his *'curriculum related vocabulary and concepts'* were growing at a fast pace. He was able to understand some of the discussions and give something to class discussions for the first time.

While Joseph moves through four levels on Listening and Speaking in his first eighteen months, he moves through three levels in Reading and two in Writing. Although Laura is not using the Bandscales as a response to the Net Process in assessing literacy (she had being using the Bandscales before the school began to use the Net Process with the Year 2) her commentary on how her Year 2 children have progressed in reading and writing on the Bandscales is made with constant implicit or explicit reference to where they sit on the Net Continua.

Laura notes in the comments on Reading Level 1 in May and August 1995 that although Joseph has a home-based literacy background, he *'has to come to terms with left to right progression, top to bottom and a different script'*. Joseph moves into Level 2 in October 1995. He was able to join in reading familiar texts, but *'very much looking at the 'whole' of the word, not parts of the word, so he really was not ready for phonetics'*. Laura notes in her comments on Level 2 that *'he does not use other decoding skills'*. Interestingly this comment relates forward to the description of Level 3 on the Bandscales, and can be seen as a partial rationale for why he is placed at Level 2 rather than Level 3. Laura also notes in her comments: *'Knowledge of sound-letter relationships poor'*. In this comment she explains that she is drawing on the Net Continuum, and indeed she does so explicitly when she refers again to the indicator when Joseph is at Level 3 (see Sample 4 above). When asked whether she would like this to go into the Bandscales, she replies that she feels that this descriptor is very relevant for Year 2. *'Very specific things like knowledge of letter-sound relationships would be harder to put into a Bandscales level than these more general ESL descriptors'*. By October 1995 Laura has begun to mark in descriptors on Level 3. *'The big step would have been that he was able to 'read own written stories' and could 'follow along as the teacher' was reading showing comprehension'. He was also able to 'ask for clarification'.*

In May 1996 when Joseph was on Reading Level 3 of the Bandscales, he was 'caught in the Net'. Although he could do a great deal of what was indicated in Experimental Reading Phase B, he had not yet moved into Early Reading.

Laura does not keep a copy of the Net Continuua in her ESL records. However, she has unhighlighted copies with her and is well aware of how her students are mapped onto it. Laura reads down the Developmental Continuum under Experimental Reading and checks off what he could do:

> *He realised that print contained a message. If it was a familiar text, he was able to move into that, and he was able to focus on expressing the meaning of a story. He really wasn't into making sure that he had those words accurately read. Because he wasn't able to do that, he was more interested in getting the message across from the story. He did know that print was from left to right, top to bottom; he knew some of the terminology of the letter, word, sentence. He would use prior knowledge to make meaning from a text. Even if he couldn't understand the words, his prior knowledge would help him come to an understanding of the text. He recognised some of the personally significant words as it says in the continuum: job rosters, weather charts, familiar books. He would have been matching some spoken words with the written words.*

Laura explains how her use of the Bandscales allows her to add to the Net Continuum assessment of ESL students such as Joseph. *'At this stage we can say, "Oh dear, this child hasn't reached the stage we would like him to reach in the continuum". And so I think we have to come to an understanding of why this child hasn't done that, and for an ESL child, I think a great place to look is in the Bandscales, and think well, what are some of the factors that are stopping him at this stage from moving on through the Continuum'.*

Laura takes Level 3 in the Bandscales as shown in Sample 5 as an example of the factors that were keeping Joseph from moving along on the Continuum and quotes: *'are limited in their reading by their developing spoken proficiency in English. Are beginning to expect what is read in English to make sense'.*

Laura states that if a child is limited in his reading by his development in spoken proficiency in English that is a *'huge reason'* why the child has not progressed any further with their reading. She gives another example: *'Are beginning to expect what is read in English to make sense'.* When asked to explain what this means, Laura explains:

> *When they first come, they have to sit in a classroom and all this talk is going on and they don't understand a word of it. The children get to a second stage where they suddenly realise, 'Oh, I can understand what's going on here', and not only in the spoken language of what they're listening to, but in books as well. They've been having all of these sounds mouthed at them from books, and all of a sudden it's starting to make some sense to them. They can draw some information out of it, or some enjoyment out of it. But that's only just beginning in Level 3, so they're only just beginning to follow along as the teacher reads short, simple, repetitive, illustrated narratives- you know, all those things make it easy for the child to follow along the teacher's reading, to make sense of the text.*

Laura points to another descriptor in Reading Level 3 connecting progress in reading with development in second language oracy: *'Will have difficulty comprehending written words, phrases and sentences which they do not know orally. Will meet more unfamiliar language than native speaking peers because of limitations of overall English proficiency. Will be unable to predict from the language context alone because of this'.* She goes on to another descriptor in Level 3, *'Are attempting to decode known and unknown words, using initial sounds and other early decoding skills. Will have difficulty predicting meaning as they decode until their oral proficiency in English develops'.*

Laura ends her reflections about the factors causing an ESL child in Bandscales Reading Level 3 to have difficulty in progressing through the English Net Reading Continuum by saying: *'They're going to come across a whole lot of reading material that just doesn't make any sense because they don't know that language'.* Children like Joseph continue to progress, however, and by October 1996 Joseph was ready to move onto the next Bandscales level in reading. Laura adds that in fact that morning, late November, he had told her, *'I was able to read four books for my teacher yesterday'.* By this stage he would also have been on Early Reading on the Continuum.

Sample 4: Illustration of how the Bandscales allow Laura to explain to her mainstream teachers why an ESL child might not seem to be moving through the mainstream developmental Continuum

Students Name: Joseph	Dates at this level	From: LATE 1995	To:
School:	Year/class levels	1995 - Year 1 - [redacted] 1996 - Year 2 - [redacted]	

NLLIA JUNIOR PRIMARY ESL BANDSCALES [redacted]

JP Bandscales

Junior Primary ESL R3

Reading: Level 3

BEGINNING - Oct 1995

Beginning to comprehend short familiar texts in English with contextual support: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to read with contextual support short familiar texts (words and phrases in passages, short passages, rhymes within a story etc.) [redacted] developed in a variety of ways; however are limited in their reading by their developing spoken proficiency in English.

Are able to read own written stories to peers and teachers (using both memory and word recognition). Are beginning to expect what is read in English to make sense. *

Can follow along as the teacher reads short simple repetitive illustrated narratives (e.g., Story Box and Bookshelf books for all junior primary learners), joining in with sections they know. Are able to show comprehension through appropriate contextual activities e.g., sequencing pictures.

[redacted] will be unable to predict from the language context alone because of this.

Are [redacted] using joint sounds and other early decoding skills. Will have difficulty predicting meaning as they decode until their oral proficiency in English develops.

Will benefit from being able ask for clarification in English when reading comprehension has broken down e.g., What does this mean? What is a cloud?

With the support of a bilingual aide some learners may be able to predict the gist of a story and retell aspects of the story in L1.

* May '96 - Reading for meaning. Asks for help when does not understand
- Still having difficulty with letter-sound relationships. SEE FIRST STEPS / EARLY YEARS NET ASSESSMENT
*Oct 96 - Joseph's understanding of the letter-sound relationships are improving. Still confusing

PTO

*Adapted by A Madsen (1995) from NLLIA ESL Bandscales (1991)

Laura continues to emphasise the role of oracy in English literacy development when she describes Joseph's progress in writing. Her discussion has to be seen within the context that Joseph was also 'caught in the Net' in Writing. As Laura talks about assessing Joseph's performance, she seems to be reflecting in her role as key teacher in dialogue with teachers pondering on how to highlight the Net Continuum when their students cannot yet talk about their writing. Although Laura did not explicitly keep referring to the continuum as she did in discussing reading, the discussion makes it clear that this is what is on her mind, and she refers to it in her comments at the bottom of the level. A few indicators from the Continuum, which can be seen in Sample 6, seem to be at the front her mind .

The first key indicator under Role Play Writing: *'assigns a message to own symbols'; 'orally recounts own experiences'; 'reads text from memory or invents meaning (the meaning may change each time)'; 'talks about own drawing and writing'; 'tells adults what to write, eg. "This is my cat"; 'states purpose for own 'writing'. eg. "This is my shopping list"*. Under Experimental Writing Key Indicator 1 states *'reads back own writing';* and then *'voices thoughts while writing'*.

Laura discusses the difficulties of finding out whether Joseph attached a meaning to his writing. She uses phrases from the Bandscales which describe Joseph's writing and behaviour while writing, but discusses these in great detail in clear dialogue with the Continuum. In May 1995 she places Joseph on Level 2 of the Bandscales:

> *Joseph was drawing 'pictures' as a 'context for writing'; he'd 'respond' yes and no if you asked him questions about his writing. He wouldn't come up like other children and say, 'This is a cat in a hat'. He'd just come up and show you the picture, and rely on you to say, 'Is that your car?' He'd say, 'Yes'; and you'd say, 'Is that Dad driving the car?' and he'd say 'Yes'. 'Is that you in the back seat?' 'No'. So at that stage it really was you questioning, and him saying yes or no about his writing.*

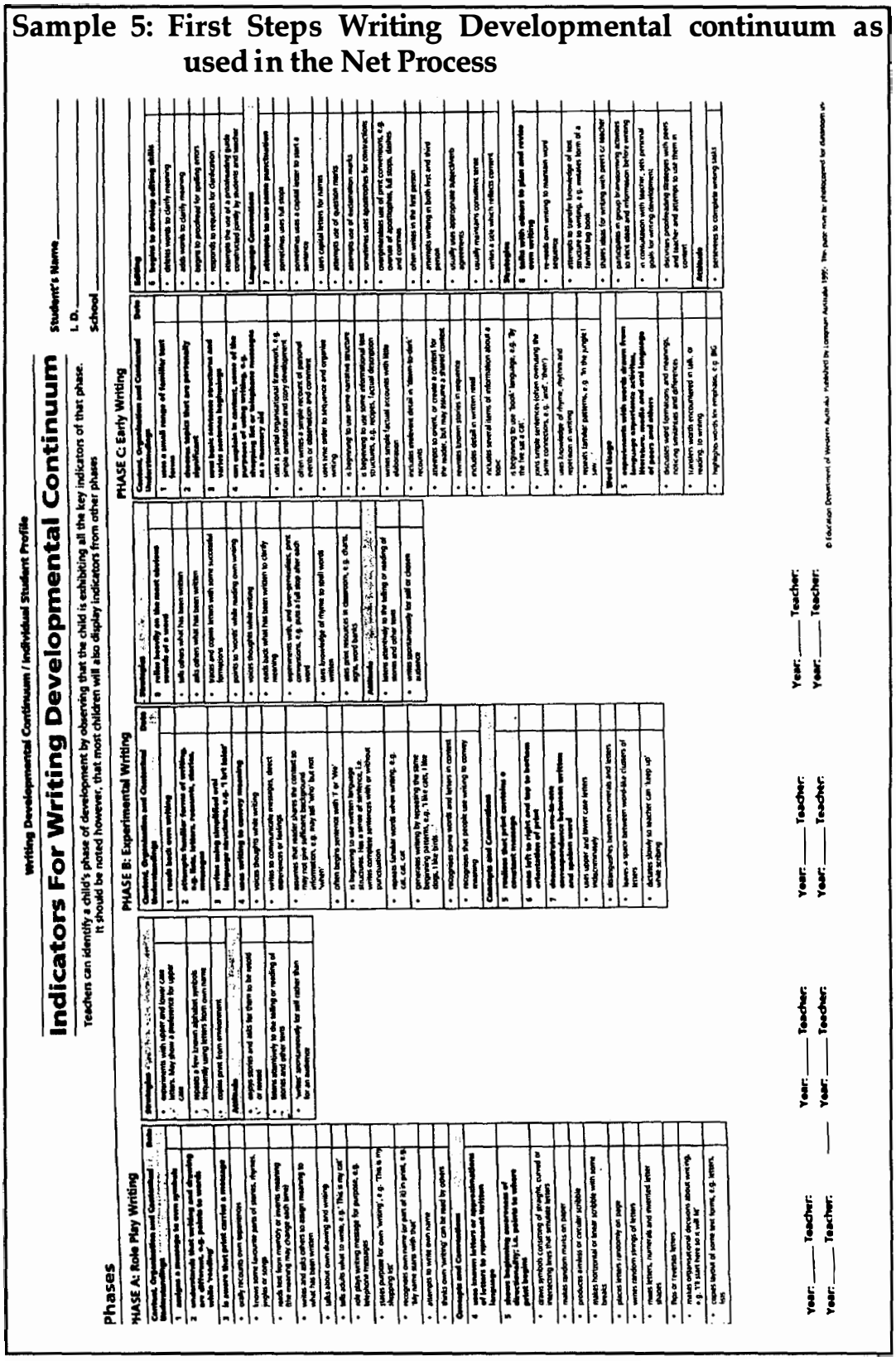
Laura describes other indicators Joseph met on the level such as varieties of 'writing-like behaviour': strings of letters, approximations of letters, words copied from the back wall. However, on the format she places a question mark over whether he attached some meaning to his writing.

It was really hard to judge at that stage if he did attach meaning to any of his writing, because it was hard to say that that writing had the meaning that he wanted to give it, or whether he knew that writing 'the farm' *(from the wall pictures)* was the wrong thing to write. It 's very hard to judge when you can't speak to a child very much about it.

As Laura explains below she clearly empathises with the struggle the mainstream teachers have in fitting the ESL child to indicators which assume a developed oracy, but she comments that she herself found reassurance in the Bandscales that the child was following normal ESL development and that neither the child nor the teacher was the problem.

> *Most Year 1 children will come up to you and be able to give you a sentence about their picture. Joseph could not do that, and that's what floors teachers. They say, 'I was floored by it. How do you actually talk to a child about this picture?' And so, it was actually affirming to read in the Bandscales that the children can only respond 'Yes' or 'No' to questions about their picture. You think, 'Well, I did handle that the right way by asking him and perhaps making up a little sentence for him to write underneath, like 'this is my family in the car'. Then he was seeing a well-constructed sentence there, even if it wasn't his, he'd given some information towards that.*

Sample 5: First Steps Writing Developmental continuum as used in the Net Process



Writing Developmental Continuum / Individual Student Profile

Indicators For Writing Developmental Continuum

Teachers can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all the key indicators of that phase. It should be noted however, that most children will also display indicators from other phases

Student's Name _____ I. D. _____ School _____

Phases

PHASE A: Role Play Writing

PHASE B: Experimental Writing

PHASE C: Early Writing

Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____

Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____ Year: ____ Teacher: ____

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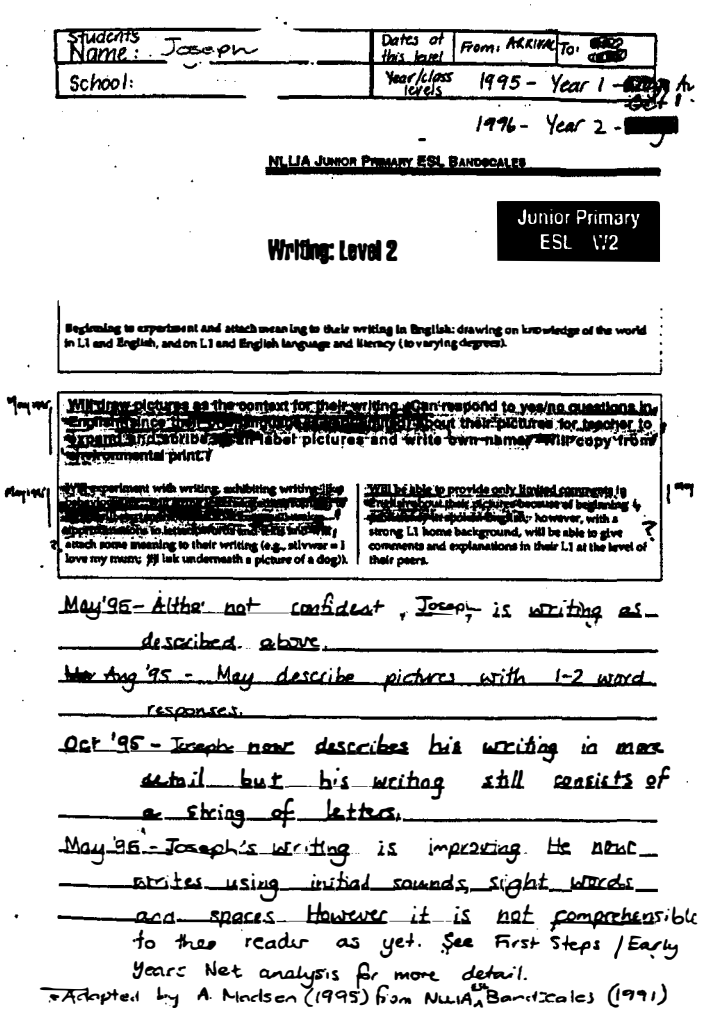
Laura fills in her comments on the Bandscales format for Joseph at Level 2 with reference to the Net Continuum. In May 1996 Joseph was still at Role Play writing and was 'caught' in the Validation. When Laura writes that he is now using *'initial sounds, sight words and spaces'* she is indicating that he is in fact moving into Experimental Writing. Laura writes in the comments: *'See First Steps/Early Years Net analysis for more detail on the Net Continuum.*

Laura explains that writing is the hardest mode to move forward in if a child does not like to take risks. Although Joseph moved four levels in listening and speaking and three levels in reading, he only moved two levels in writing:

> *Some children will just sit there and fill up a page with approximations of letters, and you might think that they're moving on. But other children need to get that oral language down pat, and need to start experimenting with the speaking, gaining some more knowledge of the reading before they're ready to take risks with writing because it's there on the page forever for everyone to look at. So he did stay on Level 2 for an awfully long time, and that was one of the worrying things.*

When Joseph was put in Role Play on the continuum Laura was able to prevent any panic in the school. *'We were able to say, 'well let's intervene', and by October he had moved into Level 3 on the Bandscales and into Experimental Writing on the continuum'.* This is illustrated by Joseph's Journal text written in October in the mainstream classroom as in Sample 6.

Sample 6: Laura's recording of her assessment of Joseph's writing showing the interplay in her assessment between the Bandscales and the First steps Net Continuum



Students Name: Joseph | Dates of this level: From: ARRIVAL To: [redacted]
School: | Year/class levels: 1995 - Year 1 - [redacted]
1996 - Year 2 - [redacted]

NLLIA JUNIOR PRIMARY ESL BANDSCALES

Junior Primary ESL W2

Writing: Level 2

Beginning to experiment and attach meaning to their writing in English: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Will draw pictures as the context for their writing. Can respond to yes/no questions in English about their pictures for teacher to [illegible] label pictures and write own name. Will copy from environmental print.

Will experiment with writing, exhibiting writing-like [illegible] approximations to letters and letter forms; will attach some meaning to their writing (e.g., stivvar = I love my mum; ffj ink underneath a picture of a dog).

Will be able to provide only limited comments in English about their pictures because of beginning knowledge of spoken English; however, with a strong L1 home background, will be able to give comments and explanations in their L1 at the level of their peers.

May '95 - Altho' not confident, Joseph is writing as described above.

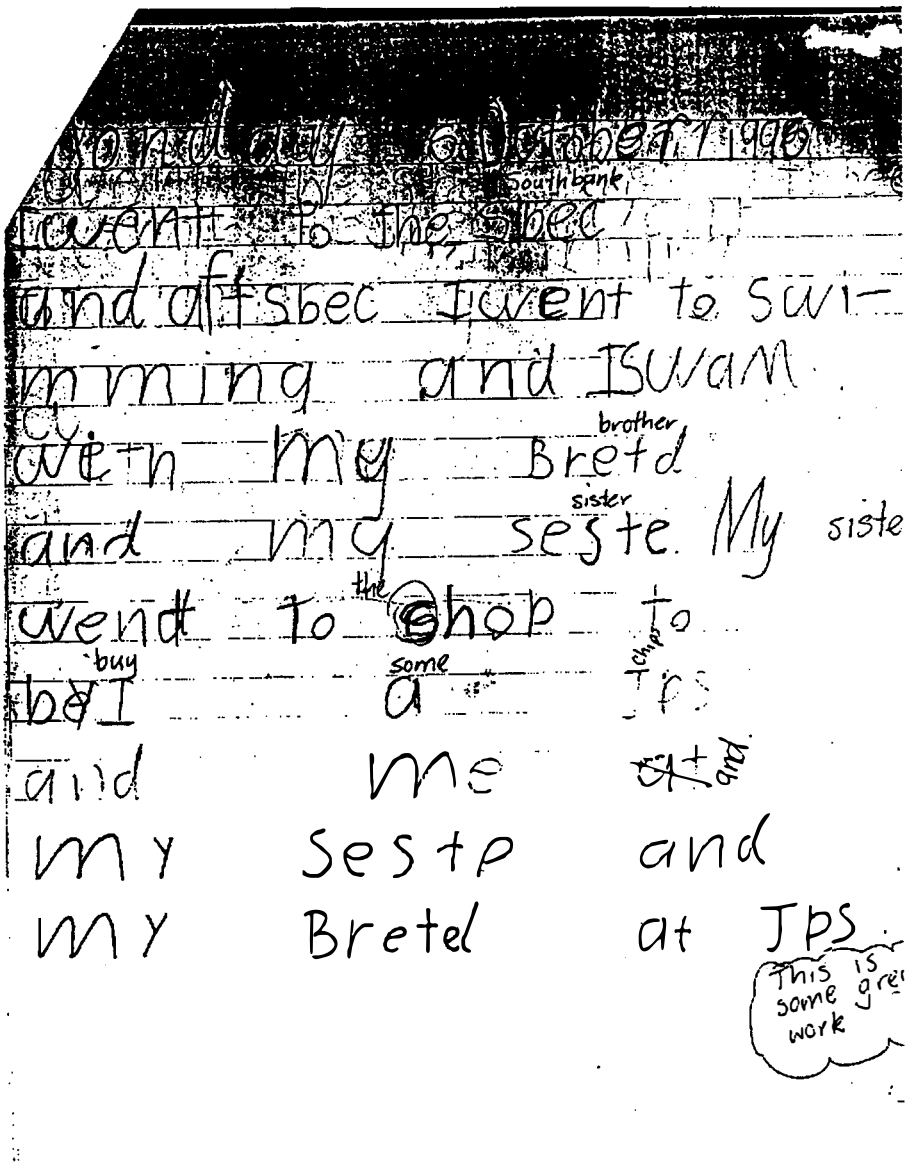
Aug '95 - May describe pictures with 1-2 word responses.

Oct '95 - Joseph now describes his writing in more detail but his writing still consists of a string of letters.

May '96 - Joseph's writing is improving. He now writes using initial sounds, sight words and spaces. However it is not comprehensible to the reader as yet. See First Steps / Early Years Net analysis for more detail.

*Adapted by A. Madsen (1995) from NLLIA Bandscales (1991)

Sample 7: Mainstream Class Journal Task illustrating Laura's assessment that Joseph is had progressed to Level 3 on the Bandscales and Experimental Writing on the First Steps Continuum



Laura points out that in Bandscale terms he has written a short comprehensible text about the familiar environment with ESL features influenced by the nature of spoken language (*eg 'to the sbec', 'I went to swimming', 'wend to chop'*). She explains that when the children are talking the listener may not hear the ESL features. However, when she reads it, *'it jumps out and hits you in the face'*. Joseph is using *'invented spelling as well as using some conventional spelling'*. He is not yet self-correcting. In Continuum terms she explains that Joseph now *'realises*

that print contains a constant message' and is using the *'most obvious sounds in a word'*. He knows that what he's written will mean the same thing in a week's time as it did when he wrote it. So he has written it properly.

Laura discusses her assessment of Thuy, who was mentioned earlier, as a student whose needs are different from Joseph, the very new arrival. Thuy had been in Australia a year longer than Joseph and had attended pre-school. Like Joseph she came from a literate background, but she was also 'caught' in the Net in both reading and writing in Year 2. Unlike Joseph, her level of speaking was deceptive in that she had been at Level 4 for a year (Joseph had only just reached Level 4 in speaking when 'caught'). Her apparent fluency in conversations on familiar topics with attentive adults masked the other features of the stage that made it difficult for her to talk about reading and writing. By the end of Year 2, however, she had moved to the 'expected' Net phases. Thuy is first mapped in May 1995 at Level 4 in Listening and Speaking. By the end of 1996 she has moved to Level 6 in Listening and Level 5 in Speaking. Laura points out that it would be quite typical that her rate of progress on the Bandscales in these higher stages would be slower than that of new arrivals like Joseph moving from Levels One and Two. She is keen that Thuy continue to receive ESL support to maintain and go forward in her ESL development.

In Year 1 Thuy appeared to be comprehending quite well and was well used to the culture of the classroom. However, Laura's assessment of her listening using the Bandscales made it clear that she was *'really struggling in many ways with the classroom'*. Laura placed her on Level 4 which meant that she was *'comprehending social and academic* ('academic' is Laura's addition to Thuy's Bandscales' format) *in familiar contexts'*, but on new topics she had a very short concentration span. Laura comments:

> *Quite often this is put down to naughtiness in the classroom isn't it? I think that's where teachers have to realise that they are not actually being naughty, that it's a skill they have to develop: the need to concentrate for long periods of time, on a topic where they might not know what's really going on.*

Laura points out that Thuy was using strategies listed in the Bandscales to give the impression that *'full comprehension'* had taken place eg. nodding, copying actions of others. When Thuy is mapped on Level 5 in October 1995 she stays there for a year. Laura feels that there is so much repetition in Year 1 that there is *'not really much of a strain put on their comprehending skills. In Year 2 Thuy was challenged a bit more in terms of what she had to listen to and the level of proficiency she was expected to have'*. Laura explains that Thuy did not have that *'depth of language'* to follow extended talk with complex ideas. Vocabulary range was also a factor. By the end of the year Laura has placed her on Level 6 with the comment that she would need ESL support in Year 3 to maintain the level.

> *What's expected of her will be harder, they're going into concepts which need greater depth and I worry that she may find it hard to maintain Level 6 if it's not understood where she's at. She comes from the family that I described earlier that doesn't watch television because they cannot understand it. There are going to be times when they are talking about things within the classroom and she has no idea what they are talking about. That is going to continue to be a problem for her. So while she is beginning at Level 6, I still needed to put in the note that she needed support there, otherwise I could see her going backwards in terms of levels. That's something I've noticed with the early years. Sometimes they do seem to jump back as greater expectations are placed on them and the tasks get harder. They slip back to that Level Five area. In Year Three there will be a new teacher who may take a little while to realise what a child needs. And that's one thing about a new class. It's often a little while before*

> *the teacher realises just how much explanation a child needs. So at Level 6 there are concerns on my behalf as to how she will be able to maintain that level.*

Laura felt that Thuy's level of progress in speaking in the Bandscales was a cause for concern for different reasons from that of Joseph. In her discussion Laura's focus was again the emphasis put on being able to talk about writing on the Net Continuum for writing. Laura placed Thuy at Level 4 on the Bandscales when she first mapped her speaking and Thuy stayed there until October 1996, the Net Process occurring in May 1996. Laura states her concern about Thuy's level of speaking. The issue is similar to that discussed with Joseph, but more complex because of Thuy's apparent ability in speaking.

> *Thuy could 'sustain a conversation with an attentive adult'. This sort of thing makes you think that this child is quite all right but as she goes on you realise she hasn't got the 'depth'. You then realise that there are 'approximations to standard forms'. We found that the meaning was often lost because of her 'fragmented' language. She often stopped and you would think, 'What did she say?' Especially because of her strong accent, it was hard to understand what she was saying. Now when I think back, it was very hard to understand what she was saying.*

Laura states that this greatly affected the way Thuy could talk about her writing

> *She attached meaning to her writing and she'd come up and tell you what it was all about and you literally couldn't understand what she was saying. That was because of her pronunciation problem we talked about earlier. And you really noticed it when she wanted to get a meaning across to you like 'this is what I'm saying in my picture' but you couldn't understand what she was saying, which was really hard, especially when she wanted you to write down exactly what she had said and you couldn't. So that was hard. You then had to talk around the picture and look at what you could write.*

This meant Laura felt that Thuy could be mistakenly identified as struggling academically when mapped on the Continuum at Validation. Her apparent social fluency at Level Four in speaking suggested a level of academic speaking that she did not yet have.

Laura feels that the Bandscales and the Net Continua are both useful tools that can be used together, though she feels that the Net Validation process is *probably unnecessary* (see below **Views on the Assessment Frameworks).** She is keenly aware that the Bandscales give her an explanatory framework when there is a lack of fit between the descriptions in the Continuum and the behaviour and achievements of her ESL students, particularly as regards the development of second language oracy. The Bandscales allow her to describe how much progress her ESL students have made, and she extends the Bandscales' descriptions by turning to the Continua for the specifics of general literacy development.

Reporting to Mainstream and other ESL Teachers

Laura uses her adapted Bandscales formats to report to the mainstream teachers in the school. She had been doing this before the Net Process began, but found it particularly useful when so many of the children were 'caught in the Net'. Laura was able to show the teachers where the children had come from and the great progress they had made as ESL learners:

> *If teachers were worried about the child's progress on the Net Continuum I was able to say to them, 'Look, I know that you cannot see any movement through the continuum, but have a look at this.*

> *This is how far the child has moved through the ESL Bandscales'. That might be two or three stages within the year.*

Her discussions with teachers are mostly incidental, when opportunities arise that allow her to inform teachers about the typical stage of second language behaviour that a student is going through, and which may be frustrating a teacher who does not understand the normal stages of ESL development:

> *I would certainly use them, just incidentally, in terms of helping teachers come to an understanding of where the child was at. A teacher might make a comment about a student. 'Such and such always comes back and asks again. They never just listen in the first place'. You're able to say, 'Hang on, is it that they're not listening in the first place or is it that they're still working through the stages of becoming a second language learner'. Then you're able to show them the child's progress and say, 'Look, it's actually documented here in the Bandscales that this is a step that children go through. They go through the stage of asking for repetition before they move on to being confident enough to do it for themselves'.*

Laura has used her Bandscales formats in a more formal way at set planning meetings with the teachers at the beginning of the term. She would also refer to them with the mainstream teacher at assessment time. *'Often the teachers would request an interview so that we could talk about what they were going to put on the reports to send home to the parents'.* When asked how the mainstream teachers reacted to her ESL system, Laura commented:

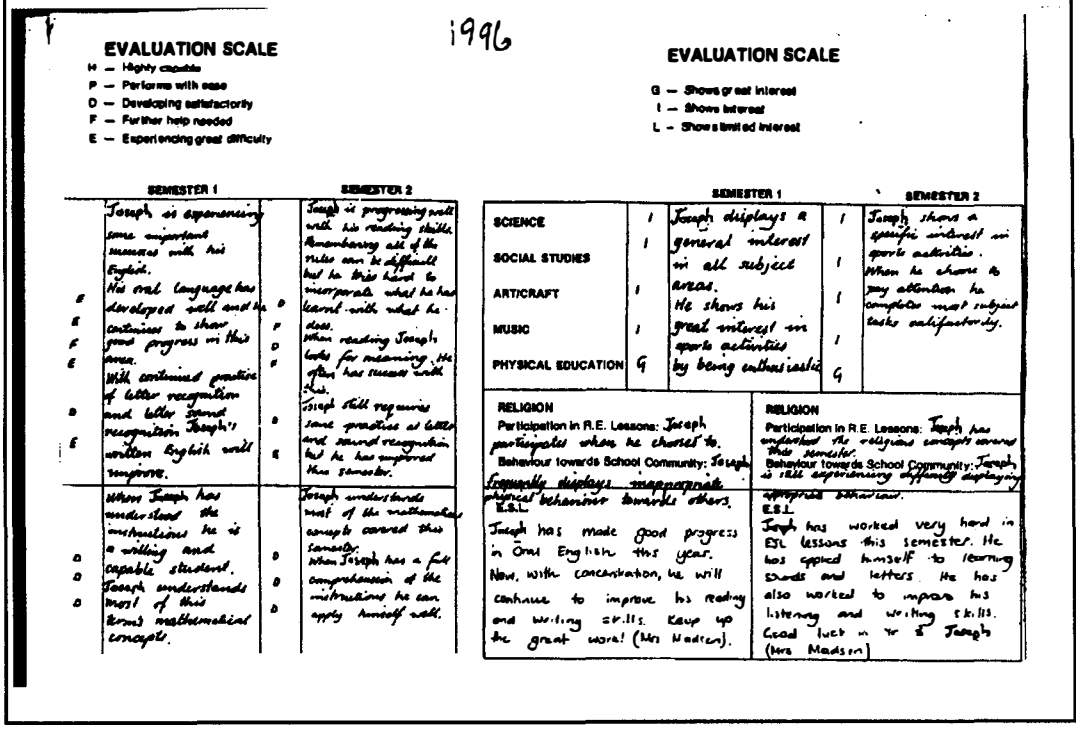
> *The teachers seemed to feel it was worthwhile. One teacher commented, 'Wow! That looks like a lot of work'. But she could see that it was less work than other forms.*

When Laura moved to another school this year, the children's files, including a bio-data sheet and Laura's highlighted long term records using the Bandscales formats, were left in a black plastic pocketed folder for the teacher that replaced her. Laura used the records to discuss the children's needs when she talked to the new teacher before she left the school.

Reporting to Parents

Laura is involved in reporting to parents in a number of ways. Because the school had used the Net Process for the first time, she points out that the school had a *'low key reporting scheme this year'.* The school was not obliged to report on the Net process and in the first parent information evening on the Net the parents had not seemed to be very interested. Laura explains that this year's class was particularly needy and seven children were *'caught'.* She believes that the average for the school per class in the future would probably be about two. The staff decided to take things slowly. 'Intervention' began and by the end of the year the children had moved into Experimental Writing and Early Reading on the Net Continuum and *'we were able to report much more positively to the parents by the end of the year'.* The normal school report card was used. This includes a rather large box for an ESL comment for each semester which Laura fills in as the ESL teacher as in Sample 8:

Sample 8: School Report on Joseph



1996

EVALUATION SCALE

H — Highly capable
P — Performs with ease
D — Developing satisfactorily
F — Further help needed
E — Experiencing great difficulty

	SEMESTER 1		SEMESTER 2
E	Joseph is experiencing some important success with his English. His oral language has developed well and he continues to show good progress in this area.	D	Joseph is progressing well with his reading skills. Remembering all of the rules can be difficult but he tries hard to incorporate what he has learnt with what he does.
E		P	
E		D	When reading Joseph looks for meaning. He often has success with this.
E		F	
D	With continued practice of letter recognition and letter sound recognition Joseph's written English will improve.	D	Joseph still requires some practice at letter and sound recognition but he has improved this semester.
E		E	
D	When Joseph has understood the instructions he is a willing and capable student. Joseph understands most of the basic mathematical concepts.	D	Joseph understands most of the mathematical concepts covered this semester. When Joseph has a full comprehension of the instructions he can apply himself well.
D		D	
D		D	

EVALUATION SCALE

G — Shows great interest
I — Shows interest
L — Shows limited interest

	SEMESTER 1		SEMESTER 2
SCIENCE	I	Joseph displays a general interest in all subject areas. He shows his great interest in sports activities by being enthusiastic	I
SOCIAL STUDIES	I		I
ART/CRAFT	I		I
MUSIC	I		I
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	G		G

RELIGION

Participation in R.E. Lessons: Joseph participates when he chooses to.

Behaviour towards School Community: Joseph frequently displays inappropriate physical behaviour towards others.

E.S.L.

Joseph has made good progress in Oral English this year. Now, with concentration, he will continue to improve his reading and writing skills. Keep up the great work! (Mrs Madsen).

RELIGION

Participation in R.E. Lessons: Joseph has understood the religious concepts covered this semester.

Behaviour towards School Community: Joseph is still experiencing difficulty displaying appropriate behaviour.

E.S.L.

Joseph has worked very hard in ESL lessons this semester. He has applied himself to learning sounds and letters. He has also worked to improve his listening and writing skills. Good luck in Yr 5 Joseph (Mrs Madsen)

This is a broad, very positive comment reflecting her feeling that Joseph has progressed a long way on the scales.

At the same time as introducing the Net Process, the school started to use the Queensland Student Performance Standards (SPS) for all classes above Year 3. The Student Performance Standards were to be used in reporting. Laura was particularly concerned about a group of ESL students, some of whom had been in Australia for a little more than twelve months (Year 4s) and others who had been in Australia for almost two years. Laura felt that the SPS would not be appropriate for these students, and use of them would not be *'at all fair. When you plotted the children on the SPS they were so far below what they will be able to achieve academically that I did not really feel that it was just.'* She reports on an interesting discussion she had with the teachers, which led to her to produce a reporting format for parents drawing on the Middle and Upper Primary Writing Levels in the Bandscales to be used with New Arrivals ESL students (these would be students who had been in Australia under three years) in place of the SPS levels :

> *The teachers said, 'What are we going to do? How about we put them on the Early Years continuum* (the Net Continuum) *and show the parents that?' I said, 'Well I don't think that's just. If you are going to use anything it will be best to use the Bandscales. They said, 'Well, we don't know anything about the Bandscales. We can't do that'. So I sat down one morning and paraphrased the Writing Bandscales from Levels one to six. I didn't bother about Level 7 because I thought that at Level 7 they are well and truly being assessed within SPS.*

Laura explains that she attempted to put the Bandscales into language that would be accessible to parents. The student's level was ticked off according to the level mapped onto the Bandscales. Sample 10 shows the format of levels. The format folds down the centre so that the report becomes a leaflet. The front cover contains the name of the school and the crest and the title ESL BANDSCALES, Writing, Semester Two 1996, NAME: YEAR:

Sample 9: Reporting Format summarising Bandscale levels.

These are descriptions of the levels of writing we would expect most recently arrived children to be working in.

☐ *Writing Level 1*

The child
*is using knowledge of his/her first language to try to understand English.
*can copy words in English but does not always understand the meaning.
*may choose to write in his/her first language.
*may want to use a bilingual dictionary to translate words.

☐ *Writing Level 2*

The child
*can copy sentences.
*can write labels for known words (e.g. pencil, book).
*has learnt to speak some sentences and can fill in gaps (e.g. This is a _____.)
*may wish to draw rather than write.
*will like to talk about writing in his/her first language rather than English.

☐ *Writing Level 3*

The child
*writes own texts (eg: stories, reports) after guidance from teacher.
*still experiences difficulties with writing tasks set for the whole class.

The writing
*is similar to their spoken English. Sometimes they lack the vocabulary to express themselves clearly.
*shows spelling based on the child's pronunciation of English words.

☐ *Writing Level 4*

The child
*writes own texts after modelling from teacher.
*will still find most class tasks difficult.
*can write faster and longer texts.

The writing
*is similar to the child's spoken English and sometimes the writing is hard to understand.
*contains some words that are spelt correctly as the child is building-up a list of spelling words. Some words will be based on his/her pronunciation.

☐ *Writing Level 5*

The child
*is becoming an independent writer.
*will reread and edit own work although may still not be aware of mistakes.
*is able to write more complex sentences.
*is willing to experiment with writing.

☐ *Writing Level 6*

The child
*is a competent writer, as expected at their level of schooling.
*still needs the support of the teacher to understand some writing tasks.
*will need more time to sort ideas before writing.
*will have some problems with reflective writing.

The writing
*will be easy to read as they now have a good understanding of the spelling and grammar of English.

_____
TEACHER

Adapted by A. Madsen From NLLIA ESL Bandscales (1996)

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Both the Net Process and the ESL Bandscales have been seen to be affecting Laura's roles as ESL teacher in the mainstream classroom and with her withdrawal groups. Since the teachers have begun to use the State framework, Laura has used the Net Process as a backdrop against which she judges the appropriacy of mainstream expectations of stages of English literacy development and types of intervention, considering the level of progress of each of her students on the ESL Bandscales.

When children are 'caught' in the Literacy Net, the department has set up funds for an intervention process. Since it was the first time the school had been through the process, the teachers took it slowly and concentrated only on intervention in writing. This year they will begin using the Support a Reader program. The group 'caught' was quite large (seven children) and so the ESL teacher, mainstream teacher and learning support teacher worked as a team 'intervening' in a variety of ways. They attempted to work out strategies where normal classroom teaching would be part of the intervention process. Because Laura was in the class regularly, the class could be divided and either she or the mainstream teacher could take the intervention group. At other times an extra teacher was employed to teach the whole class while the mainstream teacher did some intervention or the other way round.

The team looked to First Steps (which had been adopted as the Early Years Diagnostic Net) for guidance in their teaching and at some of the specific skills that the children needed. If the children cannot write the 'most obvious sounds' in a word they will be 'caught' in the Net. This lead the team to a focus on building up phonetic awareness, which Laura felt was particularly relevant for the ESL children:

> *We did a lot of rhyming and things like that with them. We also went back to work that they probably missed in Year 1 (especially the ESL children), in terms of initial sounds and final sounds and just 'the hearing' of the language. The ESL children do not sing the same nursery rhymes and the same alphabet games and things that English speaking children do at home. If they don't have some of those experiences in Pre-school or Year 1 which they often don't, because teachers are not aware that there is a need for it, the ESL children just don't have that awareness of basic language that the English speaking children have.*

Laura however modifies the mainstream classroom approach to intervention when it comes to the ESL children in the group. Laura is able to have a direct effect here because of her role as team teacher in Year 2. She feels that a large emphasis on decoding skills (a remedial approach) is not appropriate for her ESL students. They need a more comprehensive approach suited to their needs:

> *Looking at how the child could take a piece of written text, and break it down into smaller parts to look at words and sound/symbol relationships, sight words -- those sorts of skills are valuable to an ESL child, but they're not the whole picture. The basic problem at this stage is that they don't have the oral language to comprehend the text. They need to be taught those decoding skills but that needs to go hand- in-hand with oral language development.*

In her role as Key teacher, Laura is able to keep in touch with concerns with mapping on the Net Continuum and misfits in ESL performance. This allows her to provide explanations from the Bandscales to allay panic and to modify 'over-remedial' types of literacy intervention for the ESL students.

As has been seen, the Bandscales have also affirmed her approach to problems in her ESL teaching by explaining typical behaviour at various stages. She has also been able to use the Scales in her role as advocate when her student's behaviour in the mainstream classroom is misinterpreted eg. short concentration spans.

Although teaching activities in the mainstream classroom (especially Year 2) are affected by the Net Continuum Process and by the intervention program, for the rest of the time planning and teaching relate to the Queensland English Language Arts Syllabus and its grammatical basis in Systemic Functional Linguistics. In her ESL withdrawal, group Laura's teaching activities have been seen to relate to

curriculum needs that arise in the normal teaching units of the mainstream classroom.

Based on her experience as a teacher, and unrelated to the frameworks, she has a firmly non-interventionalist attitude to very new arrivals in the mainstream classroom:

> *I think new arrival children need time. Just to sit within the classroom. Just to be there. To participate in group work even if they don't understand a great deal of what's going on. Just to be there within the group listening to the English.*

Laura's understanding of the Bandscales does alter the rate and timing of her approach to certain activities. At two points in the interviews, she emphasised that at Level 2 in the Reading Bandscales students were not yet ready for breaking down words phonetically and related this to the development of second language oracy.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Clearly Laura finds the Net Continuum a very useful tool, though she is keenly aware of the difficulties many teachers had when it was first introduced:

> *I saw First Steps as a great tool: a great way to formalise what you had already been doing. People had already been doing lots of check lists and so on. The best thing about it was that it had strategies for taking the children from where they are and moving them beyond that, so I thought it was a very good tool.*

> *For me, it wasn't anything new or too hard to undertake, although it was for lots of people. As time has gone on, more and more people have started to say, 'This really is good isn't it.' But at first it was just so overwhelming to come to terms with the actual continuum, the use of the resource books and everything else.*

Although she finds the First Steps Continuum and the suggested strategies useful, she has many reservations about the validation process:

> *I didn't like the validation process. I found that it was artificial and in some ways unnecessary. Personally, I felt that it was more a political move than anything else to show the parents what we were doing. We found that the children were not comfortable in a situation that was not their normal classroom situation. Obviously you can't help but put pressure on children. We found the results of the validation process were not always as accurate as we thought they might be. Some children - many children - did not produce writing like we expected that they would, from their normal writing. It was one-off. If the children were having a bad day, if they felt nervous about the situation...even though we did everything possible to prevent this, the children pick up that this is a bit different, that they were put in a place away from the class, that something was going on, that they were being watched for their reaction to what they were doing. It just wasn't as natural as their normal work is so the result wasn't as natural. Even when we did the reading validation, we found the children did not read as well as they might in other situations.*

Laura feels that the validation process is a distortion of First Steps:

> *The validation process is not part of First Steps. First Steps did not ever say that at some point in time bang, that's when you say the child 'should' be at this particular point. It's all about being on a*

> *continuum that flows on and you recognise that children are moving at different stages.*

Laura also believes that a newly arrived child cannot be put on the Continuum and but could be placed on the ESL Bandscales:

> *Even some children who have here for up to a year haven't got the output skills to be able to tell you exactly where they are at. How do you judge the reading comprehension and output of a child when they can't talk freely to you?*

Laura also points to the difficulties that came out in the writing validation with a newly arrived child such as Joseph. The task was contextualised and a long time was spent building up the field to do with 'Ants'. However, at the validation Jospeh was not yet able to construct a sentence about ants.

> *I know he knew all the words in terms of oral language, but the piece of writing that he produced did not match his knowledge, as he did not have the ability to write those sentences - he didn't have the sentence structure. Also the task was about seeing how the students took the knowledge they had and put it into a description, which he was not ready for. The rest of the class did that very well because over the years they have had enough modelling of descriptions, but he wasn't really at that particular stage.*

Laura concludes:

> *I certainly don't think the Continuum is fair to the newly arrived ESL children. And if we want to map their progress then the Bandscales could be used. And I would certainly be happy to see that children were progressing rather than just thinking that they're 'stuck there'.*

When Laura was asked why she would take on the Bandscales as well, when she was already involved in the Net Process, she pointed out that she was not actually involved in the *'actual recording of the Net'* and that she was already using the Bandscales throughout the school. She is well aware that the teachers have found the Net to be a great deal of extra work, and believes that teachers would see the Bandscales as yet more work. However, as an ESL teacher she feels that the children move more quickly through the Bandscales than the continuum and it can be made clear that the children are making progress:

> *Although a child might be stuck in the experimental stage of writing for quite a long time or even the role play stage of writing, they actually move much faster through the ESL Bandscales, so you could see the child's progress in the Bandscales that you couldn't see in the Net.*

Laura feels that the Bandscales *'tell her something about the child's progress that the Continuum cannot':*

> *It makes you realise that the child who is caught in the Net because they're only at Phase B Experimental Reading in mid Year 2, is there for a reason. It's not that this child is academically struggling; the child is there because the child has only been in the country for a short while, because the family speaks another language and the children are just moving through the phases of becoming a second-language speaker. So it's not something to panic about; it's not something to attack with what we used to call 'remedial skills'. The child doesn't need that; the child needs ESL support; the child needs help to understand the oral language, to increase their vocabulary range, and also to look back at the skills that the other children picked up in Year 1 that they've missed - things like decoding. They need to be revising those sorts of things.*

Laura believes that the Frameworks can go together, one informing on general literacy and the other on 'ESLness' in literacy development:

> *I think the two can go hand-in-hand. The Bandscales as we said before, do not go into those specifics, and I don't think that they really have to go in there. I think it's good that the ESL Bandscales look at the ESLness' of it, not at the skills that every child goes through.'*

Laura sees the Bandscales as a comprehensive framework which could be used as a common assessment tool across schools, systems and States. She feels that since ESL children tend to be quite mobile, it would be useful if a commonly used assessment tool could be used to pass on information the the new school when the children move. She also sees them as a 'stepping stone' to other assessment tools. New arrivals could be placed on them before other tools are appropriate for them and children experiencing academic difficulties or slow movement through other frameworks could be achieving progress through the ESL Bandscales. She feels that ESL teachers, mainstream teachers and parents could benefit from this knowledge though is unsure of the appropriateness of mainstream teachers fully using the Bandscales (i.e. plotting the children in their class). *'On top of other frameworks and profiles, I think most mainstream teachers would find the extra load too difficult'.*

Laura is aware of the energy and time it takes to 'map' the students and feels that in schools with large ESL populations it would only be possible to map students who are receiving the more intensive help. *'By the time a child reaches Level 5, 6 or 7 she will be mapped on mainstream frameworks anyway'.*

As to the Bandscales themselves, Laura is aware of gaps and room for revision. *'A more user-friendly recording format needs to be developed and put into circulation. The formats in the Bandscales' book are not time efficient. A reporting format would also be useful'.*

Finally, Laura expresses a need to bring a closer relationship between the Bandscales and the implications for teaching young ESL students:

> *I would love to see the Junior Primary and Primary Bandscales developed to include suggestions for teaching children at each level - both in the ESL teacher's context and in the mainstream. This is where the First Steps/EarlyYears material is wonderful!*

Clearly, Laura feels that there can and should be a strong relationship between the way ESL primary students are assessed and the pedagogy followed by the teacher at all levels of ESL support.

Minh at Lachlan St Primary School

Catherine Hudson

The School Context

Lachlan St Primary School lies in the heart of one of Brisbane's oldest multicultural inner city suburbs. Greek music can still be heard as you pass the barber shop on the main street and excellent baklava can still be bought at the bakery, but the cultural mix has altered over the past decade or so. Brisbane's only Vietnamese bookshop can be found quite close to the school and there are now excellent Vietnamese restaurants. Although there are thirty three nationalities at the state school, the bulk of the children are Vietnamese. The school is notable for the diverse cultural background of its teachers. To meet the needs of its ESL students it has a full-time Vietnamese teacher, a full-time ESL teacher, and a Greek and Vietnamese aide. The school, which has a population of about 500 children, has the longest running Vietnamese bilingual program in Queensland.

There is something very special about Lachlan St State School. The Junior Primary and Pre-School is in a separate building from the Upper Primary. School. While in most schools one is aware of the repetitive design, the bricks, the mortar, the newly designed gardens, at Lachlan St one feels that time has moulded the building into a human shape. The children, the community and the teachers somehow dominate the well-worn materials of the Queensland Department of Education. There is a comfortable feeling. One walks through the blinding heat of the bare playing field where the boys are playing cricket in the noon-day sun into the shade of the old school. The children are sitting on benches the boys in broad brimmed hats, the girls in blue scrunchy hats wearing T-shirts with the school motto, We All Smile in One Language. This is the kind of school where it is difficult to distinguish between the teachers, the administration, the aides, and the parents.

The classrooms downstairs open onto a peaceful, green-ferned inner courtyard: an oasis with a sundial on a stone pedestal in the centre. The children trundle down the stairs and slow down as they come to the courtyard. The classroom of Minh, the Bilingual teacher and Annette, the ESL teacher, looks onto this tranquil space. Minh and Annette share a room, but work in different ends separated by a partition. The partition seems to be always slightly open. Minh and Annette run the ESL program together. Minh runs the Bilingual Program which is part of the ESL service, Annette runs the 'regular' ESL Program. They share the same students in Years 1 and 2 and work as a team, though in a flexible ESL support model rather than in the bilingual teaching models more commonly known in other Australian schools.

The Classroom Context

The Bilingual Program was the first of its kind in the city, and began as a Departmental initiative. Minh states that the parents, in general, are not actively involved in the procedures or content of the program.

> *One or two are very interested and come. The Vietnamese parents think that this is the school's job, so they take it for granted that the bilingual program is part of the school'.*

When a meeting was held at night for the parents, because so many of them are working, the parents said they were very happy with the program and there was nothing they wanted to improve. Minh reflects, *'They compare it with what their kids would receive in their own country'.*

The program operates from pre-school to the end of Year 2 in withdrawal groups of four or five children, most of whom do not speak English as their home language. Children who have been born in Australia, but have non-English speaking parents, come under the ESL funding guidelines for the first two years of primary schooling (children who are new arrivals receive support for three years from the day they arrive in Australia). Minh states that these children come into pre-school at five with very little or no spoken English at all.

Minh says that the aim of the program is:

> *To make sure that they understand all the concepts because it's very important especially in the early ages, before they learn a second language. So that's why it's starts early at pre-school. That's the age when they learn all their concepts in the mother tongue. I collaborate in planning with the classroom teachers and ESL teacher, so the Bilingual program is not something isolated. The content is based on what the classroom teachers will be teaching the children, and also on what the ESL teacher is doing with the group in her program.*

Minh feels that the funding period is very inadequate. Her aim in the Bilingual program has to be limited to developing English literacy in her students, she says. Minh believes that she would need much more time to develop literacy in Vietnamese:

> *I find it's really hard to maintain the literacy in Vietnamese too because of the limit of time and all the subject areas you have to cover. At the end of Year 2 the program stops, the funding stops, and for them to be literate in Vietnamese it would have to continue. You'd have to have at least five years of their first language. You know, that's a very short-term bilingual program, the first two years of their school. Ideally it should go up to high school or at least year 7. Although it gives them a foundation, you can't extend that. If they're not bilingual by then, it makes it hard for them.*

Even so, Minh is convinced the program is worthwhile:

> *Without the program, the children would be really struggling in their classrooms, especially in the first years of schooling. Even though they are born here, they don't use English in the home, so with my program I am able to support the children in the development of the concepts as well as their English, and they do seem to experience a lot more success in school. They can have confidence and they feel confident about their achievement in school. I think the parents are happy too, knowing their children can actually do something.*

Minh feels that the program has the support of the mainstream teachers because she uses the content the mainstream teachers are using in their programs, and so assists them in meeting the needs of the Vietnamese students.

Minh enlarges on her rationale for the bilingual program by giving an interpretation of why the children have language needs in Vietnamese. She explains that most of the children's parents are blue-collar workers working in factories.

> *they are fairly well off, in that they work in two or three jobs to get a house and a car and all that. They're not poor. They work really hard for their money.*

Minh feels that their work patterns are having an increasingly detrimental effect on the children. She believes that *'the children are missing out on all the attention and support that the parents give from a young age. Even if they work from home they don't have time to look after the children and talk to them'*. None of the children Minh teaches has an extended family background in Australia.

Minh explains that the parents tend to come from the rural areas in Vietnam or were fishermen, unlike the refugees in the 70s and 80s who tended to come from a middle-class or elite background wanting an education for their children. She adds that these are:

> *poor people that want a better life for themselves. That's why it's getting harder and harder to maintain their language. Some parents are illiterate in the first language, so how can you expect the children to learn in the first language when parents don't even know it.*

Minh feels that the children are more or less left to *'fend for themselves'*, because both parents are working so hard they have little time to spend with them and *'it shows'* in their language needs in Vietnamese when they come to school:

> *They're behind all the other children. They come to school, pre-school, without knowing basic things like colours and numbers in their first language, and you have to teach them that and even names of the objects around them.*

By November of the pre-school year, Minh says that her students have learnt to count in Vietnamese, know their colours, are reading books and knowing *'appropriate'* language to use.

Minh explains that the children would be getting very little English language support from the TV. Even though the children watch TV, she says, *'that's just one way isn't it. You need interaction within two channels for them to benefit'*. She states that many of her students tell her that they have a TV in their own room to keep them occupied while their parents work, and they do not tend to watch programs like Play School. She also feels that their *'English model'* at home is poor, because it is from brothers and sisters, many of whom are still at the school and who are *'still developing their English as a second language'*.

Minh teaches the Vietnamese Bilingual Program in withdrawal groups for two forty-five minutes lessons a week. She is assisted by a Vietnamese aide who takes the children individually, for support in certain areas. Each day the aide would have a timetable of which children to take and what concepts they were currently working on.

Minh teaches the children in 'two languages'.

> *Just say they're reading a book. I discuss it all in Vietnamese first, although I'll try and make sure they know what it is and ask them questions. The second time I read it will be in English, so they focus entirely on the English the second time around because they know what the book is about.*

However, Minh only works in one language at a time. Minh would for example, discuss a concept, or the meaning of a title in Vietnamese, or the features of the genre in Vietnamese. When the children come to write they *'translate the knowledge and skills of that genre into English'*. She gives the children a lot of support with their writing. They have gone through all the steps before in Vietnamese and then she goes through it all again in English.

The children do some reading and writing in Vietnamese, but only *'using very basic words'* and this tends to be in Year 1. In Year 1 because the letters are similar, she is able to teach beginning literacy in Vietnamese. She mainly uses Vietnamese for numeracy in Years 1 and 2 since her priority is to make sure that the children are clear about the concepts. By Year 2, Minh says, the children need to take on so much English for the Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net that she gets them to write in English, although she supports the writing orally in Vietnamese.

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net is a process of assessment and intervention to support children's literacy and numeracy development during the early years of schooling in Queensland. It identifies and provides additional support for those children who are experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy. Teachers observe and map children's progress using Developmental Continua for literacy and numeracy. The Continua for literacy are those used in the First Steps program with some very slight adaptation (just a few words). Observations of children's literacy are validated ('the validation') with specifically designed assessment tasks . Children who are identified because they do not reach the expected phases are funded for intervention support. The teachers tend to describe such children as those 'caught in the net' The assessment of Oracy is not part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net.

Minh is free of the *'pressure'* of the Year 2 Diagnostic Test when she works in the pre-school:

> *There isn't that pressure of tests or that sort of thing. I can devote my whole time. Actually I rarely use English in the pre-school environment, because at that time, even in Vietnamese they're* very *poor. You have to develop that first.*

Minh works with the children in withdrawal groups rather than in the mainstream classroom. This enables her to pace her own lessons and to maximise the time she spends with the children. With mainstream classroom ESL support she finds that ESL teachers are very dependent on the somewhat unpredictable lesson timing of the mainstream teacher. Minh explains that she might go into a mainstream classroom expecting a lesson that needed her support to find that the teacher is behind in her timing. In that way Minh might waste thirty minutes or so sitting in on a lesson. She finds that ESL support in the mainstream classroom is also limited to one or two children at a time at each table and she has found herself repeating the same thing 'five times'. *Withdrawal group support also allows her more control over the problem of 'noise' and 'distraction'.*

Minh also explains that when she supports the teacher in the mainstream classroom she often finds her teaching limited to *'showing the children how to do a worksheet'*, which might not be the best way of supporting their real classroom needs.

> *But you need knowledge too, prior knowledge to be able to do that* (fill in a worksheet)*, and some of our ESL children have not acquired that knowledge yet. In withdrawal you can make sure you're on the same understanding. The children then understand what is required of them before they attempt to do that sheet.*

Minh developed a pragmatic approach to planning through experience with mainstream teachers. She gets the planning *'from'* the teachers, rather than planning *'with'* the teachers. She uses the same content being covered in the classroom in a particular week and plans activities around the language being covered. Her activities will not be the same as those being covered by the mainstream teacher or as her ESL teacher partner. Her aim is to give the children a broader base for meeting the demands of the mainstream classroom.

She might suggest resources to the mainstream teacher and will discuss the children's needs in relation to the teacher's planning. This is a two-way process of concern.

Minh started her system of planning the first year she arrived at the school, eight years ago. She plans her own bilingual program to support the weekly planning of the mainstream teachers. She devised the planning sheet because she had to make up the resources first:

Sample 1: Minh's Weekly Planning Sheet

MAINSTREAM PLANNING

AK1 PONIES	AK2 UNICORNS
LANG. To town. (I) (the)	LANG. What a mess ↺ rhyming words.
MATHS. tall / short Money thick / thin 5c wide / narrow THEME: 10c	MATHS. Tens / ones Odd / even FAIRY TALES → genre.
MP1. METEORS	**MP2. COMETS**
LANG. Smarty Pants (b) (s) (m) (see) (me) MATHS. The ghost (the) (my) no 4 long / short Rectangle THEME: SPACE	LANG. Until We got Princess Past tense Revise (sh) (ar) MATHS. + & ● How many more? Stories. Length - arbitrary. Solids - cube. Counting 2s 5s 10s.
JM1. DUCKLINGS	**JM2 DUCKS**
LANG. • Tree House (w) (went) • Big Hill • Night time (is) • My Home MATHS. Shapes - Circles high / low. THEME: FAIRY TALES.	LANG. Where Does the Wind go? Trucks (-nk). MATHS. Solids.
DESLEY'S 2/3	**CAROL'S YR 3**
LANG. MATHS. THEME	LANG. A cat's eye is one. MATHS. Reg.

To start it off was really hard because teachers did not know what they were doing the following week until the Monday morning. So we slowly trained the teachers on a Friday morning, because Friday afternoon they thought, you know, we can't think.

Now she goes to the teachers and gets their planning on a Friday morning, which means she feels that they get clear in their minds what they are going to teach and she knows it in advance for her own planning. With the Year 2 children, she superimposes a program of ESL development onto the mainstream teachers' weekly program, fitted to language demands of the mainstream classroom tasks for the week, using Vietnamese as the medium for teaching. (In the case of the pre-school and Year 1 she programs additionally for development in Vietnamese). This is worked out by Minh in a focused way, but is not easily articulated. This is perhaps due to her isolation as a bilingual teacher. There are very few colleagues who are bilingual teachers for her to discuss her program with.

A typical lesson is noteworthy for four features: the comfort level of the children, the amount of spoken language uttered, the amount of language used by the teacher and the tight pace of the lesson, and lastly the response of the children to the lesson.

The lesson to be described is first up in the morning and is held just before the school's Open Day where the children are to dance in Vietnamese costume. Minh divides the lesson up into 'morning group talk' with Minh sitting on the low chair and the children sitting on the carpet, followed by literacy and then numeracy. The pace seems incredible and perhaps that is because it is all in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese aide sits in on the lesson.

The children come in with their stories and there is much discussion about organisation for Open Day: messages that have to go home to parents, discussions about the progress of costumes and about what is happening about lunchtime practices. The significant thing is the relaxation and ease of the children; there is no hesitation, the children are in command of all that they want to say and their long utterances have to be interrupted to allow other members of the group to speak. They appear to be playing the role of small fairly responsible grown ups, bearing important information home to their parents about Open Day. The children seemed a lot younger when observed in their English-speaking classroom. Minh firmly stops the talk after ten minutes and the literacy part of the lesson begins.

This involves reading a Big Book in Vietnamese. The children read it and discuss what happened and discuss key words. Minh points to phonic cards on the wall. They then read the book in English.

Minh then moves to numeracy. One of the teachers has discussed with her the fact that one of the children is having difficulty with multiplication: the fact that 4x3=12, but 12x1 and 6x2 also equals 12. The children plant plastic rows of fruit trees and Minh discusses the concept in Vietnamese. The children then work independently solving problems and then share their solutions with the other children. The child who was having special difficulty gets individual attention from Minh. At the end of the lesson the children line up and practise their dance for Open Day. Minh uses the dance to reinforce the concept being taught. She shows them that although the rows change, the total number of children remains the same:

Sample 2: Reinforcing the Multiplication Lesson through Dance

eg 1. xxxx	2. xxxxxx	3. xx
xxxx	xxxxxx	xx
xxxx		xx
		xx
		xx
		xx

The children are fully engaged in the lesson and look as though they would be happy if it went on for hours. At the end of the lesson, Minh voices her thoughts about the children's performance and makes a note of some of their performances in her record book:

Sample 3: Minh's Anecdotal Record: notes made at the end of the lesson

3/10/96	Hieu is able to form groups using concrete materials Vang is able to use the appropriate language for grouping Lan is able to form groups using concrete material with teacher assistance

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Minh is a trained ESL teacher with a Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics (TESOL). She has been teaching for eight years. Although she assists in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process (the numeracy part of the process is done in Vietnamese), she does not use the Literacy framework herself. She has been inserviced in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process and is well aware of the Reading and Writing Developmental Continua. She takes part in the process by setting the context for the validation tasks in her teaching and she also takes part in reporting. However the mainstream teachers plot the children on the Continuum and keep the Diagnostic Net records. Minh has been inserviced through her Region in the use of the NLLIA Bandscales but the Region, while encouraging the ESL teachers to explore the use of the Bandscales, is not officially using them, so Minh and Annette have not taken them up. This year, however, ESL teachers were asked to use the Draft Queensland Proficiency Levels to record an overall proficiency level for each student to go into the Database to provide the region with an indication of the children's ESL needs

The levels are not considered by the Department to be an assessment framework and there was no inservice. The process used in identifying the levels appears to be an informal one, in which the ESL teacher matches her overall knowledge of student performance to the level statements, using the pointers as a guide.

Sample 4: Draft Queensland Proficiency Levels

Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels

Level		Statement Pointers
1	Students with minimal to low proficiency in English	• Participates in social interactions, e g. greetings, farewells • Provides personal information in response to spoken or written questions. • Communicates basic needs. • Follows short instructions or directions. • Recognises known words in a short spoken or written text
2	Students can communicate in English related to their immediate personal experiences or familiar subject matter	• Relates a simple event from past experiences • Participates in a single transaction. (e.g. Borrowing a book, purchasing an item at a tuckshop) • Provides personal details when asked • Participates in classroom activities when supportive strategies are used (for example, explicit language focus, modelling, bilingual support, controlled selection of highly contextualised written texts with visual clues, extended time
3	Students are beginning to apply learned language to extended social and familiar academic contexts.	• Demonstrates emerging ability to attempt cognitively demanding, context-reduced tasks for work at the appropriate year level. • Identifies and produces a limited range of text types that have been developed from sequenced learning activities, e.g. recounts, procedures, descriptions, short factual report appropriate to age educational background and social development. • Uses and recognises a limited range of explicit language signals within texts, e g sequence (first, next, then) contrast (but, however), etc., and some cohesive ties (because so, personal pronouns) • Requires contextual clues to read texts on unfamiliar topics (i.e. Uses visual supports such as diagrams, graphs or pictures to interpret meaning.)
4	Students are able to participate in most age appropriate mainstream class activities in most informal situations with increasing success. There may be differences between a student's level of academic and social English language competency depending on his/her experiences and language traditions.	• Demonstrates ability to attempt with increasing success cognitively demanding, context-reduced tasks for work at the appropriate year level. • Produces independently short structured texts for general or familiar audiences • Begins to select the appropriate genre to respond to a particular task (choices of structure, tenor, textual features are appropriate). • Requires supportive teaching strategies for comprehending and composing longer, lexically dense or complex texts, which could include unfamiliar content. • Accesses and applies the English required in most language and literacy activities in mainstream classrooms • Expresses reasons, opinions, arguments and provides examples and explanations in expository texts
5	Students are able to participate effectively over a range of social and academic contexts. Can demonstrate competencies appropriate to age in standard English for social and academic purposes. Developing control over analysing, interpreting and synthesising materials in English.	• Selects appropriate registers for a range of situations. • Understands where slang and colloquial language can be used appropriately • Responds independently to mainstream curriculum demands. • Requires additional support for understanding of specific cultural references in texts • Accesses and responds to a range of information sources in both oral and written modes with minimal language support

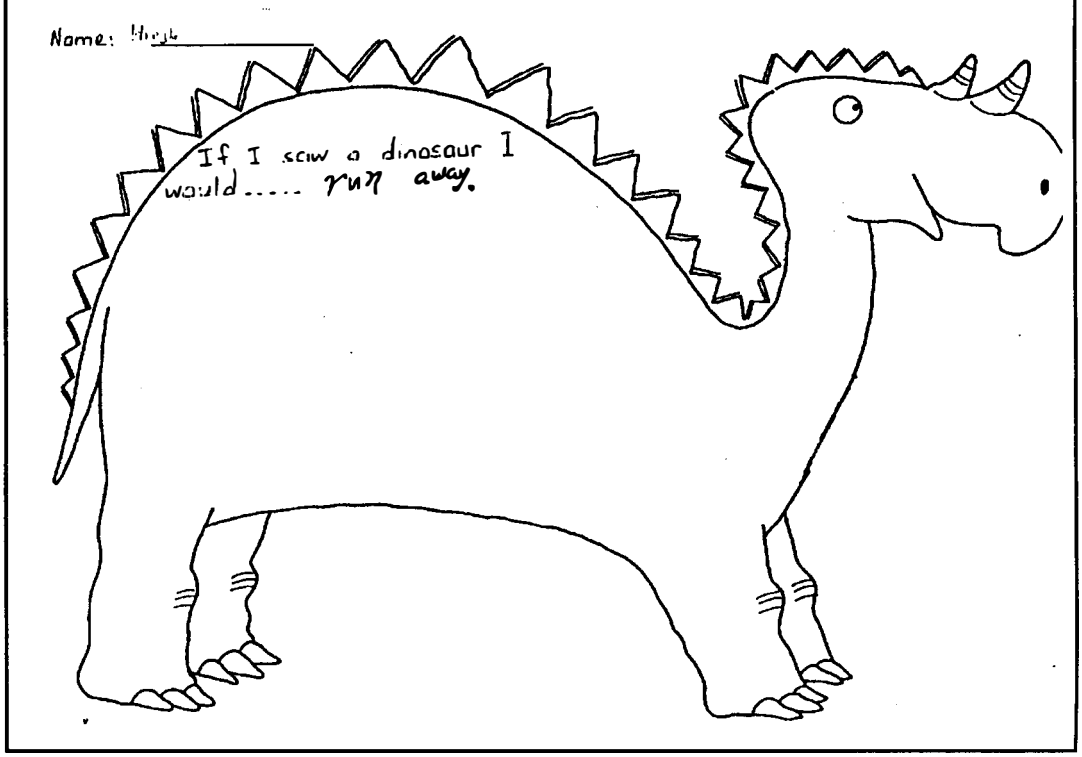
Three student examples (Hieu, Lan and Vang) will give an indication of how Minh goes about assessing her students. Only reading and writing are assessed in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net and Minh tends to follow this focus. Although she mentions oracy frequently and her knowledge of the students' oral development obviously informs her teaching (particularly in the pre-school as shown above under The Classroom Context), Minh's focus in assessment seems to be on writing in Year 2. Minh has explained earlier that since the Year 2 Diagnostic Net validation requires the children to write in English, she teaches the Year 2 children to write in English. Minh teaches in Vietnamese discussing the purpose, content, structure and features of the texts to be written. All the texts in the Year 2 folders are written in English.

Hieu was born in Australia and Minh states that she is a reluctant writer. Minh reads from Hieu's journal:

> *'My mum and my brother'....It will take her five minutes to work that much out. "Like 'brother', what is the sound 'b', what is the next sound you can hear" So you have to work one to one with her. If the teacher left her side she would just sit there.*

Minh felt that the writing in the portfolio would give the wrong idea of what Hieu could do. Writing in the mainstream and bilingual classroom is generally supported she says, and she wanted to show what the children could do independently. She asked the mainstream teacher to carry out an unsupported task. The children's task was to complete the story on the dinosaur. *'If I saw a dinosaur I would.....'*. Minh states that Hieu added only two words, *'run away'*

Sample 5: Hieu's Dinosaur Story



Minh points out that there is a lot of rubbing out and that it took Hieu two days to write, though she is by far the top reader in the group. Hieu was not identified for intervention funding in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net validation for writing. Minh feels that the Year 2 Diagnostic Net is very wanting in this respect because so much context is put in, such a large bank of sight words taught. She explains

that schools have up to a month to set up the context and teach the sight words for the Net Validation writing task. This would provide the very safe, very supported, risk-free context that suits Hieu's learning style in writing. Minh points out that the extensive setting up of the context for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Writing Task is not typical of classroom practice, even though children tend to do writing that is supported to some extent in the classroom. Minh feels that Hieu does need intervention funding for her writing, but she will not get them. Referring to the validation task, Minh says, *'It's not a true picture of what the child can do'.*

We can see here that Minh is at odds in her own assessment of Hieu's writing with that made using the State's assessment framework, the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. Although Minh is not using an ESL framework, she makes an assessment according to her own criteria as an ESL teacher and finds that Hieu is 'at risk' and needing intervention. Clearly one of Minh's most important criteria is the level to which the ESL child can perform the task in unsupported conditions.

Minh's notes about Hieu in her anecdotal record book read, *'very reluctant to write'*, and *'lacks ideas and confidence in spelling'*. These comments were written in July, and Minh adds that by November she has not changed much. While the other children tended to have long paragraphs, Hieu writes in her journal with much rubbing out. Minh comments on it:

Sample 6: Hieu's Journal Entry about Shopping

'On Sunday I went to the shopping centre. My mum and my brother bought me a After that I go home.' It's not that she can't write, or she hasn't got enough English. I think it's lack of confidence more than anything and lack of trying anything new. She has to know the correct spelling and she has to know the correct sentence to write it down.

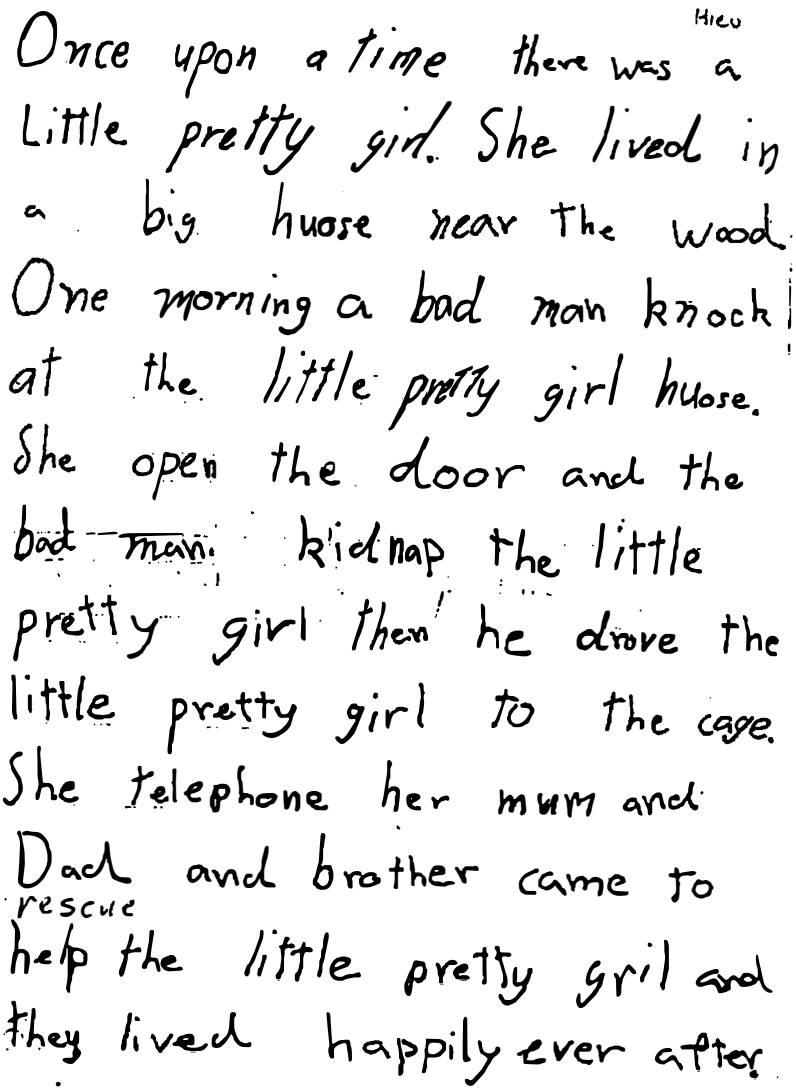
Minh takes another journal entry and comments on it:

Sample 7: On Hieu's Journal Entry about her teacher

'Today is Miss Smith's last day. She is going to have'. So you can tell, she has the right sentence structure, 'she is going to have a holiday. I will be miss her. Miss Lamont gave her some flowers. The 7th of October she will come back. When she is back and I is very happy.' But of course I had to give her all the spelling because she started rubbing it out. She's quite happy looking at the word, remembering it, writing it down, but she needs to have the word in front of her.

Minh takes Hieu's version of the Mermaid story:

Sample 8: Hieu's Mermaid Story.


Hieu

Once upon a time there was a
Little pretty girl. She lived in
a big house near the wood.
One morning a bad man knock
at the little pretty girl house.
She open the door and the
bad man kidnap the little
pretty girl then he drove the
little pretty girl to the cage.
She telephone her mum and
Dad and brother came to
rescue
help the little pretty gril and
they lived happily ever after.

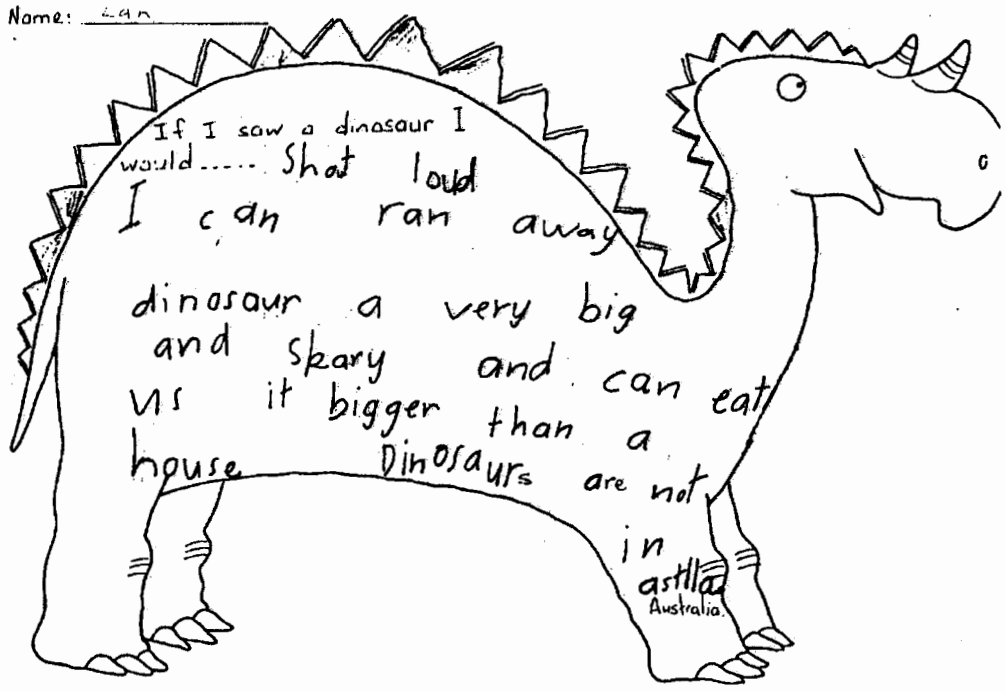
Minh explains that this story had a great deal of support. Minh was working on the fairy tale and they began by reading a story about a mermaid in a Big Book in Vietnamese. Many of the phrases had been given to them and the children only had to change a word in most cases to make their own story. The resolution was their own however.

> *She tries very hard. You know she sits there, you can tell, you know she's trying to work out how to use correct word order, what can I write about.*

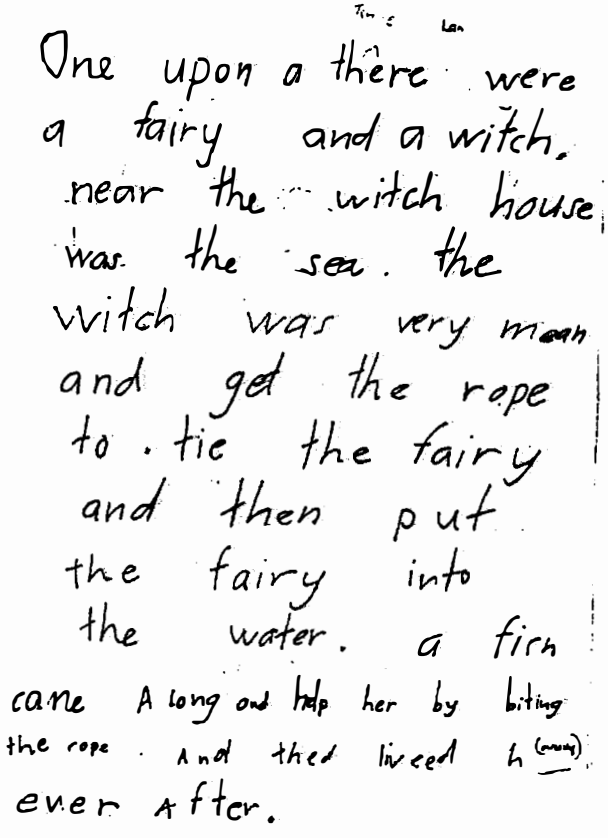
After the Dinosaur story discussed above, an unsupported task in which Hieu wrote two words over two days, Hieu had four weeks to go before the end of Year 2 and thus the funding for her ESL support at primary school. Minh was very concerned about the level Hieu had reached in her writing. Minh points out that if Minh had been a New Arrival she could have had another year's funding,

but the special Federal funding for children like Hieu who are born in Australia is only for two years. Minh discusses Lan's Dinosaur story and Mermaid text:

Sample 9: Lan's Dinosaur Story



Sample 10: Lan's Mermaid Story



Lan is the Year 2 student Minh is most concerned about. She was born in Australia. Although Minh says that her Maths seems to be fine, there are problems in Reading and Writing and Minh is worried about the development of her concepts.

> *I'm concerned about her comprehension. Her ideas are not sequenced. She writes the most, but when you compare it with the others the actual text is not very good. It's always the same as in her journal, 'On the holiday I went to the shop and I bought shoes for my sister and my mum buys three shoes and gave them to my aunty. I like shoe'. She always goes to the shop to buy things and they always end up with 'I like whatever I buy'.*

Minh talks about Lan's story in Sample 10:

> *Now with this we talked about it and she told me her story. But when she wrote it down all the ideas were jumbled up. She had to rub it out and start again. Lan needed a lot of support with this one. The other three talked about it and were quite all right.*
>
> *She reads rather well and her spelling is quite good. She was not 'caught' in the net. But sometimes the sentence constructions get mixed up and even the sequence of ideas. She doesn't always get it right.*

Again we see Minh assessing using her own criteria as an ESL teacher. Minh takes into account the sequencing of ideas, the tendency to repeat the same story and well known phrases, the sentence construction and the need for a very supported teaching context.

Minh states that *'Lan speaks well'*, however, Minh however is concerned about her listening even to simple instructions in Vietnamese where Lan does not recognise prepositions of location and sometimes cannot use them herself:

> *If you said, 'Lan, go and put the scissors on the table , or take them off the top shelf', she would go there and not actually follow the instruction but look for the scissors. Or you know, 'It's on your right hand side,' things like that ,there's little gaps even in Vietnamese too. Things like 'next to'. She can just point instead of saying, 'the boy next to the table'.*

We see here the way that Minh tends to move directly from considering assessing the children's writing in English, to referring to her assessments of the children's listening and speaking in their first language, Vietnamese.

Minh points to Lan's journal entry about a teacher leaving the school for a holiday. Minh feels that *'Lan has entirely missed the point'.*

Sample 11: Lan's Journal Entry about Miss Jay

On Monday Miss Barnes miss us because sometime Miss Barnes not going anywhere. Just at school to make some photocopies some paper. Tomorrow I go teacher but she is beautiful I like that teacher In seven weeks time she come back and we are happy.

Minh adds that Lan had asked the teacher where she was going and the teacher had said not anywhere. *'I know what she wants to get across, it's just she can't express herself'.* Minh gives a final example from the journal:

Sample 12: Lan's Journal Entry about Sport's Day

I go to sports day. Hieu is jump. Her not run, her not running, Lan and Mai run. My sister run fourth. Her don't had a ribbon, just me and Mai.

Minh feels that Lan has not improved much during the year. Minh still has to keep supporting her stories with '*whens*' and '*whys*'.

Minh again returns to discussing her assessment of what she feels are Lan's very great needs in writing, as against that of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net assessment. Lan was not 'caught' in the Net and would have been assessed as a Phase B, Experimental Writer on the Writing Developmental Continuum and so would not receive intervention funding. Yet Minh explains that in order to move along the Continuum to Phase C, Early Writing:

> *The children are expected to get things like past tense, plurals and what's not taken into consideration are all the cultural backgrounds that children come from. Because the Net is a first language process, these kinds of things are not even considered if a child is to have intervention. They come up in the next Phase , but no one has been alerted that the children need to get there from the Net process:*
>
> *I think these things need to be taught to these children. It needs to be made explicit and I think they just assume that the children know all this and let mistakes happen. All of the children we have discussed make the same mistakes.*

Minh seems to be pointing to the lack of fit between the writing performance of her ESL students in the early Phases and the indicators on the Continuum. Because the features of the ESL writing of her students are not made visible on the Continuum, the children are put into a Phase that does not alert teachers to the need for intervention, yet these needs may keep the students from moving along to the next Phase of Early Literacy.

Vang was born in Australia and Minh believes that he is the best student in the group. He is good in Maths. Minh noted in her anecdotal records that *'he needed more practice on sight words'* and spelling in March, so she worked with him on that and now he is quite good at it. She notes that *'he did not like to guess words and needed encouragement to write'* in July.

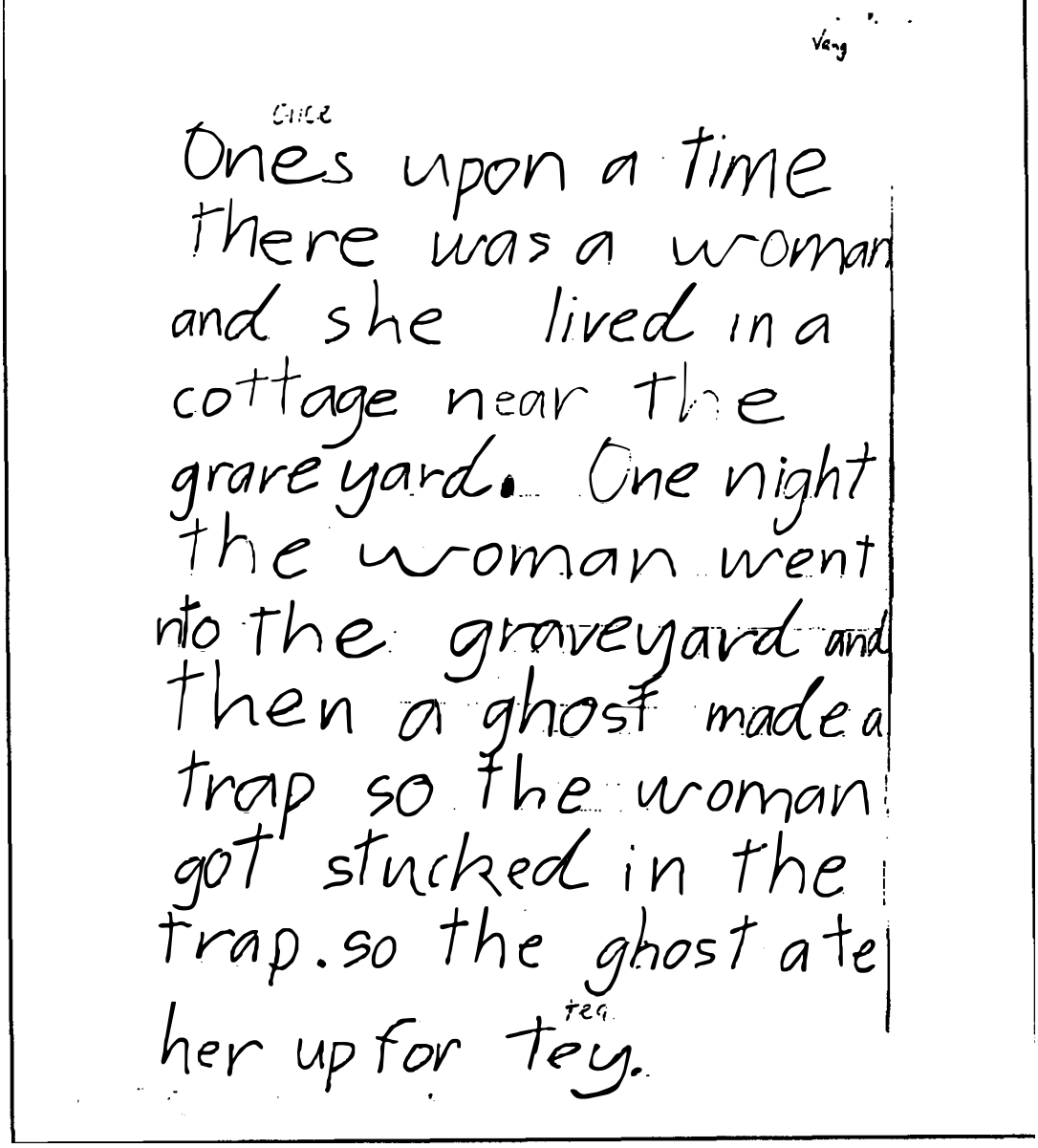
Minh reads from one of his latest journal entries which she feels is *'quite good'*:

Sample 13: Vang's Journal Entry about the Tooth Fairy

Last week I pulled out two of my teeth out, but the tooth fairy did not come because there is no such thing as tooth fairy, so I put one of my tooth down the drain and the other on the rooftop. So I keep waiting for the tooth fairy.

She reads from his Mermaid story:

Sample 14: Vang's Mermaid Story


Vang

Once
Ones upon a time there was a woman and she lived in a cottage near the grare yard. One night the woman went nto the graveyard and then a ghost made a trap so the woman got stucked in the trap. so the ghost ate her up for tea.
tea

'Once upon a time there was a woman and she lived in a cottage', they have to choose who, where they lived, 'near the graveyard'. He likes ghosts and all that. 'One night the woman went into the graveyard and then a ghost made a trap, so the woman got stuck in the trap, so the ghost ate her up for tea'. That's Vang's style of writing. He doesn't like fairies and happy endings. His sentence construction is good and he uses creative imaginative ideas too.

Minh points out that Vang's story was significantly different from other stories in that he uses creative imaginative ideas. This emerges as another of the criteria she uses in assessing the writing of her ESL students.

Minh states that Vang's reading was improving, and that his listening and speaking in Vietnamese were good. She notes that as with Hieu and Lan, his ESL support was to finish in a month. Although Minh feels that Vang would *'get by without support'* she believes that:

> *He has so much more potential and if that support continues he will actually achieve a lot more than he could without that support. He's one of these kids that will manage, he will just cope in the mainstream with other support. But with it, he will be one of the bright ones at the top.*

Another of the considerations made by Minh in her assessment of her students' Writing emerges: given the performance at the child's year level at this point of time, how will it affect the child in the long run to lose ESL support?

Minh mentions a concern she has about the assessment process used in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Reading Validation. There is a lot of teaching support leading up to the validation. Children are given the sight words from the text and these may be up on the walls for three weeks (the process is time consuming with their reading taped to be analysed later). Minh feels that the level of this support may mean that a true picture of the child's reading may not be given. The children also have to talk in English about the strategies they have used. Minh feels that the children might have the strategies (eg. looking at the pictures, reading on and reading back), but could not describe them in English.

Minh is involved in the Numeracy Validation for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net at her school, because interpreters may be used in the process. This has made her aware of how important a part language plays in the assessment process.

Since she is *'testing'* concept development she is able to tell *'whether they understand the concept or just don't understand the language'*. Minh makes the example of *'more'* or *'less'* as language that the children find difficult. One of her children counts to one hundred quite easily, however in English she *'may go 'one, two' and then 'four', but not because she cannot count. She can't remember the sequence in English'*.

'In some of the questions they have to think aloud and surely it's better to think aloud in one's mother tongue than think aloud in another language'. Minh takes this example from the validation process:

> *'Demonstrates an understanding of the link between all forms of representations of numbers'. That's subtraction and addition, but they have to voice their thoughts, explain how they got the answer. Children who are limited in their English ability will be disadvantaged. But if you can say to them, 'Now tell me a story about your sum,' they can do it quite well and they use the right language in Vietnamese to join their story together.*

Or again the children might have to describe and create patterns, but would be disadvantaged when they have to explain what they have done in English. *'That's why the validation is carried out in Vietnamese'*.

There are differences in the languages in Mathematics which may make a child's ability seem less than it is, eg. three in Vietnamese for third in English and Minh explains this to the teacher.

Minh's school has the human resources to carry out the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Validation process in Vietnamese, but this is a rare situation. She states that New Arrivals can pass the Numeracy segment if it is done in Vietnamese. *'I'm just wondering how other schools carry out the numeracy validation with our ESL children, because we are lucky to have the resources here.'*

Keeping Records

Minh uses an exercise book (Minh's anecdotal records have been referred to above) to record her observations of progress and also the comments other

teachers make to her about the children for her to follow up on in the bilingual class. Although the records in the book do not conform to a framework they tend to be quite specific in terms of the child's language needs. Rather than choosing separate assessment activities, Minh carefully observes and informally assesses normal teaching activities:

> *All the things they do for me are used for assessment. When I notice something important I usually write it down. It's very basic okay? And it's not just on language its on everything. I mainly assess their concepts, what they haven't got and what they have got.*

When it was pointed out to her that the notes seemed quite specific eg. mixed up verb form, past tense writing recount, more practice with adding on money, she commented: *'It's very informal, I haven't got some sort of set checklist where I tick down all the criteria'*. Laughing she said that if she had a checklist with criteria it might look more *'professional'*. However she added that it would not necessarily be better for keeping her eye on the children's needs. *'This is suitable for me, this is enough'*.

Reporting

In the school report, Minh's includes a report in Vietnamese on the bilingual program.

Sample 15: Minh's paragraph in Vietnamese with an English translation

———— rất chăm học và đã đạt được nhiều kết quả tốt đẹp trong học kỳ này. Em nhận biết nhiều mặt chữ và có thể dùng cách đánh vần để suy đoán những chữ lạ. Vì vậy, việc đọc và viết của em có nhiều tiến bộ. Những câu chuyện em viết khá dài và mô tả sự việc rõ ràng. Với những khái niệm mới của toán học, đôi khi em gặp khó khăn và cần nhiều thực tập ở nhà để em chóng tiến bộ về phương diện này.

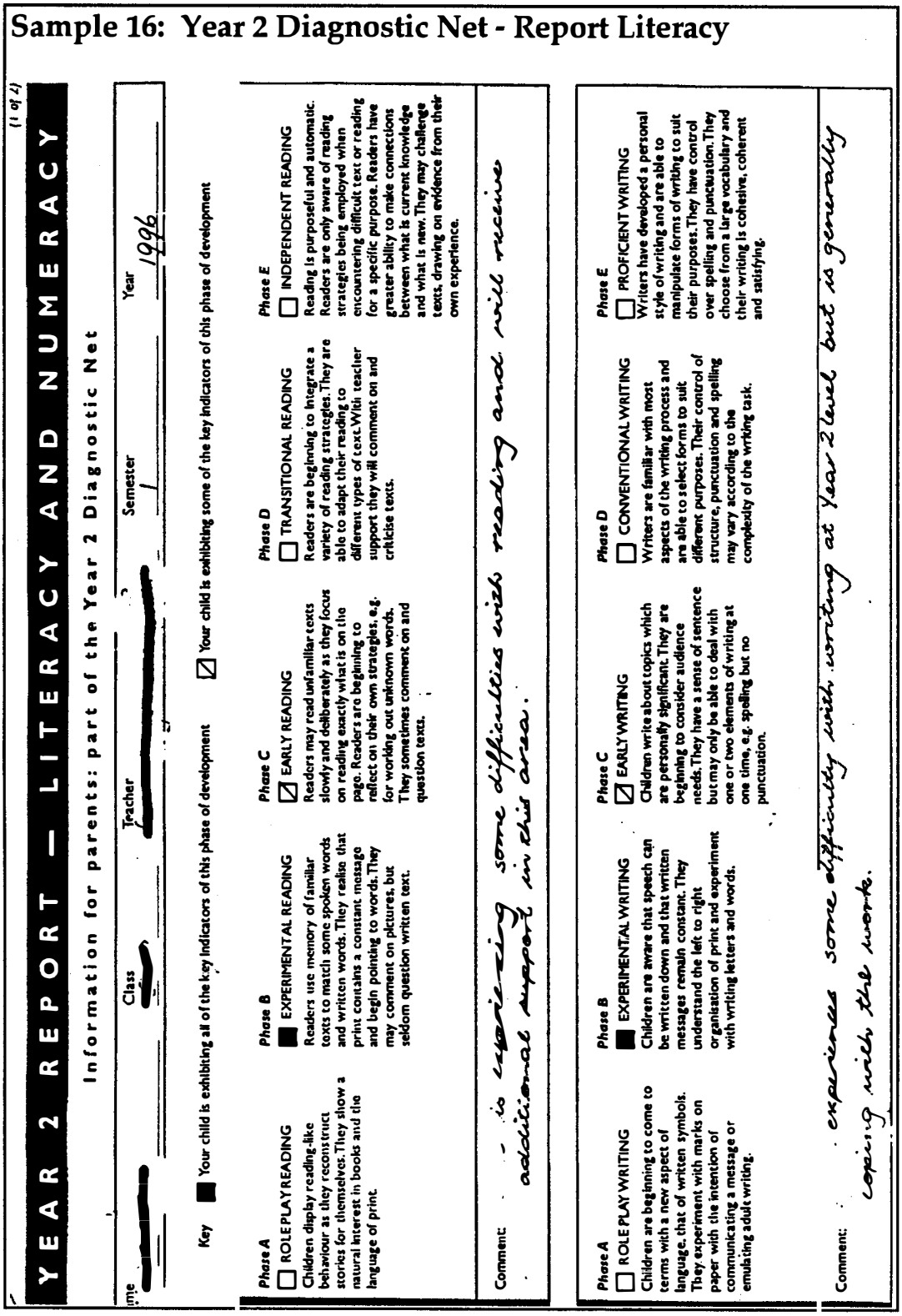
Giáo viên song ngữ. ————

ENGLISH TRANSLATION -

———— is an industrious worker & has made good progress this term. Her sight vocabulary is increasing steadily & she is attempting to spell unknown words. As a result, there is a marked improvement in her reading and writing. She is able write simple stories of good length. In Maths, sometimes she experiences difficulties with new concepts and would benefit greatly from regular practice at home.

The parents also receive a report on the results of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net in Literacy and Numeracy. In Literacy each child is mapped onto a format designed by the Department of Education in terms of the Phases the child has reached in the Reading and Writing Developmental Criteria.

Sample 16: Year 2 Diagnostic Net - Report Literacy



YEAR 2 REPORT — LITERACY AND NUMERACY (1 of 2)

Information for parents: part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net

Name [redacted] Class [redacted] Teacher [redacted] Semester 1 Year 1996

Key ■ Your child is exhibiting all of the key indicators of this phase of development ☑ Your child is exhibiting some of the key indicators of this phase of development

Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	Phase D	Phase E
☐ ROLE PLAY READING Children display reading-like behaviour as they reconstruct stories for themselves. They show a natural interest in books and the language of print.	■ EXPERIMENTAL READING Readers use memory of familiar texts to match some spoken words and written words. They realise that print contains a constant message and begin pointing to words. They may comment on pictures, but seldom question written text.	☑ EARLY READING Readers may read unfamiliar texts slowly and deliberately as they focus on reading exactly what is on the page. Readers are beginning to reflect on their own strategies, e.g. for working out unknown words. They sometimes comment on and question texts.	☐ TRANSITIONAL READING Readers are beginning to integrate a variety of reading strategies. They are able to adapt their reading to different types of text. With teacher support they will comment on and criticise texts.	☐ INDEPENDENT READING Reading is purposeful and automatic. Readers are only aware of reading strategies being employed when encountering difficult text or reading for a specific purpose. Readers have greater ability to make connections between what is current knowledge and what is new. They may challenge texts, drawing on evidence from their own experience.

Comment: [redacted] is experiencing some difficulties with reading and will receive additional support in this area.

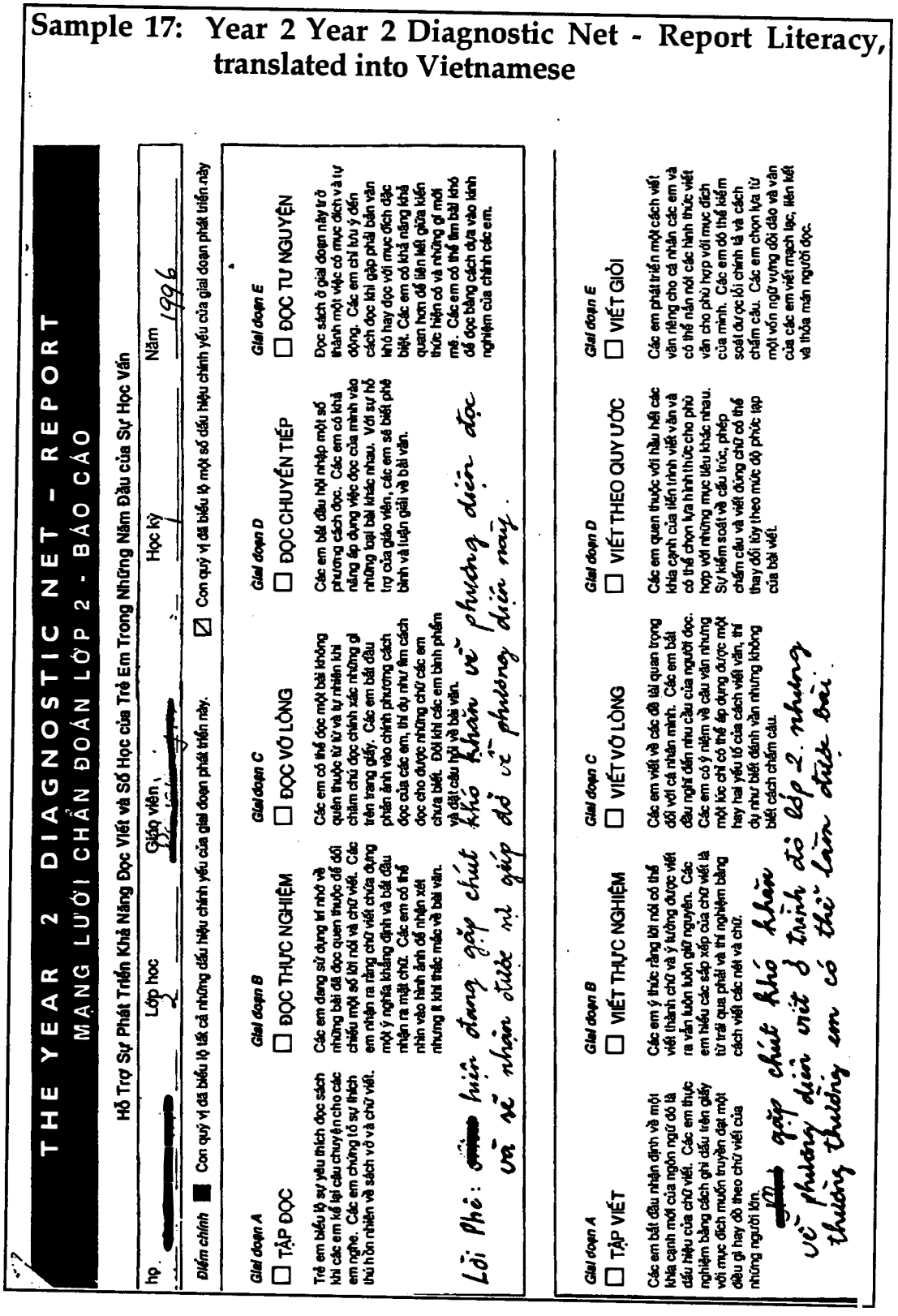
Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	Phase D	Phase E
☐ ROLE PLAY WRITING Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.	■ EXPERIMENTAL WRITING Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant. They understand the left to right organisation of print and experiment with writing letters and words.	☑ EARLY WRITING Children write about topics which are personally significant. They are beginning to consider audience needs. They have a sense of sentence but may only be able to deal with one or two elements of writing at one time, e.g. spelling but no punctuation.	☐ CONVENTIONAL WRITING Writers are familiar with most aspects of the writing process and are able to select forms to suit different purposes. Their control of structure, punctuation and spelling may vary according to the complexity of the writing task.	☐ PROFICIENT WRITING Writers have developed a personal style of writing and are able to manipulate forms of writing to suit their purposes. They have control over spelling and punctuation. They choose from a large vocabulary and their writing is cohesive, coherent and satisfying.

Comment: [redacted] experiences some difficulty with writing at Year 2 level but is generally coping with the work.

Minh's bilingual parents receive this report translated into Vietnamese. There are little paragraphs on the different phases and the child's phase is marked in. There is also a place for teacher comments. The report is available in bilingual

versions and Minh uses the version in Vietnamese for her parents and she talks to them about it:

Sample 17: Year 2 Year 2 Diagnostic Net - Report Literacy, translated into Vietnamese



THE YEAR 2 DIAGNOSTIC NET - REPORT
MẠNG LƯỚI CHẨN ĐOÁN LỚP 2 - BÁO CÁO

Hỗ Trợ Sự Phát Triển Khả Năng Đọc Viết và Số Học của Trẻ Em Trong Những Năm Đầu của Sự Học Vấn

hp. [redacted] Lớp học 2 Giáo viên [redacted] Học kỳ 1 Năm 1996

Điểm chính ■ Con quý vị đã biểu lộ tất cả những dấu hiệu chính yếu của giai đoạn phát triển này. ☑ Con quý vị đã biểu lộ một số dấu hiệu chính yếu của giai đoạn phát triển này

Giai đoạn A ☐ TẬP ĐỌC

Trẻ em biểu lộ sự yêu thích đọc sách khi các em kể lại câu chuyện cho các em nghe. Các em chứng tỏ sự thích thú hồn nhiên về sách vở và chữ viết.

Giai đoạn B ☐ ĐỌC THỰC NGHIỆM

Các em dang sử dụng trí nhớ và những bài đã đọc quen thuộc để đối chiếu một số lời nói và chữ viết. Các em nhận ra rằng chữ viết chứa đựng một ý nghĩa không định và bắt đầu nhận ra một chữ. Các em có thể nhìn vào hình ảnh để nhận xét nhưng ít khi thắc mắc về bài văn.

Giai đoạn C ☐ ĐỌC VỠ LÒNG

Các em có thể đọc một bài không quen thuộc từ từ và tự nhiên khi chăm chú đọc chính xác những gì trên trang giấy. Các em bắt đầu phản ánh vào chính phương cách đọc của các em, thí dụ như tìm cách nhìn vào hình ảnh để nhận xét và đặt câu hỏi về bài văn.

Giai đoạn D ☐ ĐỌC CHUYỂN TIẾP

Các em bắt đầu hội nhập một số phương cách đọc. Các em có khả năng áp dụng việc đọc của mình vào những loại bài khác nhau. Với sự hỗ trợ của giáo viên, các em sẽ biết phê bình và luận giải về bài văn.

Giai đoạn E ☐ ĐỌC TỰ NGUYỆN

Đọc sách ở giai đoạn này trở thành một việc có mục đích và tự động. Các em chỉ lưu ý đến cách đọc khi gặp phải bản văn khó hay đọc với mục đích đặc biệt. Các em có khả năng khá quan hơn để liên kết giữa kiến thức hiện có và những gì mới mẻ. Các em có thể tìm bài khó để đọc bằng cách dựa vào kinh nghiệm của chính các em.

Lời Phê: Con hiện đang gặp chút khó khăn về phương diện đọc và về nhận thức nó giúp đỡ về phương diện này.

Giai đoạn A ☐ TẬP VIẾT

Các em bắt đầu nhận định về một khía cạnh mới của ngôn ngữ đó là dấu hiệu của chữ viết. Các em thực nghiệm bằng cách ghi dấu trên giấy với mục đích muốn truyền đạt một điều gì hay đồ theo chữ viết của những người lớn.

Giai đoạn B ☐ VIẾT THỰC NGHIỆM

Các em ý thức rằng lời nói có thể viết thành chữ và ý tưởng được viết ra vẫn luôn luôn giữ nguyên. Các em hiểu các sắp xếp của chữ viết là từ trái qua phải và thí nghiệm bằng cách viết các nét và chữ.

Giai đoạn C ☐ VIẾT VỠ LÒNG

Các em viết về các đề tài quan trọng đối với cá nhân mình. Các em bắt đầu nghĩ đến nhu cầu của người đọc. Các em có ý niệm về câu văn nhưng một lúc chỉ có thể áp dụng được một hay hai yếu tố của cách viết văn, thí dụ như biết đánh vần nhưng không biết cách chấm câu.

Giai đoạn D ☐ VIẾT THEO QUY ƯỚC

Các em quen thuộc với hầu hết các khía cạnh của tiến trình viết văn và có thể chọn lựa hình thức cho phù hợp với những mục tiêu khác nhau. Sự kiểm soát về cấu trúc, phép chấm câu và viết đúng chữ có thể thay đổi tùy theo mức độ phức tạp của bài viết.

Giai đoạn E ☐ VIẾT GIỎI

Các em phát triển một cách viết văn riêng cho cá nhân các em và có thể nắn nót các hình thức viết văn cho phù hợp với mục đích của mình. Các em có thể kiểm soát được lỗi chính tả và cách chấm câu. Các em chọn lựa từ một vốn ngữ vựng dồi dào và văn của các em viết mạch lạc, liên kết và thỏa mãn người đọc.

Con gặp chút khó khăn về phương diện viết ở trình độ lớp 2. nhưng thường thường em có thể làm được bài.

In Numeracy, the students are plotted in terms of Phases of Numeracy on a Continuum devised in the Department of Education, Queensland:

Sample 18: Year 2 Diagnostic Net - Report Numeracy.

Key ■ Your child is exhibiting all of the key indicators of this phase of development ☒ Your child is exhibiting some of the key indicators of this phase of development

Phase A

☐ EXPLORING THE ENVIRONMENT

In exploring their immediate environment, children are learning from experiences that support early mathematical development as well as other areas of learning and development.

Children are learning about quantity and the shape and size of objects from different perspectives and using different senses. They are investigating the consequences of their actions and performing repeated patterns of actions. They are beginning to use language and simple drawings in their attempts to communicate their thoughts. Much of this development is evident when children are engaged in imaginative play as they express their feelings and act out experiences which are important to them.

Phase B

■ EARLY DISCOVERIES IN NUMBER

Children's learning continues to be closely linked with their immediate environment and everyday situations. In particular, they are learning about size, position, shape, number, colour, texture and taste.

Children are exploring materials around the home, in the community and in nature. They are solving problems of personal interest in a variety of practical contexts and play situations.

Children are counting and comparing small groups of objects. They are identifying numbers of particular relevance to them in their environment. Children are using symbols and everyday language to describe numbers.

Phase C

☒ BEGINNING NUMBER STUDY

Children have an understanding of number concepts to 10, but their counting skills extend to larger numbers.

Children can compare the size of groups by matching items or by sight if the number is three or less. They demonstrate an understanding of one-to-one correspondence — that is, they are able to physically match and compare objects from two groups.

Children are familiar with the standard ways of recording numbers in digit and word forms. Children demonstrate an understanding of the concept of addition and can record their calculations using digits and the addition sign (+). Children are able to recall most basic addition facts to 10.

Phase D

☐ EARLY PLACE VALUE

Children are developing an understanding of the concept of place value when applied to two-digit numbers — that is, the relative value of digits in the 'tens' and 'ones' places. They can read, write, compare and classify numbers to 99. Children can also represent these numbers using a variety of materials, and count to 100.

Children demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of addition and subtraction when solving problems and calculating with numbers to 99. They are able to explain addition and subtraction calculations using mathematical language. Children can recall the basic addition facts to 18 and apply these facts when adding numbers to 99. Children can also recall most subtraction facts to 10.

Phase E

☐ EARLY OPERATIONS

Children's understanding of place value now extends to three-digit numbers. They are demonstrating this understanding when they analyse, compare, classify and record numbers to 999. Children are also representing these numbers using structured mathematical materials, and their counting extends to 1 000. They are using mathematical language when describing number relationships and their representations.

Children are able to add and subtract numbers to 999. They can recall basic subtraction facts to 18. Children demonstrate an understanding of the concept and associated language of multiplication and they can also recall some multiplication facts.

Comment: [redacted] experiences difficulty with new concepts. She will require support to grasp an understanding of these.

Minh has grave concerns about both the Numeracy and the Literacy report. Importantly she feels that the Vietnamese translations are *'very good' - 'exactly the same as the English one, but what does the English one mean to the average parent, the Year 1 parent'?* Minh provides examples of the academic language used, which she feels is very exclusive.

Minh first discusses the comments in Phase A of the Numeracy Report: Exploring the Environment (see Sample 16): *'In exploring their immediate environment children are learning from experiences that support early mathematical development as well as other areas of learning and development';* She feels this is very ambiguous and needs to be brought down to the level of the parent so that the parent can say, *'Oh my child can do this or my child has difficulty with this'.* She gives another example: *'Children are learning about quantity and the shape and size of objects from different perspectives'.* Minh feels again that this is very ambiguous.

> *Actually I don't know what they want here and I'm a teacher. What can the children do? To me that doesn't tell me what my child can do. If I want to help my child at home to go from stage A to stage B, what do I do? Do I take her out exploring the environment some more? I might be sceptical here, but really, half the Vietnamese parents here, well more than half, eighty percent, are working class. Half of them only maybe finished primary school, and then to encounter this. This is a sort of middle class Australian text, but for the working class they miss out, because you know, we know what it's talking about because it's education. It is very nice, it sounds very nice, it sounds beautiful, bit I don't think it tells you very much.*

Minh sets this into a context by describing experiences she has had reporting to parents:

> *When they come up, I would always ask, 'Do you understand this?' and one hundred percent of them would say, 'Yes, yes, yes,'. They are embarrassed to admit that they do not understand it because it is written in Vietnamese. So what I do is show them specific examples from the children's work throughout the year. I find that's a much more helpful way. That way the parents can see where the children are at and maybe how to help them if they have the ability to do that.*

She explains how inaccessible academic Vietnamese would be to the parents by referring to other interactions she has had with them:

> *You know if we send home a form in Vietnamese asking for $36.00 and then in brackets (or $9.00 per term), the next day they ring up to ask if they have to pay $90.00. You know they can't even read nine decimal zero is $9.00. That shows one example of the difficulty and it's not the odd one. But you know when opportunities come up you get glimpses of it. When a parent comes up for an interview and we want to check if this is the present address. We will show her the address because we know that she may not be able to say the name of the street, or can't associate 'written down' with the sign of her street. Or the calendar. 'Now which date would suit you', I might ask. They get lost. They can't read the calendar. Or they come up and ask about something in the newsletter which goes out in Vietnamese.*

Two other examples are mentioned to exemplify the academic nature of the language in the report from *'Phase C Beginning Number Study. They demonstrate an understanding of one to one correspondence that is they are able to physically match and compare objects from two groups.'* Minh adds, *'I think it's very complicated'.*

Her final example of the academic in Phase C is the phrase: *'Children are familiar with the standard ways of recording numbers in digit and word forms'.*

Minh then discusses the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Literacy Report. Taking the example of Lan, Minh explains that she would have to modify the language in the Report for Lan's parents. Lan was 'caught' in the Net and is in Phase B, Experimental Reading, but moving into Phase C. Minh goes through the Vietnamese translation sentence by sentence with the parents and gives an example of the comment using simple language.

Minh's first example is a comment in Phase B, Experimental Reading:

> *'Readers use memory of familiar text and match some spoken words and written words'. All I need to say to the parent is, 'Lan is able to read Cat. She knows that says Cat and when she reads she points to the words.' The phrase means that the children realise that the word cat will always say Cat when it's in the book in print or in cursive writing. That's all it means and you need to bring it down to a simple level, practical, so the parents can actually see.*

Minh takes another example:

> *'Children are aware that speech can be written down and that written messages remain constant'. Okay, so I would say that when she does story writing, she would write down what she was told her story would be and she can read it back to the teacher exactly as she said it before, and the next day it would be exactly the same thing again.*

Minh gives her last example:

> *'Understand the left and right organisation of and experiment with writing letters and words.' I would say that, 'Lan knows that she starts writing from the left and moves on to the right and if she doesn't know a word she might try and sound it out'.*

Minh points out that parents without an academic background would have difficulty in trying to understand the literacy report, even though it is translated into Vietnamese. She points out that the teachers had to have two inservices before they had a grasp of what the report was *'talking about'*.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

We have already seen that Minh is concerned about the teaching implications of the use of an assessment framework for Literacy (the Writing Developmental Continuum for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net) that does not make visible the distinctive features of her students' performance in Writing. When Minh discussed Lan's performance in Writing under Assessing the Children's Achievements, she pointed out features like *'past tense, plurals'* and *'the cultural backgrounds that the children are coming from'* are not taken into account in Phase B, Experimental Writing on the Continuum. This means that a child like Lan may reach Phase B and will not be 'caught' in the Net and thus teachers will not be alerted to the fact that she needs intervention to progress to the next Phase where features like *'past tense, plurals'* come up.

Minh believes however that these features need *'to be made explicit'*, that *'they need to be taught to these children'*. Minh feels that mainstream teachers will *'just assume that the children know all this and let mistakes happen'*. This is tied to her concern that the funding for non new-arrival students only goes to the end of Year 2 and that an ESL child who is not 'caught' may be assumed to be able to progress to Phase C without any further ESL teaching support.

Minh feels that the Year 2 Diagnostic Net is slowly affecting her Bilingual Program. Although the validation process happens only in Year 2, as soon as the children begin at school in year one they are plotted on the Net Continuum, as to whether they can recognise sounds, sight words etc. Minh finds that her attention is now focused more on English literacy than on Vietnamese because they are not validated in Vietnamese.

> *If the children don't pass the test, the parents and the teachers are going to turn around and say, 'Your children, what have you been doing with them'. I have to be accountable and feel the pressure from the moment they arrive.*

Minh feels that when the children arrive they need a great deal of support to catch up to their peers in English. *'From the first day they set foot into school I have to really try to somehow bring the children up to that level'.*

When asked how that makes her feel as a bilingual teacher, Minh replies that the Year 2 Diagnostic Net pressure makes her feel that *'Vietnamese is not important. It takes a back seat to the English language'.* Minh explains that the change to her teaching has happened slowly. There was no exact point at which she thought.

> *'Now I will focus more on English'. I'm not aware of it and now I think I see myself sort of slowly, slowly heading that way with all the performance standards and tests that are coming in.*

Minh explains that since she has moved to using Vietnamese to teach writing in English, she now puts emphasis on Vietnamese oracy. *'In my class I try to use it all the time and I do encourage my children to do so, so at least they can retain the oral literacy in their language so they can communicate with their parents'.* She is now only getting the children to read and write in Vietnamese in the initial stages. She feels she must move the literacy part to *'so they can read the books for the tests and they can write to pass the Net'.* Minh explains the process:

> *I get them to a stage where they can transfer that knowledge into English. For example when they first come to Year 1, I do the alphabet in Vietnamese. For example, B is the same, so we talk about the things starting with B in Vietnamese, so they have that concept. Then I have to quickly transfer that to English. They learn to write that but maybe not practise writing all the B words in Vietnamese. It is the same with rhyming words. We would do it orally in Vietnamese. I will write it for them and they will see how it looks. The ending looks the same but there is no time to get them to write that, because now we have to write it in English - cat, bat, hat - so they practise writing that. They do get some time to practise their Vietnamese writing but it's not as important as the English I'm afraid. There's a big limit on the time that I have with them.*

Minh reiterates again how short the bilingual program is. It is only funded until the end of Year 2 and now during Year 2 the bilingual program is taking a focus towards supporting students with the Year 2 Diagnostic Net in English, rather than developing Vietnamese.

> *Just to get them to pass the Net. The parents are not going to worry about their children, in four years time. They want their child in Year 1 to do well, and Year 2 to do well and the teachers too, you see.*

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

The only ESL Scale that Minh is using is the 1996 version of the Qld. Draft ESL Proficiency Scale (see Sample 4) This scale has five levels and covers all school contexts, and teachers were asked to use it to give a view of the support needs of the ESL students. It was not intended by the Department to be used as an

Assessment Framework, although teacher have to make judgements about the children's performance to place them on a single level. Minh feels that the phrasing in the document is too general and does not tell you anything about the children which would assist her in making judgements. She wonders what phrases like 'cognitively demanding' are intended to mean in her junior primary context, *'How cognitively demanding'?* Minh states that *'either the National ESL Scales or the Bandscales would have been more appropriate'.* She feels that the scale is *'an administrative thing, we don't really assess our children on this proficiency level'.*

Minh discusses Hieu as an example of the difficulties she has in giving her students a single level on the Proficiency Scale. Hieu has a much lower level in writing than in reading listening and speaking.

> *She's got top mark for reading, speaking is quite good, she's just a quiet girl. Listening excellent, but then writing she will be quite low. But when you divide a number into four or so you can't tell. She's actually quite poor in her writing skill. So as I said the scale is quite useless for assessing children for the level they're at and the support that you need to given them. It's just a number, that's all. Nothing else.*

Minh is familiar with the National ESL Scales. Lachlan St was one of the schools involved in the validation some years ago. She found them quite useful for reporting, though they didn't *'really tell me about the students' progress and their learning'.* Minh found phrases from the descriptors in the scales useful, and although she does not use the framework as a scale, she has copied out some of the descriptors and uses them in her reports.

Minh has had professional development on the NLLIA Scales and states that she could use them because they *'actually go through step by step'.* However, the Region is not using them so she has not taken them up.

Minh would like something compatible with the Reading and Writing Continua used for the Year 2 Diagnostic Net, something that looked like the Continua, and thus had credibility with the mainstream teachers and the System, but that took account of the performance of her ESL students. If there was an ESL scale *'compatible with the Net Continuum'* she would use it.

> *I think ESL children need a separate scale to that one, sort of in a modified version then it would be consistent. They should have a package, like the Net package, to show how you assess ESL children.*

Since being in this project, she states that she has been thinking about *'accountability'.* She plans to adapt the Net Continuum for her bilingual course and will *'liquid paper out all the bits that don't translate into first language to make them more bilingual'.* She is planning in 1997 to do a reading and writing validation in Vietnamese using the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process. In the short term, she hopes to map the students development in Vietnamese on the adapted Reading and Writing Continua, using the mainstream teachers procedure of using a differently coloured highlighter each time the students are mapped:

> *A lot of what I have to say and how I evaluate them is informal. I can start highlighting bits and things now but looking at it from a Vietnamese first language perspective I think.*

She does, however, envisage knotty problems. If she was going to do the reading validation in Vietnamese, she would have to translate the set text.

> *However sometimes a simple text in English can be a very complicated text in Vietnamese. If a text is specifically designed and is not the same as the text in English, how do I know that the text is the standard one for that peer level. It needs to be consistent, so there are all these problems.*

Despite Minh's wish for an ESL scale compatible with the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Continuum and her plans to adapt the 'Net' Continua for her Bilingual Program, she has grave reservations about the whole Year 2 Diagnostic Net Process

> *I think it gives kids a label and that's what I don't like about it. I think all the energy is focused on the wrong aspect.*

Minh points out that fifty percent of the children 'caught' in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net at Lachlan St School were ESL. Although they became eligible for intervention, Minh doubted that the Support-a-Reader program was an appropriate measure. She believes that it was a mainstream intervention not geared to ESL '*mistakes*'. Minh states that the intervention focused on '*quick ways to read in English, whereas they can't even read in their first language. It makes it twice as hard doesn't it'?* She feels that the children would probably benefit more if the intervention money went into the first language program, though the intervention has helped about half of her students who were 'caught' in the Net. When asked whether the children would be better without the process altogether, she said:

> *They will develop their skills sooner or later. They need time. Just give them some time.*

Minh sums up her feeling that the focus of intervention should be on building up the first language to ensure long term development in literacy:

> *The children need to be strong at least in their own language so they can transfer that knowledge. As they move up the concepts become more abstract and their language has to be really good, regardless of what language it is. They must be strong in one language to be able to fully comprehend all the concepts that they're going to come across.*

Minh feels that this is particularly important now that the children seem to her to be spending so little time with their parents. She feels they need oral development in Vietnamese:

> *Their English can only be as good as their Vietnamese and if their Vietnamese is poor their English is not going to be much better.*

Minh sums up her fears about the long term effects of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. She feels that the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process is premature, that it pushes the children to read and write in English too early. She believes that if the focus is not on the development of first language concepts and skills, the children may be left without a firm base for later progress in literacy when the concepts become more abstract.

> *Even if the children do manage to pass the Net, I feel, in a few years' time as they move up further in the upper primary to Years 5, 6 and 7, that will be where the trouble will begin to surface. By then it's too late for anyone to do anything. They haven't got a leg to stand on. Sooner or later they're going to fall, because they can't even walk properly yet. They have learnt to run before they could walk.*

Minh is an experienced ESL teacher running a bilingual program, who is not using a formal ESL assessment framework. When she assesses her students, however, she appears to be using an informal, internalised 'ESL' framework, and in doing so has been shown to give consideration to where her students fall on the State's framework and what the implications of this are for further ESL teaching intervention to meet their needs. Minh finds that the Assessment Framework for English literacy and accompanying validation process being used in her State are affecting her Bilingual Program in ways that cause her concern. In an effort to support the Year 2 children with the validation process, she finds that, at least in terms of reading and writing, she is slowly changing the aim of the Year 2 Bilingual Program from first language maintenance and development to English

literacy support. She is concerned about the long-term effects of this on her students and has endeavoured to maintain an emphasis on the development of oracy in Vietnamese. She is also planning to develop an additional framework, compatible with the State framework, to assess and report on the progress of her children as bilingual students.