Language, literacy and learning: modelling integration and reflective practices in preservice teacher education[1]

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Abstract

This paper reports on the attempts to integrate literacy strategies across several strands (Pedagogy, Curriculum Studies and Study of Teaching) of a new Graduate Diploma of Education for preservice secondary school teachers. This paper focuses on the literacy demands the program placed on English majors, and the outcomes demonstrated by them throughout the one-year program. At the time that these data were collected, the writer was the inaugural Director of Teaching for the whole program, but with specific responsibility for Study of Teaching and English Curriculum Studies. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

The project reported here was an investigation into the design and delivery of a secondary school preservice teacher education program in which modelling and integration of language and literacy practices across the program were intended to assist preservice teachers to develop and implement language and literacy strategies in the classroom. The first section of the paper offers an overview of the ways in which aspects of literacy studies were integrated across the program; the second part of the paper focus on the ways in which a sample of the English majors critically reviewed theory and practice in the course, reflecting especially on their own practices, and the theories emerging from them. The data presented in this paper are qualitat-

ive, and given the naturalistic setting, have not been controlled for influences outside the course. In fact, the preservice teachers were urged to draw on any experience which contributed to their emerging construction as teachers.

1. Background

1.1. Context

This project was located in a one-year end-on program for preservice secondary school teachers who had previously gained a Bachelors degree in a relevant area of study. Students entering the program were, for the most part, monolingual mother tongue speakers of English. The medium of instruction in the program was English. One consequence of this set of circumstances was that for most students, their language was transparent and 'natural'; they were not particularly aware of its linguistic structures, its grammatical conventions, or of the

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discourses in which they operated as reasonably sophisticated users of English. Despite this, they would encounter students in their classrooms during school experience who were not mother-tongue English speakers, who might be unfamiliar with some of the social discourses the preservice teachers drew upon, and who were novices in some of the subject specialist discourses the preservice teachers took for granted (Gee, 1992).

The Graduate Diploma of Education (Grad. Dip. Ed.) had existed for 20 years as an uneasy graft of curriculum studies and teaching practice on to a preexisting foundations model of teacher education, which was argued to be increasingly inadequate as preparation for teachers. In the substantially reconstructed program, in which school experience was promoted as the dominant feature, reflective teaching practices and integration across strands were valorised as key principles through which competent practitioners operating from a firm theoretical base were to be produced (see Fig. 1).

Theoretically, the course drew from a number of sources. The notion that learning is a recursive practice and that students need to revisit concepts
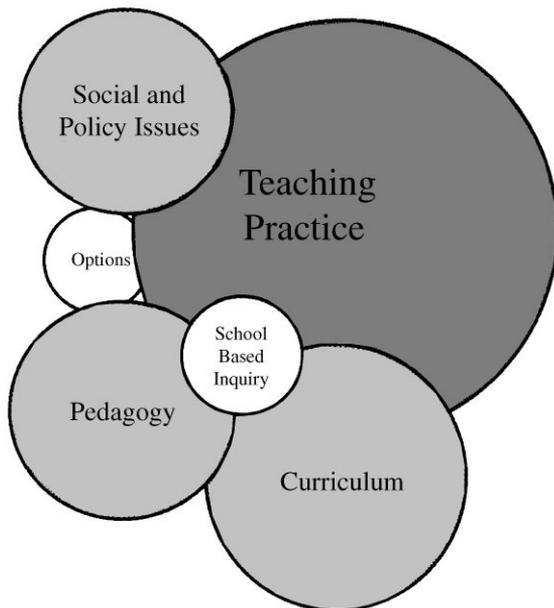

Fig. 1. Course structure of Graduate Diploma in Education. (Graduate School of Education, 1996).

in different contexts can be traced to Bruner's spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1968). Theories of critically reflective practice as developed in *Inquiry Oriented Approaches to Teacher Education* (Bullough & Gitlin, 1991) shaped decisions about Pedagogy and School-based Inquiry strands. Westerman's (1991) study of expert-novice teachers suggested that integration across components or strands of the program, as well as modelling and deconstructing practices might enable preservice teachers to move faster towards the "expert" end of the continuum. The ways in which integration and spiralling were built into the program structure are illustrated in Fig. 2.

1.2. Literacy

The principle of integration produced literacy as a multi-faceted component within the integrated structure. This article is part of a research project to identify the ways in which the concept of literacy is constructed within the Grad. Dip. Ed., the ways in which it is deployed in the various strands of the program, the literacy demands made on the preservice participants, and the extent to which they produce or reproduce literacy practices in the textual discourse of their assignments, and in the classroom practices of their school experiences. 'Literacy' as a concept and practice was produced across the strands, including the orientation week in various locations, as demonstrated in Fig. 2.

Because all of the preservice teachers were secondary school oriented, there was little attention to the acquisition of literacy. Instead emphasis was placed on supporting and enhancing literacies of adolescents, at whatever stage of development these might be. Thus, in Pedagogy, part of the challenge was to recognise political pressures to promote functional literacy (Scriven, 1984; Dawkins, 1991), and the apparent conflict that these demands posed for 'progressive' approaches to language, literacy and learning promoted by the work of Barnes (1976), Martin et al., (1974) and Britton (1970, 1975). Similarly, postgraduate students long comfortable in their subject specialist discourses found themselves struggling with the language of textbooks (Rosen, 1972) written in other people's

Orientation Week	Curriculum	Pedagogy	Study of Teaching
Dip Ed handbook as text. Teachers' Language Competency workshop. Teachers' Language Competency Test (TLCT).	Reflection on previous experience of English, language and learning. Input on language, learning and literacy in context of subject discourse and practices.	Lecture input on pedagogical theory and practice.	Support classes for preservice teachers who failed TLCT. Opportunities to re-sit TLCT
	Modelling teaching and learning strategies. Input on programming and lesson planning. Workshop activities leading to first assignment	Commencement of seminar program in which preservice teachers conduct 20 minute seminars on topics within the lecture strand. Requires assimilation of set readings, transformation into new verbal text with option of including video, OHT or print texts. Peer assessment.	Series of one-day visits to practice school; observation and small group or mini lesson teaching
	First assignment: 40 hr unit of work applying principles of language, literacy and learning in context of subject specialist curriculum	Observations of first teaching practice recorded in Pedagogy log: to be transformed in major pedagogy assignment linking theory and practice observations.	First teaching practice: preservice teachers expected to apply language learning and literacy principles in their classroom practices.
	Reflection on teaching practice; analysis of video tapes. Workshops on upper school curriculum.	Intensive lectures and workshops on language, literacy and learning.	
	Second assignment: Resource package demonstrating language, literacy and learning strategies in materials development	Minor assignments	Second teaching practice: apply language, learning and literacy principles in their classroom practices in both major and minor curriculum areas.
	Final assignment: analysis of language, literacy and learning practices in specialist subject area based on data collected during first or second teaching practice, synthesising information across strands, theory and practice.	Take home exam	

Fig. 2. Matrix showing planned literacy learning experiences across three strands of Graduate Diploma in Education.

subject discourses in an attempt to help them to understand a little of what it is like for school students who are sometimes expected to accommodate four or five subject discourse switches in a single day. In an effort to highlight the fact that students come to 'schooled literacies' from a variety of cultural backgrounds which produce cultural identities and values not necessarily congruent with those required for success in school, preservice teachers were required to address the issues raised by Ferdman (1990). These complexities were compounded by a consideration of the production of meaning through social discourses (Gee, 1994).

The preservice teachers had already had a highly salient personal experience of the complexities of language and literacy competencies required of teachers during orientation week. Passing a test of Teachers' Language Competency (TLCT) was a requirement for successful completion of the diploma of education for approximately ten years prior to the introduction of the new program. The test sampled preservice teachers' competence on the sorts of tasks in which teachers might engage daily; proofing and editing student work, examination papers or assessment tasks; reading and summarising the main ideas of a document and transforming them for a specific audience or purpose; writing letters or informational texts to parents, for example.

The high level of first-round failures on the test prompted the introduction of a workshop in orientation week in an attempt to eliminate failures produced by lack of familiarity with the test format or the types of tasks included. A second, but not necessarily subordinate objective was to raise the awareness of preservice teachers of the literacy requirements of schools as workplaces, and the roles of teachers as mentors and models of literacy practices. Preservice teachers who failed the first round were provided with opportunities to attend support classes, and opportunities to re-sit the test before being allowed to commence their second teaching practices. The purpose of the procedure, as Delpit (1988) suggests, was not to exclude preservice teachers who might not have had the necessary competencies when they were admitted to the course, but to make sure that they acquired them before completion, and in ways that support the learning of students for whom they will be responsible.

Although the test initially produced anxiety and hostility among students, course evaluations indicated that most students regarded it as a reasonable task to require of preservice teachers. From an institutional perspective, it raised some questions about the university's expectations for language competence. Some students, especially those who were initially unsuccessful claimed that it was the first time in any academic course that the university had been explicit about demonstration of literacy competencies. The University subsequently established a working party to enquire into appropriate levels of language competency in undergraduate courses, although it could not be claimed that the two things were causally linked.

The remainder of this paper is concerned with the ways in which a particular sub-group of preservice teachers, namely the English majors, developed as critically reflective practitioners, by focusing on the ways in which they came to terms with the demands of language, learning and literacy in their specialist curriculum domain.

2. English curriculum studies

2.1. Literacy and English education

The English Curriculum Studies (Major) course is designed for preservice teacher education students with an undergraduate degree in English/Language studies. The degree background is diverse, ranging from literature majors with different ideological orientations to texts, to majors in journalism, creative writing or drama and media studies. The secondary school curricula in which they will practice as teachers in Western Australia is such that any of these backgrounds can be regarded as an appropriate basis on which to build the necessary competencies for a teacher of secondary school English. In some respects the diversity is an advantage in the preservice class, because it allows all preservice teachers to feel that they have a particular expertise to contribute to the development of their fellow students, especially in peer

teaching and workshop activities. The course is front-loaded so that the majority of it takes place before the first school practice and ends before their second, except for one post-practice debriefing session.

2.1.1. Reading

Most preservice teachers have had no previous experience of Education studies, so that the discourse fields of curriculum, syllabus and pedagogy are new to them, as are the competing discourses of English education. Although the individual readings set for the unit vary in difficulty, some of them do constitute textual challenges for the students. The course starts with a consideration of the nature of English as a curriculum field; readings canvass the competing orientations of Growth Model English (Medway, 1990), Functional English (Scriven, 1984), critiques of competing orientations to English (O'Neill, 1995; Ball, Kenny & Gardiner, 1990) and the National Curriculum Statement (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). These orientations (see Fig. 3) are presented in class as residual, dominant and emergent factors in shaping English syllabus documents. The preservice teachers are encouraged to use them as a means of analysing documents and texts critically, and identifying tensions and competing demands within them. The students are not *required* to adopt any one of these orientations, although State mandated curricular tend to be located in an amalgam of Progressive, Functional and Culturally Critical orientations.

The demanding load of this reading is ameliorated by a process approach to the task, intended to model for the preservice teachers strategies for engaging students with new discourses, and for making considerable content information available for discussion. Secondary objectives are to develop and model co-operative teaching and learning strategies, and to build collegial responsibility for learning. Preservice teachers engage in a series of strategies ranging from individual reflective writing on the construction of 'English' in their school and university experiences, small group processes in which they are required to reach consensus about what counts as English, but also to identify those issues on which there is conflict, followed by

a brainstorm in which the consensus and conflicting items are arrayed. Set readings are assigned to random groups, to discuss (in class time, but also outside if they wish) and prepare a presentation on their particular reading for rotated groups, where each student is an expert on one of the readings. At other times during the course participants engage in joint planning, team teaching role play and simulation as a means of experiencing different teaching and learning strategies appropriate for secondary school students.

Articles on language and learning are chosen for their relation to students' own experiences as learners, and their application to the models of teaching and learning promoted within the course (Martin et al., 1974). For example, Rosen's article, 'The Language of Textbooks' (Rosen, 1972), is used to reflect on the recent task of reading texts in a new discourse area, and a consideration of how demands of this kind might be mediated for secondary school students. Halliday's text, 'Functions of Language', (Halliday, 1973) develops a model of language that is applied to a video tape of Year 8 students engaged in a Language project ('Language at 12', South Australian Film Corporation nd.), and to a video of Year 10 students ('Talking to Learn', WAVE) as they engage in a series of structured learning activities designed to promote language development as well as learning in a content area. Social, cultural and political issues about literacies are taken up through readings of Cook-Gumperz (1986), Luke (nd), Freebody (1993) and Babb (1993) and linked to the readings and practices offered in the Pedagogy strand (Strauss, 1973; Stuckey, 1991; Withers, 1989; Young, 1993).

The demands of the set readings are revisited in a series of spirals throughout the course, as participants tackle theories and practices of the required elements of the school curriculum (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening and Viewing). Students are required to produce a Rationale for their program assignments and for their curriculum resource packages, which identify and justify the orientation they take in each, and explicate the structure of the package, and the teaching and learning strategies adopted in each. The final assignment demands a synthesis of readings and learning, not merely from the English Curriculum

AUTHORITY
(STATE)

Functional English
(English as Skills)

Key values:
knowledge about language, standard forms and
grammar;
production of useful citizens

Role of teacher:
inculcation of knowledge about language;
demonstration of standard forms and uses; correction
of student products.

Role of learner:
assimilation of knowledge about language;
application and practice of standard forms and uses;
analysis and criticism of models.

Key figures:
M. Scriven, J. M. Williams, F. Christie, J. Martin, J.
Rothery.

SELF

INDIVIDUAL
Progressive English
(English as Growth)
Key values:
respect for the individual qualities of the learner;
child-centred, experiential, exploration of language
in use: production of personal meanings and growth
in language competence; production of self-
actualising individuals.
Role of teacher:
facilitation of language-rich experiences and
contexts; provision of real-life experiences;
collaboration and negotiation with the learner;
provision of appropriate resources and information
as the learner needs them.
Role of learner:
participation and engagement in learning
experiences; articulation of personal response; co-
operation and collaboration in learning experiences;
respect for responses and products of other learners;
link learning to real life experiences; modification of
personal, moral and social constructs.
Key figures:
J. Britton, D. Barnes, H. Rosen, J. Dixon, J. Moffett,
R Probst. L Rosenblatt. R. Schafer, G. Boomer, J.
Willinsky.

Cultural Heritage
(English as the Great Tradition)

Key values:
conservation and transmission of the canon of great
works of literature; production of keepers of the
cultural flame; perpetuation of universal human
themes and values.
Role of teacher:
 transmission of knowledge and values of the cultural
tradition; induction of students into the language of
literary criticism; inculcation of aesthetic values;
 reproduction of universal moral values

Role of learner:
assimilation of information about the literary tradition
and great work; interpretation and reproduction of the
'right response'; assimilation of literary critical
discourse; reproduction of moral and aesthetic
sensibility.

Key figures:
 F: R. Leavis, E. D. Hirsch, A. S. Bloom

NOT- SELF
COLLECTIVITY
Culturally Critical
(Radical English)
Key values:
critique of texts and readings; identification of values
and interests privileged in each; promotion of equity
and empowerment for minorities; production of
critical citizens.

Role of teacher:
 foreground construction of texts; make accessible or
visible cultural assumptions and stereotypes; make
available alternative readings; promote construction of
critical readings.

Role of learner:
analysis of construction of texts; production of
alternative/resistant readings; identification of
attitudes and values privileged by particular readings;
identification of marginalisation of groups or sub-
groups; production of alternative texts; critique of
moral and ethical positions.
Key figures:
T. Eagleton, C. Belsey, S. Ball. A. Kenny and D.
Gardiner, W. Green, Mellor, O'Neill and Patterson,
W. Corcoran, B. Moon

AUTHENTICITY

Fig. 3. Orientations to English (O'Neill, 1995a. Adapted from Ball, Kenny and Gardiner, 'Literacy, Politics and the Teaching of English'
in Goodson and Medway (1990) *Bringing English to Order*, Falmer Press, pp. 75–76).

unit, but across the strands of Pedagogy and Social and Policy Studies. Furthermore, the final product should be informed by the experience of two teaching practice placements in diverse schools.

2.1.2. Writing

Three major assessment tasks are required in the writing unit:

a program for a 20 hour unit of work for lower secondary school courses;
a resource package for a different unit of work;
a language and learning assignment chosen from a shortlist of topics or an individual project negotiated with the unit co-ordinator.

Each of the tasks is composite in nature, and makes a number of different demands on the preservice teachers' literacy competencies. The assessment tasks were designed with the objectives of developing subject specific pedagogical skills required of a teacher, inducting preservice teachers into the subject specific discourses of English Education and providing a vehicle for translation of theory into practice in a process informed by school experience in the Study of Teaching units. A detailed description of each of the tasks, together with the assessment criteria was handed out with the course outline and discussed on Day 1 of the class. Before students began each task, guidelines and assessment criteria were revisited and applied to workshopped exemplars, including video tapes where appropriate.

2.1.2.1. Program assignment. The program assignment includes several different kinds of text, which draw on a range of literacy competencies. The Rationale is a discursive text in which preservice teachers are expected to synthesise the course readings on language, learning and literacy with those on orientations to English and the demands of the specific syllabus statement in which their program is located. The Rationale must therefore also move from a level of abstract theorisation to the concrete explanations of how and why the preservice teacher's program is structured in the way that it is. One criterion for assessing this part of the task is the degree of congruence of the student's

descriptions and explanations with the program structure produced. Structurally, the text is a piece of discursive prose which can be located in Halliday's Representational function of language (Halliday, 1973).

Preservice teachers are expected to produce a set of General Aims, congruent with the syllabus statement in which the program is located, for the unit of work. If preservice teachers are working with the state schools syllabus, this will entail adapting the process objectives for the unit curriculum to accommodate the decisions they have made about the content of the unit. If they are located in a setting with an independent school syllabus statement, students may have to generate general aims for the unit of work. They are also required to use a tabular format illustrated in Fig. 4.

The literacy demands of this task are particularly complex for preservice teachers who have not previously been asked to produce a text of this kind. Each column has a different discursive/linguistic structure dictated by the function of the column. The functions of each column also demand that students decentre in order to produce the text. For example, the structure of general and specific instructional objectives means that the preservice teachers cannot think in terms of teacher intentionality, but must instead be able to represent their intentions as teachers in terms of observable student outcomes. The learning activities likewise are to be structured from the perspective of student activities, not teacher activities or intentions. At the point of production, the evaluation column is a predictive text, although it also operates as a reflective text once the preservice teacher has an opportunity to implement the program.

A program structure of this kind is a highly specific written genre, and not one that many preservice teachers will have encountered or produced previously. Consequently, a significant aspect of the task is to learn how the genre is constructed and operates, and to demonstrate that by producing a text in which the content is also judged as an exhibition of the preservice teacher's understanding of suitable course content for the unit of work or group of students for whom the unit is intended. The assessment proforma for this task is reproduced in Fig. 5.

General aims:
Briefly list cognitive, linguistic, affective, generic or process aims for the unit of work.

Learning outcomes	Learning activities	Resources	Assessment	Evaluation
State learning outcomes at the general and specific levels.	Describe learning activities from student centred perspective.	List all print and non-print resources required for each activity.	Identify formal and informal assessment procedures	Predict possible sticking points
Relate each specific objective to a general objective.	Sequence activities in logical order.	Indicate whether any are personal teacher or student resources. eg CDs,books, magazines.	Specify formal assessment tasks with criteria and weighting for each task.	Raise questions for later review.
There may be several specifies for each gerneral objective.	Link activities in cumulative learning sequences.	Specify and book specialist rooms eg library, drama centre.	Assessment tasks and criteria should link to learning outcome.	
All objectives should be ablel to be related to the learning activities and to the assessment procedures.	Ensure that all activities necessary to achieve objectives and to prepare for assessment tasks are included.	Specify any hardware required eg. OHP, slide or film projector, video equipment.	Assessment tasks should arise from learning activities ie. activities should have provided the necessary content, competencies and stages to complete assessment tasks.	
	Specify how activity will be conducted- whole class, small group,pairs, individual.			

Fig. 4. Five column program grid.

2.1.2.2. Curriculum resource package. The specifications for the curriculum resource package impose a set of literacy demands, which, while they have some overlap with the program assignment, also produce different demands in relation to function and audience. Preservice teachers have to make a number of decisions about their texts. For example, which audience are they addressing? Is the Rationale to be addressed to the teacher or to the school student? If the text is addressed to the student client, is it to be constructed as a one-sided conversation in print in which the student might be addressed as 'you' and his/her teacher referred to in the third person? The decisions made at this point will affect the mode of address of the remainder of the package, and the task is used to reinforce

Student Number as it appears on program

Unit Code   **Numerical Score**

Scale:

Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Fail	No Award
HD (6)	D (5)	C (4)	P (3)	U/S (2)	F (1)	N/A (0)

			HD	D	C	P	U/S	F	N/A
			6	5	4	3	2	1	0

1. Rationale
How well does the statement explain the orientation to English and to teaching, language and learning that is taken in the program?

2. Objectives
Are the objectives clearly stated as student learning outcomes? How well do they relate to the learning activities?

3. Sequence
How well do the planned activities develop into a coherent topic?

4. Continuity
How well does the 20 hour segment develop cumulative learning, identify what is to be covered, how it will be taught, and how the students' learning will be evaluated?

5. Balance
How well are the various aspects of the unit covered and integrated in the overview?

6. Interest
How well do you think this program will engage the students' interests at the designated year level?

7. Practicality
How effective do you find this as a professional teaching document?

8. Assessment
How well do the assessment criteria relate to the Objectives and the Learning activities? Are the criteria stated as student outcomes?

Fig. 5. English curriculum studies program evaluation.

the problems that their own students may experience in adopting a stance and developing a relationship with the expected audiences for their writing (Hodge, 1993).

The resource package must be fully self-contained. That is, all of the materials, information, activities and tasks to be undertaken are to be included in the package. The writer, in preparing the package has to differentiate between the functions of various aspects of the text, and therefore the language in which the materials, activities and tasks are presented. The issue of prescription in the text must also be considered. Unless the package is intended to be teacher and student proof, optional activities, or alternatives should be signalled to allow teachers and students some flexibility in selecting those elements of the package which suit individual learning styles or levels of competence. The writer also engages in role exchange; that is, students have to try to put themselves in the place of teachers and students trying to work with this text, and consider what sense they will be able to make of it. As with the program assignment, preservice teachers were provided with a detailed description of the task, and the assessment criteria (not included here due to limitations of space), as well as opportunities to work through and critique sample strategies and published texts.

The difficulty preservice teachers experience in writing the two texts above offer some insight into the need to provide their own students with support in the 'how to' aspects of writing – how is the text constructed? which bits belong where? how do I address the audiences for this text? As well as addressing competencies they need to develop as teacher writers, the tasks help the preservice teachers to understand some of the difficulties that high school students experience in struggling with unfamiliar genres.

2.1.2.3. Language and learning report. This last assignment for the unit was designed to offer the opportunity for preservice teachers to integrate what they have learned about language, learning and literacy in the various strands of their course. The choice of topics encourages preservice teachers to address an issue that has attracted their attention for deeper, and more independent study than

the other assignments in the English major, which are both more prescribed and circumscribed in their nature. Detailed information about what might be included was provided for each topic, as well as the statement below:

The general criteria for each of these tasks will be

- how well you have met the guidelines for the assignment you have chosen,
- the extent to which you have synthesised information from cognate fields (Pedagogy, Social and Policy Issues, elective units),
- integration of material from your school experience where relevant,
- demonstration of relevant theoretical knowledge.

The way in which you structure and present the assignment will be dictated to a large extent by the demands of the topic you have chosen. (Extracted from Assessment Guidelines, Curriculum Studies 470)

The degree of choice (including an option to negotiate a topic of their own) also imposes a demand for autonomy, as the preservice teachers are expected to locate and review literature appropriate to the task they have set themselves. For some, the task entails presentation of research data such as interviews, transcripts from their video tape, or tabular presentation of data collected on school students' language performance, and draws on competencies developed during the first semester in the school-based inquiry strand. The form of this assignment is in some respects a more conventional academic text. Preservice teachers are expected to produce a formal essay or research report, but they have to make decisions about the form and structure of the text, selection of data, ways in which the information can best be presented to argue the case, and so on.

From this description, it is argued that the English Curriculum course makes a substantial demand on the literacy competencies of preservice teachers in reading, writing and performance. The teaching strategies adopted in the unit model different approaches to teaching and learning, promote collaborative and cooperative teaching and learning practices, and require preservice teachers to

reflect on their previous learning experiences as well as those engaged with during the course.

3. Outcomes for English preservice teachers

3.1. Evaluation procedures

Nineteen English majors commenced the program. One withdrew from the course after completion of the program assignment; the remainder completed the course successfully. Data collected in this project included samples of each of the assessment tasks, and samples of video-taped lessons. The English Curriculum majors exhibited the capacities to:

- pay closer attention to new words as they are encountered (the 'jargon' or subject specialist discourse of English literary criticism);
- reflect and critique their own previously held positions on literacy;
- critique their preferred orientation to English on the basis of its treatment of literacy;
- apply teaching and learning strategies modelled on campus;
- critique their own teaching practices from a theoretical perspective.

The data presented below were excerpted (with permission) from course assignments in an attempt to show ways in which preservice teachers' thinking changed over the period of the course, the ways in which they applied theory to review of their own practices, and conceptualised and applied this in their planning and practice. In order to show the development of the participants' thinking processes, only a small sample of students (5) could be included. They were chosen to represent the range of thinking across tasks, rather than because of excellence as demonstrated by final grades.

3.2. Representative assignment data

3.2.1. Subject specialist discourse

Extracts from the video-taped lessons showed ways in which the preservice teachers attempted to induct students into subject specialist discourses and practices. Rosemary's video-tape included a section where she introduced the term 'theme' to students, and set them a task in which the chart building exercise would help them to develop an operational definition and apply it to the text with which they were working.

Ros: We'll read the story, 'The Copy', work on the themes in 'The Copy', and then hopefully that will help you to develop themes in your *own* short story. (*Overview of sequence of lessons, showing how this lesson fitted into the work for the week*).
Now, your task this morning is to work out exactly what the author is trying to say to you through that story. He may not be just trying to say *one* particular thing … I'm going to give you a worksheet that has ten options on it that the author might be trying to say to you through the story. I want you people to work out which of the themes you think are correct, and then write fifty or so words about why you think they're correct. When you do that, I want you to refer to the story and give me some examples in the story - some quotes, perhaps something the character said, that explains why you think that theme is relevant. So, in pairs - you'll be doing all of this work in pairs (*Organises students so that they will have someone to work with; gives out worksheet*). I'm going to give you about 20 minutes, and then we'll have a look and see what you've come up with … (*Students start work*) Does anyone not understand what they're supposed to be doing? Brett? *(Moves to Brett).*Brett, with the themes on this page - take the first one, 'Even unlikely people have been oppressed at times'. Do you think that is a theme of the story?

Brett: No.

Ros: No. So if you don't think it is a theme of the story, tell me why, and if you think it is, explain why you think it is, using quotes from the story. So go back into your story,

and if you think that is, go back and find a couple of lines that tell you in the story that's part of the theme? Matt?

In designing this teaching and learning strategy, Rosemary was employing techniques modelled on campus. Supplying theme statements was intended to help students develop an operational definition of the relatively abstract concept of 'theme'; the chart building exercise would help them locate instances where the theme seemed to be played out in the text, and provide a scaffold for recording their ideas for later class discussion. The practice of locating specific examples or quotations to illustrate this was developing students' competence with the practices and discourses of a particular form of textual analysis in English studies. The decision to have students work in pairs was another instance of encouraging students to test and verify their ideas in a low-risk peer situation, before presenting them to the larger audience of the whole class.

Xan, working with a group of older students, attempted to examine the use of social stereotypes, especially those related to gender construction, in game shows through a role-playing exercise.

Xan: Now, the thing we are going to do today is have a bit of a go at a few rounds of Wheel of Fortune (*popular Australian TV game show*). As I said, I've left my big bag of prizes at home; I'm very frustrated with myself about that. But let's try it differently. Let's try having one of the male students come out and perform the task of turning things around on the board...taking Adriana Xenides' (*female host*) role (*lots of class response, suggestions of names; one male student volunteers*). And, of course, who else do we need to make this show really work? Baby John Burgess! (*male host; female student volunteers*). Now, you arrange yourselves. How do you think it will work? Maybe you can stand up the front, facing the audience... Now who else do we need?

Studs: Three contestants.

Xan: Three contestants. Who's going to be those contestants? Carlo? Katie Finch (*Nominated by students*). And... Brett! Now where will the contestants be seated, I wonder?

Studs: Behind the desk?

       In the chairs.

Xan: Well, if we're going to have the wheel here? How about we have the contestants here? (*Students move around, arranging furniture*).

By engaging the students in identifying and allocating roles, thinking about the arrangement of the set, moving themselves around, Xan was inviting the students to recognise the elements of the genre of game shows, and how they operated. The next phase of the lesson took the students into role, asking them to produce dialogue, which either reproduced or ran counter to the gendered stereotypes they perceived to be presented on television.

Xan: If you'd just like to start off with some idle banter, so that we generate some dialogue that runs along stereotypical lines. You're a middle-aged woman from the suburbs, ... you can be a surfie, a young surfie boy from Sorrento (*beach suburb*). Carlo, what would you like to be (*student suggestion inaudible*) OK, you can be a professor.

       I'd like to see if we can improvise some dialogue. What kinds of things would we be saying if we were running along stereotyped lines with these characters? What sort of things might you .... I mean you might like to reverse it and say some things that might be a bit out of the ordinary from what we might expect from this middle-aged woman, this surfie and this professor. OK you get that going, and I'll get the question cards. Nice and loud so everyone can hear you.
       (*Female student in role as male host starts out with introductions and questions of each contestant, relating to their job, what they do in their job, relative rates of pay and so on*).

As the students gained confidence, they began to produce the kind of dialogue that occurs in the introductions and between the stages of the game shows. The debriefing after the role play was intended to identify the sorts of stereotypes the students employed, and what social knowledge or discourses they drew upon to produce them. Xan's analysis of this lesson is referred to later in this paper.

3.2.2. Critique of previously held positions on literacy

At the beginning of the course, Rosemary, in her initial piece of reflective writing about what she thought English might or should be, said:

> What English should be doing is backing up its literary approach with background and instruction in grammar, reading skills (personal and public) and other components that are relevant and useful in life.

Four months later, after engaging in course reading on orientations to English, theories of language, literacy and learning, and participating in peer group teaching and learning strategies, Rosemary modified her previous view in her Rationale for the program assignment:

> I have had to redefine literacy as follows: literacy is the state in which the individual has the ability to read, write and comprehend well enough to function adequately within society.

At the end of her course, Rosemary saw literacy in the context of the discourse structures of English as a secondary school subject:

> In order to graduate and be eligible for university entrance, it is a state literacy requirement that students must either study English (in a variety of contexts) or English Literature in their final years of secondary schooling. Each student must achieve a passing grade in 'English' in order to graduate from secondary schooling, and therefore be seen as 'literate' by contemporary society. However, these rules put at a disadvantage those students who have not, or cannot, take on board a discourse structure that is deeply ingrained in the field of English study.

The shifts in Rosemary's position suggest that the combination of the on-campus readings and activities, combined with the effect of her school practice experience (one of which was in a low socio-economic community), have led her to look beyond the functional position she first held, and to become aware of the political and social effects of some the institutionalised literacy practices of schooling.

3.2.3. Critique of preferred orientation to English

The teaching and learning strategies and the assessment tasks in the program provided opportunities for students to reflect upon and review their location in the competing orientations to English in the context of translating their theories into practice through programming and resource development tasks. Four months into the program, Xan wrote in her Rationale:

> Although I naturally gravitate towards the Cultural Critique and Personal Growth (Progressive English) models, I also find elements of Scriven's argument for Functional English very appealing. I accept that the reality of mainstream culture is that people are judged according to their standard of literacy, and that this consequently affects their opportunities (for employment, and further education and training and other social institutions) for full participation in the culture. My aim in teaching is to empower students so that they may reach their full potential. To this end, I see Functional and Cultural Critique models in co-operation.

Rosemary pondered the problematic relationships between progressive and functional orientations to English as means of promoting literacy:

> With a purely Progressive model, literacy would ideally be a product of osmosis - that is, as the learner expresses him/herself, participating in learning experiences that lead towards his/her self-actualisation, literacy becomes an integral part of the process. It is not a skill that is taught separately from English as experience, it is precisely the 'English as experience' that contains Functional elements … (*an extended critique of Progressive English followed*).

There is much that is good in the progressive model, but I find that it must be influenced by other streams of thought to be functional for teaching and learning. I find great value, for example in drawing upon literature that has been studied by generations before. This may be seen as a regression to Leavisite theory, but it is at this point that the theories may combine and be mutually beneficial to the learner.

3.2.4. Critique own teaching practices from theoretical perspective

The critically reflective orientation of the Grad. Dip. program was deployed differently in the component strands. In the Pedagogy strand, preservice teachers were required to keep a log of their observations and experiences during their first professional placement, and to attempt to relate theories and research encountered on campus to their experiences in schools to bridge the theory–practice gap. The language and learning assignment in the curriculum strand offered them the option of analysing a video-tape of their own teaching, beginning with an analysis based on Halliday's functions of language, but drawing on information from any aspect of the course as a whole. Xan, in reviewing her video-tape from which extracts were quoted earlier, saw it in a very different light four months after she had taught the lesson. Taking what she identified as a poststructuralist stance, Xan began with an analysis of her opening remarks:

> OK, shall we begin? Sarah's up the back there taping; you're not taping yet are you? Oh good. OK, we're going to be like the model class. I've got to take this back to uni and get a mark for it.

Xan interrogated her language in the following ways:

> What sort of function is the language serving in this example? In acknowledging that I am a student myself, and that I was under assessment, a degree of solidarity and informality is established with the students .... My comments were made 'off the record' and not intended to be recorded.

> Seen from that perspective it is fairly innocent, but there is also an undercurrent of regulatory

language. I was telling the students how they should behave, for purposes of my own benefit ('I've got to take this back to uni and get a mark for it'). This part of the remark was not strictly true, and was operating more as a means of coercive control. There seem to be competing discourses at play here. In the first instance, I am inviting the students into my world, of my experience as a student; it is a personal exchange, based on the relationship I had built up with them, an unstated trust that they would display good behaviour because they wanted me to do well. Although I was shocked and embarrassed to find this exchange on the tape, as it was said unconsciously, it could be assumed that I would not have made that linguistic choice in a different situation – if, for example, my mentor teacher was in the room, or if I was addressing a class with whom I did not have a good working relationship.

Xan then moved into a critique of the teaching and learning strategies she employed with the class, relating her practices to those modelled on campus.

> The lesson (proper) begins with a question to the class. It makes a reference to a popular game show and asks the class whether they thought that the show would retain its popularity if the host and hostess were to switch roles. The question attempted to frame the topic of gender stereotyping within a context that was familiar to the students. This is consistent with several points included in *Literacy and Learning Principles* (Bickmore-Brand, 1995). She states the importance of providing students with a 'real world' context for abstract concepts, and of activating the knowledge, skills, values and cultural base of the learner.

> Within the principles of a pedagogy that values social justice, however, considering the 'cultural base of the learner' is essential. The strategy that I was using with the question is potentially constructive. It becomes problematised, however, by the attempt to activate knowledge that is part of the popular culture. Treating the class as an homogenous group who share an identical social base has the potential to marginalise those

students whose cultural backgrounds and religious values mean that they do not participate equally in (particular versions of) mainstream culture. Although it might be safe to assume that most of the class had seen at least one episode of the show referred to, teachers have a responsibility *not* to assume.

The second example selected focused on the way in which Xan employed a modelling strategy. She had written on the board a paragraph from a student's essay, which demonstrated some common points of difficulty, and was attempting to provide feedback and to promote students' skills of critical self-evaluation. Xan's commentary evaluated it in the following ways:

> This strategy was potentially positive in utilising the strategy of modelling. Bickmore-Brand identifies ways in which teachers can apply this principle by using peers to demonstrate, providing exemplars for students and by providing opportunities for students to re-visit and re-work examples and processes. While the example approximates the modelling principle, my own use of language rendered it less effective. The heuristic function of the language was immediately countered by a representational use. I asked the question, but then immediately answered it myself. Students were not given any time to think about the example, or discover possibilities by talking about it with their peers in a low-risk situation. Twenty-five students *thinking* and learning by talking through a problem is more productive than having one student or the teacher provide the 'right' answer. This is particularly important in the development of meta-cognitive skills. This shift from heuristic to representational language was an overwhelming trend throughout the lesson … Whilst students were offered the responsibility for decision-making, my hesitancy in waiting long enough after asking the questions meant that the opportunity to play an active role was taken away from them. As a consequence, questions became interpreted as rhetorical and students became lazy/disempowered, knowing that the answers would eventually be supplied by the teacher.

The last example from Xan's lesson was one in which she reflected critically on her differential treatment of student responses, in a way which led her to challenge an orientation to English that she had thought to be inclusive. The class had been discussing an advertisement for make-up, and Xan took the opportunity to tie it in to a previous discussion of negative stereotyping:

Xan: *What was one of the things that we identified as an ingredient for negative stereotyping? Why does negative stereotyping occur?*

Stud: *Because we feel threatened by that group of people and we don't understand them.*

Xan: *That's exactly right. That's a really good answer.*

She contrasted this response with a response she made to another student, who had suggested that there was violence towards transgendered people 'because it was morally wrong':

> *That it's not morally correct. Ok that's one way of looking at it.... but it's really got more to do with convention than anything else. But I accept your position and that's for you people to think about, the only point that I wanted to make, and it's the one that Kelly raised, is that we have to think about gender stereotyping critically.*

I see competing discourses at work here. My own ideology in relation to gender and sexuality is informed by post-structuralist theory that debunks essentialist positions about sex and gender. The task that we were undertaking in deconstructing the advertisement clearly disrupted the students' own values and attitudes. It was a case of the social discourses of feminism and Catholicism in conflict. Whilst this could be seen positively in some ways, it also brings to light a startling irony.

Culturally critical reading practices can be rationalised on the grounds of equity, but because the students were constructed within the social discourse of Catholicism, this reading practice marginalised them. The discourse of cultural criticism, like any other, regulates the form of an acceptable utterance, and constrains its

content. Those who are operating outside of that discourse were disempowered.

This emphasises the need to develop metacognitive and critical literacy skills in a way that does not seek to judge students for their own values, and in ways which give all students the opportunity to participate.

Xan's final judgement of her lesson was salutary:

The effect of this discourse analysis has been profound. While it is easy to be critical of someone else's methodology, it is evidently more constructive to be critical of one's own. Within the space of a few weeks my view of the lesson under analysis has shifted from considering it as successful, to observing covert forms of domination, which were inimical to learning.

Without the requirement to reflect critically on her practice in the light of theoretical readings, Xan may not have perceived her ideological position to be coercive, or to constrain students' opportunities to learn.

Peter used the analysis of his video-taped lesson to reflect on the extent to which the functions of language used in the lesson impeded or promoted achievement of his objectives. The lesson, at the end of the teaching practice block, was poetry appreciation with Year 9 students (14 years) in an independent boys' school. The objectives were to enhance appreciation and interpretation of poetry through oral performances critiqued by the peer group. Peter, writing in third person, offered the following commentary on his language use:

It is obvious that the teacher spent more of the period talking than the students as a whole – almost 80% of the recorded speech – outside of the times when students were reciting the first poem (7 minutes), listening to the tape (6.75 minutes), or reading or critiquing for the eight minutes of their group time. Almost 46% of this language was instrumental or regulatory – getting the student to behave in certain ways. A significant portion of the instrumental language involved conveying information about the exercises involved in the lesson, so it may be noted that close to 60% or more of the teacher's language merely

involved instructions on exercises and getting the students to do them. Furthermore, a number of questions posed by the teacher were for the purpose of determining students' understanding of instructions. This equates to approximately 20 minutes spent purely in conveying instructions during a 55 minute lesson (36.36%)... The sheer amount of time spent on procedure detracts from the amount of time available to devote to the stated objectives of the lesson.

Although Peter was very critical of his language use in the lesson, he was able to identify instances where it seemed more productive:

... to note those usages of language that seemed more helpful in providing the example and interest that sustained the students' attention and appeared to contribute to their learning. These were the all too infrequent use of the imaginative and personal in the teacher's language. The personal language reflects the statement of the teacher that 'that's not the way in affected me at all ... suddenly it stops and I noticed that my heart went thoomp shooomp, slowed down'. This reflection of the teacher's own personal reaction demonstrates the actual intent of effective oral delivery – that it has impact on the listener.

Preceding and combining with this example of personal language is a context of imaginative language as the teacher recreates the scenario in *The Man from Snowy River* of the horses and riders racing down the hillsides. The teacher races his language along, imagining himself in the chase: "What does that do to you when he's racing along with the story? – The Man from Snowy River running down the hillside chasing all the horses, feel like their panting and raving. And then suddenly he slows it down. What happens to you?" The students identified with the excitement created and noted the change of pace in the recitation. This use of imaginative language in this context elicited the understanding of the usage of pace and was more effective than simple questioning on oral techniques or recital of lists of techniques.

It can be presumed that if the teacher had included more of this type of language in the lesson

and less of the formal presentational and instrumental, that the students would have been led further towards the stated objectives.

Peter also analysed the students' use of language both in whole class interactions, and in groups. He noted that in some cases, boys used 'silly' voices, but argued that this had the effect of working towards the objectives of the lesson:

> By using some outrageous voices, sometimes done in order to cover embarrassment, these students practised exactly what the teacher desires them to learn – to use their voices to engage others and to break out of boring, often monotonous oral patterns. This is what imaginative language (as the students pretend to characters' qualities and put themselves in the situation) serves so well.

> It is through the use of imaginative voices that many students were able to break out of the moulds in their recitations and practice many of the qualities discussed previously in class. Imaginative language allows the student to distance him or herself from the activity, so that he can say, "That is not me," and if necessary, "Hey, I'm cool, it was just pretend," while still performing the desired functions and learning in the classroom. There is no doubt that such performances by many students allowed themselves and others to recognise and learn about qualities of pace, pitch, volume and so forth that were intended to be promoted.

3.2.5. Critiquing resource materials

Kevin chose the option of analysing curriculum materials for consistency in their orientation to English, and for the ways in which the functions of language employed offered opportunities for student learning. He worked with a poetry text intended for students new to high school, and began with an analysis of the lack of differentiation between subject specialist and everyday use of terms such as 'imagery'. He then compared different orientations toward English taken within the text as possible sources for confusion:

> The first unit also clearly illustrates the authors' inclusion of two differing ideological emphases,

contained in the sections on understanding and writing poetry. The part of the text dealing with the appreciation of poetry has a much stronger heritage orientation. For example, in providing lists of 'things to look for', or 'the language of poetry', there is a strong message to students that there are features they should focus on. There is an explicit construction of what constitutes a 'proper' poem. However, the following section (p.7) on writing poems without doubt draws on a personal growth orientation. It requests students' 'feelings' on poetry, things that are 'familiar' to them, and the emotions they have when encountering poetry. It is this section which uses the least subject-specific terminology, indicating the authors' emphasis on the reader, not on the text.

> In another aspect of the subject-specific discourse, namely the ways of reading a poem, this text again does not provide any apparent support. This is, arguably an essential element in the discourse of poetry; it includes features such as the structuring of poems by rhythm or lines, rather than by conventional punctuation, or by the insertion of pauses and emphases in places which may not be obvious. Many of the poems in this text lack conventional punctuation, and cannot be read in the manner of 'ordinary' language. They require an understanding that is not available in everyday usage; they must be made transparent to students, in order for them to become familiar with the discourse. It is only much later in the text (p. 47) that these particular features are explained.

Kevin's concern with the ways in which the authors of the poetry text drew on discourses unfamiliar to the students re-appeared later in his analysis:

> As 'authorities' in the discourse, authors of literature texts may often refer to or draw upon, language or concepts in high-level literary discussion, which will often be unfamiliar to students. If the texts are not written in ways which make these concepts clear, it may reduce the students' ability to participate in and learn from the text … A consideration of the poems included

in the unit 'Generations' (pp. 10–12) shows examples of this. Some of the poems in this section make reference to concepts most frequently engaged in discussion of post-colonial literary study, and which cannot be safely assumed to be immediately clear to school students. For example in D. J. Enright's poem, there are the lines:

Then the people all take sides,

Like in a game, His father joins the Causcasian file,

His mother the Other.

Similarly, the unit, 'Home', (pp. 19–21) includes poems such as 'Greece' by ΠO Simply the name chosen by this prominent Australian feminist-ethnic poet is likely to cause consternation among some students. Some of the lines in the poem, like those in the Enright poem, refer to issues of identity or feminist theory, which do not form part of ordinary discourse. Both the poet's name and the images have connotations which relate to a highly specific use of language and meaning, which are highly contextualised. By not providing some introduction to this context for students, the authors render the discourse less transparent and hence less informative to readers.

These lines invoke references to concepts (such as identity and hybridity) that dominate post-colonial theory, and to the authors, these are apparently part of the discourse of literature. While there is no reason that not being directly familiar with these theoretical concepts will prevent students from engaging with the poems, nevertheless the selection of these poems for inclusion suggests that there could have been some attempt at making the concepts and issues more transparent.

3.2.6. A dissenting voice

Any tendency to complacency or self-congratulation at the program results illustrated in the examples above was tempered by a dissenting voice.

Kirsty, at the commencement of the program had identified herself with a progressive orientation to English:

> My approach to the subject of English teaching is a reflection of my views on the subject of English itself. I strongly believe that one of the most important objectives of the teaching of English should be to make students aware of the differences between people's lives, and in doing this, opening the door to self-discovery and journey into one's own self, and how they arrived at being who they are … The focus of the student doing the learning and discovering would also be the ideology influencing my teaching methods, rather than relying purely on performing memory tasks on information I give them. I believe my approach is closest to the Progressive English described in Ball, Kenny and Gardiner's 'English and Forms of Literacy' model. Appreciating and recognising individuality, creativity and self expression all enhance and encourage a person's confidence in themselves and to express themselves, and it is in these objectives that I would base my program, incorporating aspects of Functional English, such as grammar and punctuation, Cultural Heritage by covering and exploring how contexts influenced ideologies, constructs etc of traditional classics, and Cultural Criticism, as I would present ways of seeing texts in different class, race, sex, etc. positions.

Towards the end of the course, Kirsty took a more resistant attitude to the requirement to theorise her practices:

> It should not have surprised me, not after the seventeen years of English education I have experienced in Australia. In primary school, rote learning of the correct spelling of words and writing stories constituted English. Final drafts of smudged pencil hung high with pride in the classroom for everyone to see. In high school, I was introduced to grammar briefly. Every Thursday, Ms Wallace would shed her flamboyant role of entertainer and friend and assume a lifeless position behind a desk at the front of the class. "Do exercises 1–6 on page 45 of *Practical*

Words," she would murmur. The whispers of confusion bounced off the walls, "which book?" as hands flicked through the pages of W. Wright's, *A Basic Course in English*, or Sadler and Hayllar's *Practical Words*. My parents used to ask how my grammar lessons were going because all I ever told them about was the great books we were reading, the plays Ms Wallace was letting us write and the debates we had in class.

Kirsty made a perfunctory gesture towards discussing the various theoretical positions offered in the readings encountered throughout the year. It was not that she had not read them; they just did not appear to her to have a vital connection with her role as a teacher, or with the students with whom she expected to interact:

> My role as a teacher is to provide all students with some insight to different ways of viewing the world and to accompanying them on their discovery of these new perspectives, acting as a sort of tour guide – pointing out specific points and keeping them on track. All the theories in the world can't change the sort of teacher you will be; I will be the best I can be.

It might be possible to dismiss this as naivety, or the argument of an intuitive teacher who, like another great teacher I knew said that he did not want to subject the art of his teaching to a close instrumental scrutiny in case the dust fell off the butterfly's wings. Kirsty achieved the highest scores for teaching practice performance of all students in the English group, and developed some of the more imaginative and challenging resource materials, although she avoided explicating the theory behind their development, and resisted organising them into a tight structure, preferring a loose assemblage from which she could choose and modify material suited to the needs and interest of her students at the time. What was surprising about Kirsty's refusal was that she ignored the open invitation to develop a topic of her own choice, to negotiate what would count, and to be as creative in designing her own learning tasks as she had been for her students.

4. Conclusions

On the basis of the data presented above, it would seem that the course design had promoted integration of ideas and practices from different strands of the program, and had required students to engage in reflective practices in the theory–practice continuum. The data above demonstrate that students had developed capacities to:

- reflect on and critique their own previously held positions on literacy,
- critique their preferred orientation to English,
- apply teaching and learning strategies modelled on campus,
- critique their own teaching and learning practices from a theoretical perspective.

Although it was not an option widely selected by students, those who attempted the task demonstrated a capacity to read and critique resource materials from the perspective of orientations to English, subject specialist discourses and literacy practices.

So what does all this mean? An optimistic reading suggests that the course structure worked very well most of the time for most of the preservice teachers. It provided the opportunities for integration of most of the strands of the course, allowing participants to draw on and synthesise information from diverse sources. It encouraged them to reflect on their previous experience, and the experiences of the course, both in theoretical and practical terms in the processes of becoming English teachers, but left space for individual differences. It may have even set in place some practices which would contribute to their long term professional development. It would be useful to follow preservice teachers into employment to see how robust their conceptualisations of language, learning and literacy were, in the context of individual school cultures. A related question would be to identify the kinds of professional environments which support, consolidate and extend critically reflective analyses of their own professional practices, and the ways in which language, learning and literacy opportunities are provided within the schools in which they work.

An adverse reading might suggest that while Kirsty was obviously resistant to the requirements

of the course, some of her peers may simply have been 'talking the talk'. As experienced students they may simply have been adept at 'giving the teacher what she wants', although the independent and anonymous course evaluations did not support such a reading. Kirsty's data also reinforces the dangers of universalism – not all students will learn in the same ways from the same curriculum design. Preservice teachers who identified themselves with a progressive model of English seemed to have more difficulty than others in theorising their practices, although the data was insufficient to be conclusive on that score. What it does suggest is that as teacher educators and teachers, perhaps the greatest need is to build spaces and flexibility into course design so that all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential as teachers, even if that means resisting some of the external demands for promotion of particular kinds of literacy practices, and giving credence to other kinds of demonstration of skills and competencies.

The data presented in this paper showed the ways in which the participants developed their thinking at a global level. What it has attended to less well is the capacity of the preservice teachers to translate their concepts into concrete tasks for students. Since these data were collected, changes have been made to the State mandated secondary school curriculum framework within which these teachers now work. The new framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) is an outcomes based model of education in which literacy competencies included in the English Outcomes are described in eight levels across four strands and substrands, further defined by performance indicators. The open and creative task of the Curriculum Resource Package has therefore been changed to emphasise tighter and more direct links between the learning processes and activities planned for students, the literacy support strategies designed to support learning at each stage of the learning process, and the performance indicators to match. This year is the first trial of the new curriculum resource package. The shift in the curriculum framework towards functional literacy and competency based outcomes need not necessarily be seen as a constraint; teachers are free to choose any material suitable to assist their students in achieving the prescribed English outcomes. It remains to

be seen whether the new assessment tasks will assist preservice teachers to translate their global conceptualisations of language, literacy and learning into more focused support for students in their classrooms. An alternative possibility is that the new task may promote a more technicist approach to planning, which may act as a strait jacket for the preservice teachers, leading to an emphasis on developing sequences of strategies at the expense of engaging students with ideas. It will not be possible to answer this question without following the preservice teachers into their classrooms as novice teachers.

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