Submission 120
TE Inquiry (Exhs 37 to 47)

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

April 21, 2005

Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP
Chairman
Standing Committee on Education & Vocational Training
Inquiry into Teacher Education
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed our submission to this Standing Committee.

We have decided to take one area of education, namely Literacy instruction, as the launching pad to address matters relating to teacher education. Our belief is that unless we see the need to write vocational training concepts into teacher education we will not be properly equipping teachers for the critical task of teaching Australian students. We have developed a training program for teachers entitled WRAP – A Writing Approach to Reading (Integrated Systematic Literacy Instruction) which takes up the challenge of teaching teachers to **do** the task of literacy instruction in the classroom.

We could have taken this matter further and explored other subject areas but time constraints prevented this. We have, however, made reference to a previous inquiry, Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics: Main Report, where our School's approach to innovation in teaching was cited as having gained us outstanding results in science and technology.

We would be available to meet the Standing Committee at any time to further impress upon you this whole need to include training as a vital part of teacher education.

Yours sincerely

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ARE CHILDREN BEING TAUGHT TO READ IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY?

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STUDENT: SIR, WE HAVE TALKED A LOT ABOUT LITERACY... BUT ***HOW*** DO YOU TEACH A CHILD TO READ?

LECTURER: YES. THAT *IS* A GOOD QUESTION..... HOW ***DO*** YOU TEACH A CHILD TO READ?

UNIVERSITY LECTURE, FINAL SEMESTER OF TWO SEMESTERS OF LITERACY EDUCATION FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS, NOVEMBER 2000

THIS BEGS THE QUESTION...

ARE TEACHERS BEING TAUGHT HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN TO READ IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY?

PARLIAMENT *of* AUSTRALIA
HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training

Inquiry into Teacher Education

Terms of Reference

- **To inquire into and report on the scope, suitability, organisation, resourcing, and delivery of teacher training courses in Australia's public and private universities**

- **To examine the preparedness of graduates to meet the current and future demands of teaching in Australia's schools**

Specific Terms of Reference related to this submission

1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses. (in brief)

2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences. (in brief)

3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition. (in brief)

5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses (including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research. (Specifically linked to 7. for this submission)

7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:
   - i. teach literacy and numeracy; (Specific literacy focus for this submission)
   - ii. teach vocational education courses; (Focus in relation to i.)
   - iii. effectively manage classrooms; (in brief)
   - vi. deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities; (in relation to this submission)
   - vii. achieve accreditation; (in brief & in relation to VET)

8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers. (in relation to supporting pre-service and new teachers with teaching skills for developing practice)

9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training. (in relation to 7. i. in the area of Literacy needs for students in Primary and Secondary schools)

10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workplace. (in relation to Training Course development)

11. Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrators. (in relation to developing training for in-service teachers)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary p. 11
- Summary p. 17
- General Introduction p. 21
- Introduction to WRAP p. 31
- Appendices p. 49

📖 Appendix 1 p. 53
Redeemer Baptist School - Cited in Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future

📖 Appendix 2 p. 57
The Haberman Educational Foundation – Star Teaching Qualities

📖 Appendix 3 p. 71
Principles for Designing Cognitive Apprenticeship Environments

📖 Appendix 4 p. 77
Overview of Instructional Processes for Teaching Reading

📖 Appendix 5 p. 89
Knowledge and Skills for Teaching Reading: A Core Curriculum...

📖 Appendix 6 p. 95
Units of Competency

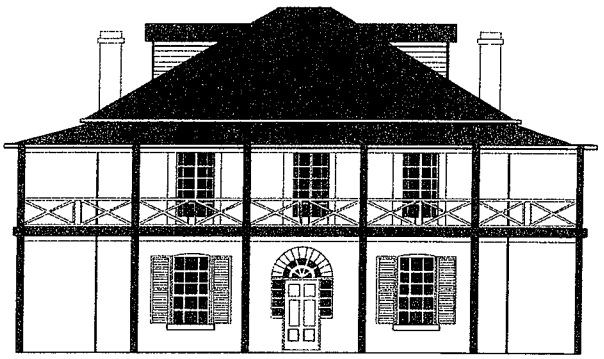
📖 Appendix 7 p. 151
Parent Information

📖 Appendix 8 p. 167
Training Course Reference Texts

📖 Appendix 9 p. 173
Course Texts

📖 Appendix 10 p. 177
Media Articles, and Transcripts

📖 Appendix 11 p. 185
Bibliography



The Hills Regional Skills Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We welcome this opportunity to present this submission to the Inquiry into Teacher Education. We do so on the basis that we have longitudinal experience in teaching literacy to students from the Kindergarten level through to their final years of schooling. These students have a mixed range of ability and included are students with special needs as well as those who have language backgrounds other than English. Our purpose for contributing this submission is that we have experience in developing training for teachers in Literacy Instruction.

The Hills Regional Skills Centre is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) registered by the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) to deliver a range of nationally accredited school and post-school courses from Certificate I to Certificate IV. It is through this training centre that we have developed these literacy training courses for teachers, and are seeking to have these courses accredited by VETAB and added to the scope of the RTO. The need for developing this training came out of a recognition within a number of schools that, whilst schools addressed the learning of English in holistic ways, there was a distinct deficit in teaching and learning processes for explicit, systematic and integrated instruction. The teachers and specialists who have given of their time for this course development have worked to develop an approach which demonstrates excellence in teaching practice, based on the areas identified in the research on the Psychology of Reading and Reading Development.

The Hills Regional Skills Centre is currently applying for VETAB accreditation of course work titled Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading – Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction – A course in Spelling, Writing and Reading Strategies. The course is at present in the final stages of the application process. The Hills Regional Skills Centre wishes to make this

course work available to the general public for a modest fee and to develop a strong network of support for the pre-service and graduate teachers, educational specialists, teachers' aides and parents who have been trained to use this program. The RTO will also develop trainers and assessors to operate in various locations throughout Australia which will be designated as "hubs". Schools and other institutions adjacent to a hub will be able to access local training delivered in a way to meet the particular needs of these hub locations.

We wish to put to the inquiry the following points:

1. **RESEARCH-BASED TEACHING PRACTICE**
   Research-based teaching practices need to be **defined** and instructional practices need to be **rehearsed** and **developed** by teachers under the guidance of experienced instructors.
   Specific Terms of Reference 7. i. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to: ...teach literacy... See also...
   Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses...and assess the extent to which it is informed by research...See also...
   Specific Terms of Reference 8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers. (in relation to supporting pre-service and new teachers with teaching skills for developing practice) ...See also...
   *Specific Terms of Reference*10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workplace. (in relation to Training Course development)

2. **A FULL RANGE OF LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES**
   Instructional practices need to include, and develop, **the full range of language experiences** so that teachers gain proficiency in teaching all foundational literacy sub-skills.
   Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses...and assess the extent to which it is informed by research...See also
   Specific Terms of Reference 9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training. (in relation to 7. i. in the area of Literacy needs for students in Primary and Secondary schools)

3. **INTEGRATED AND SYSTEMATIC LITERACY INSTRUCTION**
   Instruction needs to be both **integrated and systematic.** Integrated instruction is planned with the recognition that all **literacy sub-skills** be **taught with expertise** in the individual skill, but also with expertise in teaching the interactive composite of all of these sub-skills together. Secondly, instruction needs to be **systematic** so that teachers and their pupils can clearly follow the unfolding instruction and then integrate their learning. Teachers can make informed instructional decisions for individual pupils and their class as a whole.
   Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses...and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.
   Specific Terms of Reference 7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:
   i. teach literacy and numeracy; (Specific literacy focus for this submission)

4. A NEW GENERATION OF PHONICS

A new generation of phonics needs to be taught to address critical skill building in the now well researched and documented areas of phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge development. But, a fulsome array of sounds needs to be presented that accurately represents speech. Sound patterns matched up with letter patterns requires approximately 46 speech sounds and approximately 70 symbols to be experienced. The oft taught simple correlation of one sound for one letter is insufficient. Given that the full array of sound/symbol patterns are experienced, it is then critical that teachers explore with their pupils sound to symbol options and vice versa – symbol to sound options. In other words: auditory to visual processing and visual to auditory processing. Furthermore the new generation of phonics instruction should be synthetic, that is, express symbol/sound combinations in isolation, but should also immediately help pupils to experience the sound/symbol combinations, or analytic, within the sequence of real, whole words. This process is dependent on segmenting and blending words.

Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses...and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.

5. MULTISENSORY INSTRUCTION

Instruction needs to be multisensory so that all sensory systems are stimulated. Auditory, visual and tactile-kinaesthetic instruction will ensure that all learning modalities are addressed in the classroom and that each pupil's sensory system is developing for Spelling, Writing, and Reading.

Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses...and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.

Specific Terms of Reference 7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:

i. teach literacy and numeracy; (Specific literacy focus for this submission)

6. TRANSLATION FROM RESEARCH INTO LITERACY PRACTICE

The latest research needs to be **translated from theory into practical teaching techniques**. Australian schools need to be at the cutting edge in the use of teaching knowledge and strategies which have already been pioneered. These need to be incorporated into Australian teacher training opportunities - be that at the teachers' colleges and universities for undergraduates or provision of teacher's professional development for graduates. This instructional expertise will give teachers greater confidence to exercise professional judgement, to make appropriate instructional decisions when evaluating pupils' progress and to develop programs which meet students' literacy needs within their current curriculum.

Specific Terms of Reference 7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:

i. teach literacy and numeracy; (Specific literacy focus for this submission)
ii. teach vocational education courses; (Focus in relation to i.)
iii. effectively manage classrooms; (in brief)
vi. deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities; (in relation to this submission)
vii. achieve accreditation; (in brief & in relation to VET)

Specific Terms of Reference 8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers. (in relation to supporting pre-service and new teachers with teaching skills for developing practice)

7. METACOGNITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Metacognitive Learning Strategies is now a term that can be translated into one approach to teaching Writing and Reading through the development of the WRAP training course. This is an example of a private institution understanding current research and new internationally recognised techniques and translating both into practical Australian literacy instruction for Spelling, Written Expression and Comprehension teaching techniques.

Specific Terms of Reference 5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses (including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research. (Specifically linked to 7. for this submission)

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PUBLIC SUBMISSION FOR

INTEGRATED SYSTEMATIC LITERACY INSTRUCTION

WRAP

A Writing Approach to reading

Report compiled by Mrs Fiona Bailey
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SUMMARY

The training of teachers is of primary importance. The introduction to this submission outlines perceived problems with Teacher Training based on the experiences of one school. This focus specifically highlights the need for a recognition of an academic course of study with a practical teaching component outside of the practicum which provides training in skills for instruction for practice in classroom settings. One Teacher Selection program is highlighted as an example of the definition of skills for teacher selection. It is presented as a suggestion for aspects which could be a springboard for a local expression of teacher selection and training.

Defining skills for practice would be essential for teachers in training and expressing these is problematic. The focus of this submission is to bring to the attention of the committee the WRAP Project as one example of skills for Instruction defined through the VET training framework. Whilst the world of academia and the world of training appear to be antithetical, there is a need for recognising that workplace skills will often be a part of ongoing staff development, even of those who have come through an academic pathway. We wish to put forward WRAP as an example where skills for teaching Literacy have been defined as a program of training which also embraces the theory which supports the focus on Instruction.

WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading - Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction is a training course for parents, teachers and tutors wish to develop and support **foundational literacy skills** in Spelling, Writing and Reading for learners whose level of skills development lies within the compulsory years of schooling. It is currently being developed through The Hills Regional Skills Centre, a Registered Training Organisation, as **a course within the VET framework** through VETAB in NSW. Through endorsement, trainees would receive a nationally recognised qualification with appropriate standing in our Australian educational framework.

Its genesis lies with a committee of educators and specialists who have seen the need for **the availability of ongoing training here in Australia. These courses provide not only support in Systematic Phonemic Awareness for the teaching of Reading**, but continue to **develop Literacy Skills in Spelling and Writing for Reading**. It is based on the premise that if students focus on the sub-skills of Reading in Spelling and Writing Instruction, then Reading lessons focus on Comprehension and strategies which support students' development of skills for Comprehension. Those who have formed the Committee have worked within schools which have used this approach successfully for several years. We seek to develop **an Australian expression for Literacy teaching**, albeit one, which **provides choice, not just balance, for approaches to Literacy Instruction**.

The WRAP approach is based on the areas identified in recent national and international research about literacy teaching, particularly those seen to be effective in assisting students with reading difficulties. The training course has been written around the following sub-headings identified in the research.

- **Phonemic Awareness Instruction** - Explicit and systematic instruction in the manipulation of the sounds in language (phonemes) [Spelling focus].

- **Phonics Instruction** - Systematic instruction in the relationships between letters (graphemes) or written language and the individual sounds (phonemes), i.e. sound/symbol relationships [Spelling Focus]
- **Vocabulary Instruction** - Application and practice of Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction beginning at the word level, a lexical process allowing the listener or reader to access meaning [Spelling/Writing focus]
- **Writing Instruction** - Instruction in grammatical conventions, a syntactic process, which allows the reader to both write and read text in meaningful ways, a process which explores the Writing/Reading connection [Writing/Reading focus]
- **Reading and Text Comprehension Instruction** - Reading for meaning, a semantic process, is dependent on several research-based strategies including metacognitive strategies such as question answering and generation, summarising, reformatting/using graphic organisers and identification of text structures [Reading/Writing focus]

Integrated Systematic Literacy instruction was developed as a focus for training in response to the Australian Federal report on boys' schooling, "Boys: Getting It Right". The recommendations identified for literacy included the following:

Recommendation 7:

> "...programs should be required to adopt an **integrated** approach which includes a strong element of explicit, intensive, **systematic** phonics instruction".

Recommendation 8:

> "...pre-service teacher training in literacy should involve an **integrated** approach which includes explicit, intensive structured phonics as an essential element in early and remedial literacy instruction".

Recommendation 9:

> "...teachers' professional development be increased ... and ... directed towards a greater focus on literacy ... This should **involve developing skills in intensive phonics instruction** as part of an **integrated approach** to teaching literacy.

Integrated instruction allows for the **development of skills in a teaching/learning framework** but also **recognises the importance of planning for and providing meaningful opportunities for skill application. Systematic Instruction recognises and plans for effective teaching/learning sequences** which **proceed from identified foundational skills and knowledge** and **move to increasing layers of complexity.**

WRAP is a teacher's kit bag of Spelling, Writing and Reading strategies for the development of Literacy skills. It has broad application and teaches skills for Instruction, that is, how to teach effectively for foundational Literacy skills. In schooling this means that it is effective across the **early and middle years**. WRAP is not just another technique to apply in the classroom for Literacy skill development. At present, in the area of Literacy, new techniques are applied to a failing instructional framework to try and repair the deficits identified through Literacy testing. To identify WRAP as a technique or methodology would be to limit its effectiveness for teachers as it would then be reduced to a series of teaching procedures with narrow applications.

We welcome this opportunity to present this submission to the Inquiry into Teacher Education which is examining the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to teach literacy. More specifically, from the perspective of the WRAP committee, what should be under revue in relation to teacher training in Literacy is whether children are being taught to read in the most effective way. Having followed the literacy debate over several years, the WRAP committee members see this as an opportunity to express our response to the literacy needs we have perceived in our schools and in the community at large. It has been an interesting journey and the opportunity to train teachers affords us an unusual view of teachers' training and expectations for Literacy Teaching. We trust that it will be recognised as one academic and sincere attempt to fulfil a deficit in this area of Instruction for teaching and learning of English literacy, the foundation for all lifelong, ongoing educational opportunity.

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Inquiry into Teacher Education

General Introduction – Background and Experience of Teacher Training

As a practising teacher, it has always been my wish to make a contribution such as this to attempt to bring facets of experience to the attention of those who bear the responsibility to determine the direction for teacher training in this country. My desire has come from over 25 years experience in the classroom and administrative roles in both the public and private sectors of education.

After spending 5 years in the public sector in Primary schooling, I moved to an Independent non-government school where I was responsible for establishing the Preparatory School. (See Appendix 1) Having practiced in this institution since 1984, I have carried the role of Curriculum Coordinator: K-12, responsible for Registration and Accreditation with the Department of Education and now, Board of Studies (NSW); Preparatory School Coordinator: K-6, and more recently, Middle School Coordinator: 5-8. I have also in recent years become the person responsible for coordinating the teaching of Literacy in the school, a school with around 75% of students with a language background other than English.

In 1997, I was asked to further develop the Middle School concept in Years 7 & 8 in order to establish an effective teaching and learning continuum into the secondary years of schooling. I found myself back in the classroom face-to-face teaching Year 7/8 groups of boys English and Literacy for a period of 7 years. It was in this most recent role that I have found myself developing solutions for Foundational Literacy Skills which support the ongoing development of students' Writing and Reading skills beyond the Primary years. This has lead to the development of training courses for teachers and practitioners, within the VET framework, which support this type of Literacy practice beginning with the early years of Primary education.

During the last 12 years of practice, I have also been given the opportunity to upgrade my teaching qualifications to a B. Ed. from a Dip. Teach. I am at present studying for my Masters degree. Some of the research into the area of teaching Literacy has been the subject of my coursework towards this qualification. Having begun my career with a Diploma of Teaching, I was fortunate to reap the benefits of training from the newly appointed Nepean College of Advanced Education which had begun its life as Westmead Teachers College.

My first experience of teacher education was one where there was still an implicit belief in the ability to **train** a teacher. This was mixed with a radical Marxist expression of educational theory and practice which fitted the mid-70's perfectly and left me with a distinct distaste for "quasi-sociology", a perspective which, although now more subtle, is still evident and unyielding in teacher training programs today. My son, who is now studying at the same institution 29 years on, has just completed his training in Sociological Perspectives in Education. When you understand the world outside of an educational framework, your implicit

belief in "changing the society through educational opportunity to promote the individual" is a little jaded. This view is not based on cynicism, but rather an understanding that **if you wish to effect change, then your solutions need to be accessible and practical**. In the area of Literacy Training, this is the precise focus of our project.

One of my ongoing roles has been the responsibility of Teaching Practicum for many students from a range of teacher training institutions. This has afforded me an interesting view of how teacher training is expressed in practice for pre-service teachers. Another of my responsibilities has also been the induction of new teachers both prior to teaching whilst in training and as a part of the full-time teaching staff. We have been in the fortunate position where the teachers who are in training have already established a link within the school through a mentoring relationship with practicing full-time staff. This affords them helpful resources through teachers and their experience whilst they are in training, as well as making their transition into a full-time role easier for them. It is this area of Pre-service Teacher education and the transition into full-time teaching that I would like to discuss briefly before discussing the main focus of this submission.

How should students be selected for teacher training courses?

(*Specific Terms of Reference 1., 2. and 3.*)

"..A Career of Choice..."

Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Main Report (October 2003)

As a young person, I entered teacher training at the age of 18 years in 1975 straight from school. It was not uncommon for people to ask the question, "So what did you want to do before you entered into teacher training?" The assumption was that it was my last choice and that I had to teach because I had failed to gain entry into anything else. In fact, I passed up University selection into a B.A. Dip.Ed. program for a course in a College which offered academic subjects as well as training subjects which taught skills for teaching. My father, who understood the "craft" of teaching, sought advice from his teaching colleagues and they assisted me with my choice.

So, what was the general perception of teaching as a career then and has that perception changed in the last 30 years? I fear that the answer is no and in one sense, this is **the** key question for this inquiry. As a practicing teacher I would suggest the following pointers from my own experience:

- Many students who enter teacher training are undecided in terms of their career choice. Fresh out of school themselves, they have yet to feel that their choice to remain at "school" for a lifetime is the right one. (STR1)

- Having witnessed in their own schooling the way in which teachers can be inappropriately treated in the classroom and understood, at times, that there was very little the teachers could do about it, who would willingly subject themselves to such public pressure? Unfortunately, the law, at present, often

leaves the teacher in a defenceless position. Students very often know their rights, and so potential teaching candidates understand fully the implications of this. (STR1)

- In Australia, teaching as a profession, has less standing than it did 50 years ago. When talking with my South Korean teaching colleagues, it is interesting to hear them talk of the esteem in which they are held in their society and how people still look up to them because of their chosen profession.

  Perhaps the egalitarian nature of our society would not allow for this kind of respect. However, surely the worth of an employee today is understood directly in terms of the pay, and reward and incentives speak of the value that is placed on a job. Whilst I do not make my choice on these terms, and many teachers don't, if you want to attract people into a profession, then these issues are important (STR1).

- I cannot speak for other states, but here in NSW the aim of every HSC student is 99.9 and the courses on offering for such an effort do not include teaching. It has been pleasing to see in several institutions that the UAI in teaching subjects has risen. This means that the academic standard for teacher training entry is improving. However, does this really mean that the overall standard of teachers entering the workplace has improved?

  My experience of working with secondary teachers who have achieved academic excellence in tertiary studies has been that they, too often, do not regard the needs of a learner who is having difficulty with higher-level concepts. It is so important in teaching to own the necessity for imparting understanding as well as promoting those students who have the capacity for independent learning and academic excellence.

  One concern I would have is, if the standard of entry has improved, then how many potential teacher candidates are excluded who may, with maturation in learning and life, also make good teachers? My experience has been that these teachers know from experience the necessity for developing understanding and often they are interested in professional development for themselves in so far as that it contributes to both their own learning and their students' learning. I have had experience with both types of teachers and the "academic" approach has cost me many hours in mentoring. Whilst these hours are not wasted and I have established many sound professional relationships with such academically oriented teachers, I would hate to see others with whom I have worked, written out of the profession, those who would make an equally valuable contribution. (STR 2)

- One of the factors associated with the rate of attrition is the lack of practical experience within teacher training courses. Whilst there is a necessity for

understanding educational theory, students in training often feel that these will not help them with face to face teaching. This perception is right. I believe that the theoretical component of a teaching degree is necessary and essential, but it is so important to link that theory to practice.

Unfortunately many practicum experiences I have supervised were not clearly delineated prior to the practicum. This places a larger burden on the school and leaves the student in an awkward position of uncertainty. Nobody likes to fail, particularly in front of an audience of 20-30 eager onlookers who understand what "prac teachers" are. As a school we have always supported teachers in training appropriately. However, good preparation makes a trainee teacher's learning a more rewarding experience.

Another anxiety which is now common amongst trainee teachers is whether the learning culture of their selected school for practicum will support appropriate behavioural expectations such that they **can** practice or demonstrate their teaching skill. Teacher training institutions at times have difficulty placing students. However, if the prevailing climate of some of our selected schools is a challenge for pre-service teachers, then maybe it is important to define the type of learning culture necessary to practicum. One could say that it has ever been thus, however, I believe it is now a greater challenge than 30 years ago. (STR 3)

How do we establish the selection criteria for teacher training courses?

Star Teachers – One selection process developed for assessing potential teacher candidates

Martin Haberman conducted research in inner-city schools in New York. He wanted to know what were the factors which made some teachers successful when all the pointers were against them succeeding. He conducted interviews and found that many of these teachers had begun their working life in a career outside of teaching. They had elected to retrain and entered the teaching force at a later stage in their life. He also found that those who failed to last the distance were often young teachers who had left school, immediately entered training and went straight back to school as the teacher. He found that what was missing was the need for some experience beyond the four walls of a school. He found that teachers such as this did not often have a large enough experience of the world to see beyond their own cultural assumptions.

He found that the teachers who lasted the distance had certain qualities which guaranteed that they would not give up in the face of low rewards and rough school cultures fraught with little respect for authority. He identified these teachers as Star Teachers and defined the following qualities based on his study:

1. **Persistence**
   predicts the propensity to work with children who present learning and behavioural problems on a daily basis without giving up on them for the full 180 day work year.

2. **Organisation and Planning**
   refers to how and why star teachers plan as well as their ability to manage complex classroom organisations.

3. **Values student learning**
   predicts the degree to which the responses reflect a willingness to make student learning the teacher's highest priority.

4. **Theory to Practice**
   predicts the respondent's ability to see the practical implications of generalisations as well as the concepts reflected by specific practices.

5. **At-Risk Students**
   predicts the likelihood that the respondent will be able to connect with and teach students of all backgrounds and levels.

6. **Approach to Students**
   predicts the way the respondent will attempt to relate to students and the likelihood this approach will be effective.

7. **Survive in Bureaucracy**
   predicts the likelihood that the respondent will be able to function as a teacher in large, depersonalised organisation.

8. **Explains Teacher Success**
   deals with the criteria the respondent uses to determine teaching success and whether these are relevant to teachers in poverty schools.

9. **Explains Student Success**
   deals with the criteria the respondent uses to determine students' success and whether these are relevant to students in poverty schools.

10. **Fallibility**
    refers to how the teacher plans to deal with mistakes in the classroom.

He established The Haberman Educational Foundation (THEF) – National Centre for Alternative Certification Information. The training he offers is to principals, school boards, site-based parent/teacher unions, and superintendants. They are taught how to identify those candidates who will succeed with even the most challenging of students. The interview boasts a 95% accuracy rate in predicting which teachers will stay and succeed. The effect of employing such

an instrument is that the students who are taught by these teachers improve dramatically in their academic performance in spite of the circumstances in which they are being educated.

I was trained in this method of assessment in 1993 by Dr Susan Moore who was at that time with The Institute of Public Affairs. The interview offers a different way of viewing teacher selection. It recognises those candidates who have the potential to continue in the face of difficulty. Whilst I was not in a position to use the selection process, I found the identified qualities an interesting measure and could see where the absence of these indicated a deficit in teacher performance. I can see that this may not be suitable for some school areas. However, it represents one method for teacher selection worth viewing. Maybe there is a need for a local expression which serves our purposes here in Australia. A further development of the foundation was the Star Urban Administrator Test which evaluates effective school leadership in urban schools. Once again there is a listing of "Dimensions of Effective School Leadership" which also makes interesting reading when examining selection criteria. (STR 1 & 3) **(See Appendix 2)**

How do we develop Teacher Induction for those who have come via alternative entry points into the profession?

One of my jobs has been teacher induction for those who have entered teaching after a career path in industry. One of the identified strengths of the school where I teach is that some of our staff have entered teaching with tertiary training and experience in industry in the fields of Science and Technology. These staff have completed teacher training whilst being mentored within the school. (See Appendix 1)

The biggest difficulty that such staff members face is the loss of identity in what they had successfully achieved prior to entering teaching. The transition is not always an easy one. However, having made the choice, the personal rewards in their students' learning and the practical expertise that they bring to the school, contributes to their ongoing job satisfaction. It has involved building a meaningful relationship of support and allowing space and time for practice. In their first year of teaching this meant close supervision of daily teaching plans and supervision of programs. Once patterns of practice were established, it became easier for them to participate with confidence.

New Teacher Training Courses for Vocational Education

My first experience with a trainee teacher who had enrolled in a new tertiary retraining program was two years ago. This person had been through Hotel School and had completed qualifications to run the Kitchens in large Hotels. She arrived for a 3 week practicum having been in the tertiary training program for 3 months. She had been told what she had to do for subject related study but had received no teaching preparation whatsoever. She felt awkward and uncomfortable because of this. Here was someone who was already competent in one field of work. She was willing to do the job and with the guidance of expert staff in her subject areas went on to have a good practicum experience.

If we want to attract experienced people into the profession through this pathway, then they will need a proper preparation for their school experiences. If they have achieved a level of expertise in industry, then they need to be nurtured. The profession needs teachers such as these, particularly if we want to build up numbers of staff who have practised in the fields of Science and Technology. I felt that this person had been badly let down. I wondered if the reason for lack of preparation was in direct proportion to this type of training course being undertaken in a prestigious **academic** institution. (STR 8)

To train or to study?

One of the greatest divides in education is the separation between training and academic study. The learning continuum defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) seems to bear very little relevance when applied to peoples understanding or perception of the value of qualifications achieved. Having established The Hills Regional Hills Centre, a private Registered Training Organisation accredited by ANTA, it became evident that the value of the courses taught towards an HSC was seen to be insignificant in academic terms. We have encouraged all of our Year 11 students to participate in these courses as an adjunct to their future working life even if a University education was their ultimate goal. In every career there will always be that element of training which will impart specific industry-related or generic skills. For example, a course in IT would be one such useful component of study for any career.

So, why have we reduced Teaching to an academic course of study when there are practical components which could inform the skills involved in teaching? One common criticism I hear from trainee teachers and new graduates is that they were not taught practical skills in relation to the theoretical components in their study. One example that comes to mind is an assignment which seems to be common in several courses. The assignment requires the student to work with Syllabus documents in order to explain to a defined audience, the scope and content of a subject area. Having had very little experience, the student is left to define the framework academically, without being given any explanation or instruction in the practical elements for teaching within that subject area. Assignments such as this worry students because they only focus on the problems associated with definition rather than understanding how to really work within that framework.

When I trained in 1975, I was taught to teach anything and everything. I had to fulfil my assignments in woodwork, football, junk sculpture and weaving as well as studies in Psychometrics, Psychology, Educational Theory and Philosophy. One element of training, a mandatory part of our study, was the weekly Micro-Skills lesson. In our Psychology classes, we were taught the Behavioural Theories of Skinner, Pavlov and other theorists. In our Micro Skills lessons we applied those Behavioural theories when we taught a selected group of 5 children from the "Dem" school next door. We were expected to analyse these lessons in order to check our progress. There was still an implicit belief that it was possible to train a teacher in skills for the workplace, the classroom.

I must admit that at times I found these skills offensive. The one example which comes to mind is the video lesson where we were required to practice Negative Reinforcement. In order to demonstrate this skill, I had to choose one student in the group I was teaching and ignore any attempt the student made to participate in the lesson. I imagine today that this would not be an accepted part of training. The thought behind this was that we would learn to ignore inappropriate behaviour. I found the bypassing of the will of a child to be unacceptable. In Teacher Training 50 years ago the will was defined as the Volitional. It is some years since the affective in education is really considered as it specifically relates to teachers' practice and is not just left to definitions of Values and Attitudes.

Whilst I did learn many valuable skills which I now see contributed to my practice, the focus on manipulation of the individual was in contradistinction to the new theories associated with discovery learning and open plan classrooms. These are probably some of the reasons why such skill building became passé. As teaching courses have become more academic, I have witnessed the dilution of any practical components related to areas of study and these are often not found in the scope of the practicum either. (STR 5 & 8)

Would it still be possible to <u>train</u> a teacher?

How teachers teach is as important for student learning as what they teach.

Review of Teaching and Teacher Education - Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future. October 2003: 13

The statement on the front page of this submission was made in a university lecture hall. The students were in the process of completing feedback at the end of the second semester of two semesters of Literacy Training. I think in the area of Literacy teaching we have a good example of too much theory and very little application; a smorgasbord of techniques and no methodology or direction which assists trainee teachers in learning to apply their understanding. In the area of Literacy education, the underlying ideology which informs practice in this area is Whole Language, an expression of Socio-Cultural Literary Theory. This is one area in education where the prevailing dominant ideology should give way to a measured acceptance of a true balanced approach to teaching and learning which recognises skills which are of necessity linked to holistic practice. (See Appendix 5) (STR 5)

In the last 8 years, our school has undergone a revolution in the area of instruction for Literacy. Because of the large number of our students from language backgrounds other than English, we have had to train our staff in a more direct approach to developing Foundational skills in the English language. This has involved all school staff, K – 12. Suddenly the English department in the secondary years could not be blamed for the students' lack of skills for essay work or written tasks in all subject areas. So, how did such a revolution occur?

With the recognition of a problem in the secondary years in the expression of conceptual thought, we began training in a systematic phonemic awareness training course which emphasised Spelling, Writing and Reading. In 2003, we began the process of developing training for teachers, aides, parents and tutors through the VET framework. It was an

approach which defined integrated and systematic instruction for Literacy. The training courses were developed through The Hills Regional Skills Centre and are at present are under review by VETAB in NSW for accreditation.

As a school teacher, my skills lie within the area of developing and expressing curriculum for teaching and learning. It has been interesting to learn to write within the VET framework. It is a totally different way to conceptualise teaching and learning. However, I can see the value of being able to define teaching practice in terms of Units and Elements of Competency. The interesting feature of this framework is:

- the capacity to recognise prior learning,
- the definition of elements of practice for the workplace, the classroom,
- the provision of practical assessment of performance and practice, and
- the capacity to define an assessment framework which provides clear expectations of feedback to refine performance.

It is interesting to read the most recent findings in relation to a survey which the Federal Department of Science Education and Training has conducted in relation to professional development which trains school teachers to improve their classroom performance.

> "...courses failed to provide coaching and feedback in the workplace for teachers, despite these being essential to learning new skills."
>
> The Sydney Morning Herald. Monday April 18, 2005.

This training is designed with the trainee, in this case the teacher as trainee, in mind and combines elements of theory linked to practice. My own experiences of training for practice have formed for me a measure of the importance of training as well as the theoretical elements which are critical to understanding why particular training aspects are important. It is possible to provide appropriate coaching and feedback. This has been an interesting journey and one in which over 160 teachers, aides, tutors and parents have already participated in several states throughout Australia.

Introduction to WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading Training Courses

Why is language acquisition important?

The acquisition of the understanding of the word allows for access to a world of written text in its variety of forms. This could be in a number of modes: spoken, written or viewed. In our age of the information superhighway the word has become more accessible and some would argue more vulnerable. The question remains what are those aspects of language and its acquisition that are critical to a foundational use and understanding of the word? How, in an age of information technology, do we gain the skills necessary to access not just written text, but all text in any mode which relies on effective use and understanding of the word?

In order to study the English Language and its acquisition it is important to understand the elements of which it is constituted. Language structure, interaction and usage involve complex skill development (Crystal, ed., 1995: 426). It is possible to reach adulthood with a basic proficiency, linguistically in all three areas, but still to be functionally illiterate (Bianco and Freebody, 2001: 21). Herein lies an implied understanding of the full range of media required for successful language acquisition: speaking and listening, reading and writing, and signing and seeing (Crystal, ed., 1997: 123). In any linguistic communication each of these media is the vehicle for expressing Language structure and includes an implicit recognition of its properties. These properties of language present distinct areas of study in each medium (Crystal, ed., 1995: 430).

The foundational years for language acquisition beginning from birth, are where the primary media, speaking and listening, develop with the "production, transmission and reception of speech" (Crystal, ed., 1997:123). The child is immersed in a world of language and its complexities, learning to produce sounds and utterances of their own (speaking) as well as learning to perceive sounds and to understand the utterances of others (listening). The development of an active vocabulary grows from fifty words at around seventeen months to three thousand words by three years of age (Crystal, ed., 1995: 430). Spoken language is supreme at this stage of development and young children usually have access to written language only through the medium of the speech of others, emphasising the need for many opportunities for successful language interaction with adults and peers (Crystal, ed., 1995: 427).

Why emphasise writing and reading?

It is the next major phase of language acquisition; the development of an understanding of the written language that this training course seeks to address. This primarily involves the medium of writing in addition to that of Reading. The relationship between all six media is integral to language acquisition at every stage of a child's development. However, **learning to write and read involves a specific set of skills which are different from those required for spoken language**. The focus of study changes from oral language acquisition to an understanding of **language structure in its written forms**. This involves learning the **"elements of vocabulary, grammar, phonology and graphology which are used to**

produce meaningful words and sentences", as text to be written or read (Crystal, ed., 1995: 285).

What is Literacy?

The ability to participate in the process of encoding or decoding text defines the person as both educated and literate. The term Literacy is the noun used to imply the possession of an adequate education (Delbridge, ed. In chief. 1981: 1026).

Definitions of literacy abound. Literacy can be described as a "continuum of gradually increasing levels and domains of ability" including:

- reading or decoding with comprehension
- reading a wide range of text in varied contexts (life skills) eg. road signs, newspapers, medicine labels
- an increasing ability in writing or typing with fluency and clarity
- responding to demands for situated contexts for writing such as questionnaires, job applications etc.
- learning to spell. (Crystal, ed., 1995: 427)

If a person could not perform all of theses tasks they would be classified as illiterate. However many people could learn varying skill in performing some of these tasks and be classed as possessing a level of literacy. Here a notion of functional literacy would need definition and as can be seen from this list it is a far more complex issue than merely "ability to read and write".

'Functional' literacy was defined by UNESCO in 1951 as:

> A person is literate who can with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life;
>
> (Crystal, ed., 1995: 427)

and in the 1960's:

> A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community.
>
> (Crystal, ed., 1995: 427)

Note the shift in emphasis on what constitutes the notion of 'functional'. In 1950 reading and writing defined literacy whereas the 1960's version involves a range of skills in a range of applications. Here the new agenda is for an effective and functional contribution to society directly related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills through literacy.

What is the purpose for developing functional Literacy?

Over the last 10–15 years similar definitions of literacy abound with similar agendas.

> Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.
>
> Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop through an individual's lifetime.
>
> All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare, but also for Australia to reach its social and economic goals.
> (Australia's Language and Literacy Policy, Companion Volume to Policy Paper, 1991: 9)

Herein lies an obvious socio-political agenda where successful literate individuals will contribute to Australia's "social and economic goals" (Dawkins, 1991: 9). When looking at the implications for educators the notion of "benchmarks" is introduced where the measure of the level or standard of literacy of an individual indicates their future success in schooling and society. (Peach, 1991: 12)

> Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It also involves the integration of speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking with reading and writing. It includes the cultural knowledge that enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.
>
> Within literacy, the areas of reading, writing, spelling, listening, viewing and speaking were identified by ministers of Education as those areas in which benchmarks were to be developed.

(from Frank Peach "The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies:Implications for Educators." p.12)

Literacy for all implied successful participation in schooling and education and also defines its scope. (DEET, 1991: 5,7).

> It is in the first years of school that all children can be helped to acquire the foundation skills which set them on the path of success in reading and writing...
>
> (DEET, 1991: 7)

> Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.
>
> (DEET, 1991: 5)

Key competencies include an obvious literacy agenda where the goal is for the multi-skilling of an individual in order to ensure that re-training and re-employment are a possibility for the length of a person's working life (DEET, 1991).

> The key competencies, particularly *Collecting, analysing and organising information, Communicating ideas and information* and *Using mathematical ideas and techniques*, can assist with the development of literacy and numeracy across curriculum domains. The literacy emphasis that is likely to be encouraged when working to develop key competencies would feature learners being encouraged to:
>
> - respond to information by interpreting it and establishing meaning, considering relevance, evaluating the information, applying it and evaluating its application, and
> - considering what sort of information is required to communicate for particular purposes that have meaning and relevance to the learner, and demonstrating the ability to communicate.
>
> (Key Competencies — An integrated project: 33)

Whatever the approach or rationale may entail for developing functional literacy, the common goal for all educators is success. Ongoing success is dependent on two things; first, the development of sound **foundational literacy skills** and, second, the successful transfer of these skills into a range of different contexts each curriculum strand demands. The question remains: what are the best ways to promote successful transfer of **foundational literacy skills** into all Key Learning Areas? Also, which learning methodologies promote successful literacy development and application of literacy skills for different purposes at every level of schooling?

Educators would agree that basic functional literacy skills are foundational to all learning be it in academic, vocational or creative fields. The debate remains as to which emphasis will fulfil the goal of Functional Literacy Outcomes for all learners in current curricula.

Rationale for Literacy Instruction

> It is therefore a necessary priority for schooling to equip students to come to appreciate that accepted knowledge in modern societies is dependent on literacy for both its original development and its later transmission. **Formalised 'ways of knowing' about the world...are crucially dependent on reading and writing...**
>
> Disciplinary specialisations and the particular literacy practices these specialisations require, mean that **we cannot assume that the 'foundational' aspects of literacy are quickly and unproblematically able to be secured in the first years of school**.
>
> (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 2001: 51)

Colin Lankshear defined a **three-dimensional model for literacy**, an integrated model which identified each dimension of literacy separately, but which recognised the importance of each to the other.

In the first dimension he outlines **Foundational skills** – not just Basic Skills which may have been previously expressed as isolated skill development – a phase of learning which recognised mature forms of practice whilst at the same time developing foundational skills towards that practice. This means the development of foundational skills in learning to write and read beginning in the first years of schooling.

Secondly, he defines **Cultural Literacy** which relies on foundational skills and provides opportunities for practice of those skills. This practice enhances the foundational skills through application. This means using foundational skills to explore writing and reading for learning across all subject areas. This begins formally at around the end of Stage One or beginning of Stage 2 in schooling, Year 2 or Year 3.

His third dimension was **Critical Literacy** where the student could demonstrate understanding through analysis of course content and synthesis of their ideas and understanding. Being an integrated model, it allowed for recognition of development in all three areas at any level of schooling. Teachers planning should allow for the integration and recognition of skills necessary to academic tasks at the higher levels. This dimension begins formally in Stage 4 with introductory work in Year 7 and 8. Students are provided with a basis for performance at the level of Critical Literacy by developing sound Foundational Literacy skills and, more importantly, the recognition for themselves of the literacy skills needed to perform at that higher level.

Allan Collins, John Seely and Ann Holm define the instructional model which is foundational to this training course i.e. "Cognitive Apprenticeship: Making Thinking Visible" (S. Carver, 1991). As teachers we all talk about scaffolding for our students learning, but the question should be asked, how many teachers scaffold with the knowledge of what lies beneath this model? Collin's Model expresses the process of support, scaffolding being only one of the processes involved.

> In apprenticeship, the processes of the activity being taught are visible. **In schooling, the processes of thinking are often invisible to both the students and the teacher.** Cognitive apprenticeship is a model of instruction that works to make thinking visible.....**To make real differences in students' skill, we need both to understand the nature of expert practice and to devise methods that are appropriate to learning that practice.**
>
> Collins, Brown & Holum. 1991

Whereas traditional apprenticeship relied on the master instructing the apprentice, Cognitive Apprenticeship relied on not only the teacher's thinking being made visible, but was dependent on the student being able to articulate their thinking to the teacher. Here we can see in this interaction not just the cognitive processes being made explicit, but also the metacognitive processes. Here the knowledge learned by the students is only a part of the teaching and

learning interaction through instruction. The expression of their understanding is an essential part of this learning process. The complete picture is that students not only learn a skill, they can use it in a range of appropriate contexts, they know when it is not applicable and they can transfer that skill independently when they are faced with new situations which demand application. (See Appendix 1)

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING COGNITIVE APPRENTICESHIP ENVIRONMENTS
CONTENT: types of knowledge required for expertise
Domain knowledge: subject matter specific concepts, facts and procedures **Heuristic strategies:** generally applicable techniques for accomplishing tasks **Control strategies:** general approaches for directing one's solution process **Learning strategies:** knowledge about how to learn new concepts, facts and procedures
METHOD: ways to promote the development of expertise
Modelling: teacher performs a task so students can observe **Coaching:** teacher observes and facilitates while students perform a task **Scaffolding:** teacher provides supports to help the student perform a task **Articulation:** teacher encourages students to verbalise their knowledge and thinking **Reflection:** teacher enables students to compare their performance with others **Exploration:** teacher invites students to pose and solve their own problems
SEQUENCING: keys to ordering learning activities
Global before local skills: focus on conceptualizing the whole task before executing the parts **Increasing complexity:** meaningful tasks gradually increasing in difficulty **Increasing diversity:** practice in a variety of situations to emphasise broad application
SOCIOLOGY: social characteristics of learning environment
Situated learning: students learn in the context of working on realistic tasks **Community of practice:** communication about different ways to accomplish meaningful tasks **Intrinsic motivation:** students set personal goals to seek skills and solutions **Cooperation:** students work together to accomplish their goals

Developed by Sharon Carver for Collins, A., Brown, J.S., and Holum, A. (1991). "Cognitive Apprenticeship: Making Thinking Visible." ***American Educator***

Training for Literacy instruction should embrace these elements if a balanced focus is sought. It is not sufficient to know just about the theory which should inform best practice in these areas. Neither is it sufficient to view literacy instruction only in terms of Basic Skills. A broad focus for Literacy Instruction is needed here which embraces **Foundational Literacy Skills** at every level of a student's education. This focus should also be informed by an understanding of the research based on the Psychology of Reading and Reading Development. (Appendix 3)

Designing Teaching and Learning Environments for Literacy: A comment on Socio-Cultural Literacy practice (*Specific Terms of Reference 5.*)

Collins, Brown and Holum (1991) have defined a framework which not only considers the Sociology of the classroom, but also defines the need for types of knowledge expressed through Content, a Teaching Methodology for developing expertise and the Sequencing of learning activities. Current educational practices in Literacy rely heavily on the Sociology of the classroom for transmission of knowledge and skills through teaching and learning experiences. Collin's framework recognises that all principles are necessary to learning, promoting a conscious awareness on the part of the teacher for responsibly selecting the focus for instruction. Teachers should be actively involved in perceiving the gestalt of the classroom. To put on blinkers and focus on one area as a perceived ideology is dangerous. Hence, it is important to remember that all four aspects are necessary to creating a full range of expression for learning experiences; content, methodology, sequencing and sociology.

So, to only focus on Sociology, leads to a deficit in an instructional focus which recognises a suitable methodology and systematic approach to the sequencing of content. Hence, there is a difficulty in determining the essential teaching skills for pre-service teachers in a Whole Language Framework.

In an Outcomes-based framework, teaching and learning practices are adopted which promote a developmental, constructivist approach which is learner-centred. (Donnelly, 2004:62) The efficient integration of content blurs the lines between that content and the processes for its transmission. Many young teachers are left without any idea where to "buy in" to the art of best teaching practice because of this integrated model, expressed and promoted by an Outcomes-based framework. They cannot determine where they will begin because they do not understand the "big picture" of the classroom and where to focus their practice. It is the sociology of practice which determines their overall focus for teaching and learning. Ideology such as this needs to be balanced by a recognition of the need for defining the teaching of skills systematically, and recognising the opportunities for situated learning in authentic contexts. Teachers need to be unafraid to teach.

To only recognise Methodology, leads to a narrow skills focus which relies on defined content and ignores the Sociology of the learning environment and the promotion of situated learning contexts. So, a narrow skills–based emphasis is also insufficient.

The notion of a "basic skills" curriculum is always associated with rote learning, direct instruction and boredom in learning. A modern-day example of such a teaching program is the

education system in South Korea. Whilst Kevin Donnelly raises many vital issues which are of great importance to the Australian education scene, one country he identifies as being successful is that of the South Korean system of education. (Donnelly, 2004:110)

Having taught for 20 years in a school where the ratio of students from a language background other than English has risen to 75%, I have had considerable contact with students who have come from South Korea to be educated here in Australia. I have good friends who are also teachers from that education system. They have come to Australia to view other models of education which are not as rigid in their delivery and to experience a classroom culture where the students are assessed in a range of ways which promote the expression of understanding. In their own country, teachers rarely use a teaching method other than "chalk and talk" and their final exams at the end of schooling are all multiple-choice exams given in several sittings on one day. Whilst this may be economically viable, the "heart and soul" of a true education is missing.

It is precisely this type of practice which does not promote true learning. In the past, Phonics-based Instruction was seen to fail at the point where the students did not transfer their skills and knowledge into Reading practice and so students were seen to initially succeed and then plateau off in their learning. Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction was planned with the specific purpose of defining practice through analysing the tasks involved in learning to Write and Read. Based on the research on the Psychology of Reading and Reading Development, the training course was planned with a full picture of Literacy Instruction, not just a Phonics Program. The recognition of Integrated and systematic instruction identified in the "Boys: Getting it right" document seeks to identify this precise point.

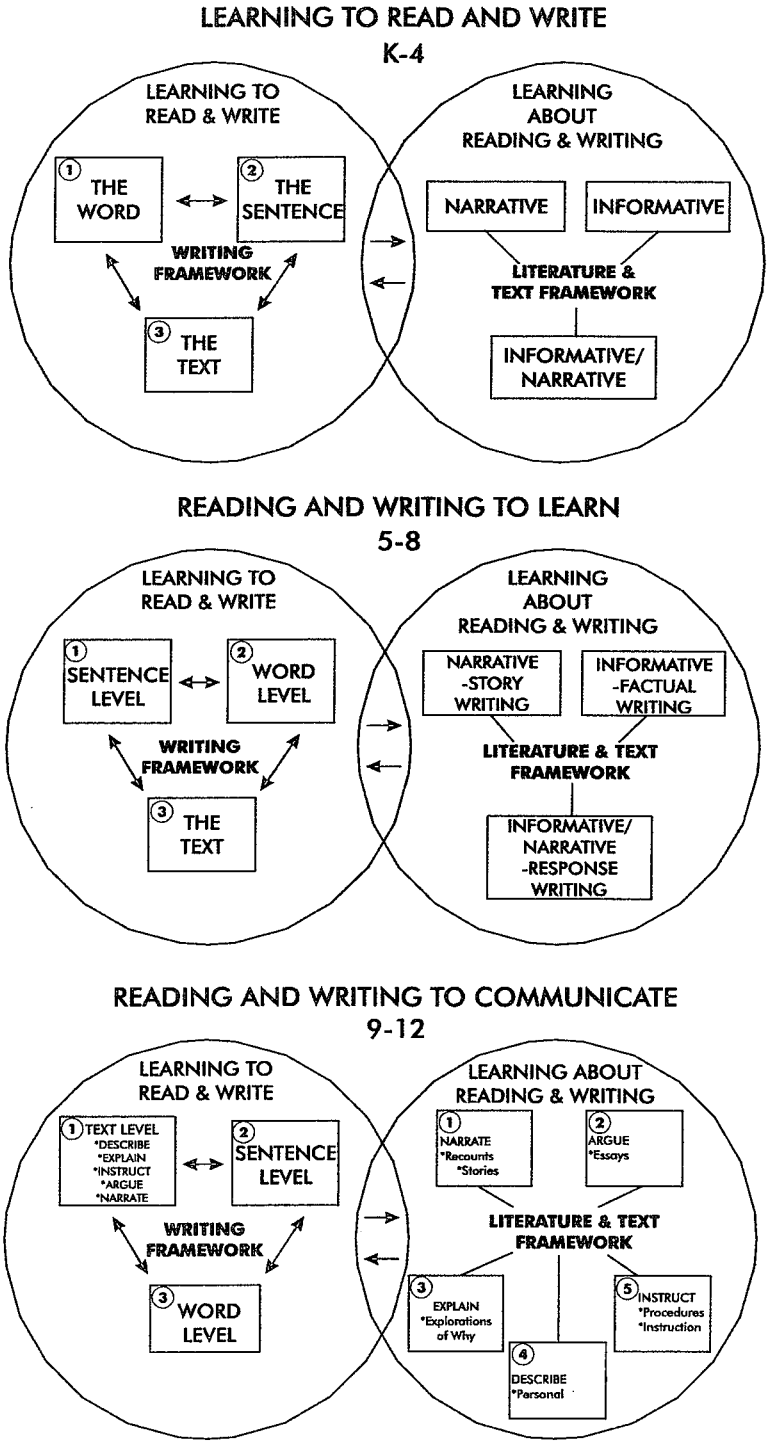
When training teachers in this approach to Literacy instruction, new teachers always say,
"...but why weren't we trained to do this at University?"
Experienced teachers say,
"...I have been teaching for thirty years and I have never understood these things in this way. I now feel that I can understand how to plan and teach because of the focus on skills and I can now define meaningful contexts for skill integration."

And, as a practicing teacher myself, I felt cheated that I had only ever been fed a holistic picture about these things which included a selective view of the research in professional development in these areas. The notion of balance belongs not in whole language, but in a realistic spread between holistic practice found in situated learning and a skills emphasis which acknowledges skill integration. If you only use the parts of the research which support your ideology, albeit holistic practice or a skills-based methodology, then you do not define all that is needed for a full expression of teaching and learning.

A framework such as Collin's is one approach that is worthy of consideration or may act as a catalyst for developing a local expression as such. The following diagram is one attempt to define a teaching and learning framework which acknowledges both learning to read and write as well as learning about Reading and Writing. We need to develop a total framework which

expresses the essential ingredients necessary to a full picture for teaching Foundational Literacy Skills to students at all levels of schooling.

A MODEL FOR READING AND WRITING K-12:



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What does the research say?

(*Specific Terms of Reference 5 and 7. i. ...teach literacy..., iii, vi & vii.*)

This training course has been based on the research findings relating to the processes underlying the acquisition of reading and the evidence of instructional practices that are effective in improving reading outcomes. The link between Writing and Reading Instruction was also explored for the development of units of competency which support best practice in Reading instruction.
(See Appendix 6: I have included one Unit of Competency which is complete so that the committee can see the full extent of planning for practice and assessment in practical terms. For all other units, I have included only the Title, the Application Statements, and the Elements and Performance Criteria. The units are still under review by VETAB and so are not to be made publicly available.)

The dominance of Socio-Cultural Literacy practice has skewed educational approaches away from evidence-based research in favour of holistic approaches to Writing and Reading instruction. A focus on research-based instruction allows for the development of language skills which form the basis for learning to read. Incorporation of these into English Language and Literacy programs provides equitable means to instruction for all students regardless of socio-cultural literacy differences. (See Appendix 3)

Whilst Whole Language seeks to create an integrated approach to instruction, **in current practice, instructional processes are largely undefined. This training course seeks to define areas of instructional practice and processes for Writing and Reading** which incorporate the research findings. These areas include:

- **Phonemic Awareness Instruction** - Explicit and systematic instruction in the manipulation of the sounds in language (phonemes). Phonemic Awareness training lead to improvement in students' phonemic awareness, reading and spelling.

- **Phonics Instruction** - Systematic Instruction in the relationships between letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) (i.e. Sound/Symbol Relationships) leads to the development of understanding for reading and writing words. Systematic Phonics instruction helps in the encoding and decoding of words.

- **Vocabulary Instruction** - Application and practice of Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction begins at the word level. Vocabulary knowledge is a lexical process allowing the listener or reader to access meaning. Through segmenting and blending words reading is reinforced. Though training in Writing instruction meaning is accessed for Vocabulary using High Frequency Vocabulary word lists.

- **Writing Instruction** - Instruction in grammatical conventions is a Syntactic Process. Understanding Syntax assists the reader in gaining meaning from text. In writing texts, there is a reciprocal understanding developed for the reading of texts.

- **Reading and Text Comprehension Instruction** - Comprehension is the purpose for reading. Reading for meaning is a semantic process that can be taught. Reading sub-skills can be developed through Spelling and Writing Instruction and enable the reader to focus on Comprehension. Techniques for instruction include metacognitive strategies such as question answering and generation, summarising, reformatting/using graphic organisers and identifying Text Structures. (See Appendix 4)

Why Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction?

> **How to teach reading and writing to young students, whatever their spoken language background or social and economic circumstances, is one of the most strongly contested and debated fields in education. Divergent positions, informed variously by direct experience, sometimes incompatible theories and philosophies of literacy and education, and long traditions of research in various disciplines, sustain coherent positions about literacy pedagogy.**
>
> (Lo Bianco and Freebody, 2001: 53)

It is important to recognise the debate and to recognise that for all of the above complexities and reasons a diversity of approaches will be inevitable. However, responsibility lies with the teacher as a professional to evaluate the learner and the curriculum to make appropriate instructional decisions.

"Boys: Getting it Right", is a recent federal report on boys schooling involving a two-year inquiry into the performance of boys at school. Among a range of issues, high on the agenda was the development of literacy skills. Phonics and the acquisition of literacy skills are discussed. The instruction of phonics is recommended where the relationship between the component sounds of a language (phonemes) and its written symbols (orthography) are taught simultaneously. If a student cannot infer the relationship between sounds and the symbol for those sounds, and they are not explicitly taught, the result is poor word attack skills. Students who can rely on sight vocabulary cope, but those who have difficulty in reading, particularly boys, struggle where this is not explicitly taught (pp. 110–115).

The committee's recommendation was an **Integrated** model for developing these skills where both a strong emphasis on phonics instruction integrated with relevant and meaningful reading experience engaged the young school learner, especially children having difficulty with reading.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth-funded literacy programs should be required to adopt an **integrated** approach which includes a strong element of explicit, intensive, **systematic** phonics instruction.

A similar emphasis from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 a U.S. report cited the following findings from the report of the National Reading Panel (2000), a panel convened to investigate

an evidence-based assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its implications for reading instruction.

Phonics

> Phonics instruction may be provided systematically or incidentally. The hallmark of a systematic phonics approach or program is that a sequential set of phonics elements is delineated and these elements are taught along a dimension of explicitness depending on the type of phonics method employed (p.8) ... Systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through to sixth grade and for children having difficulty learning to read. (p.9).

After examining several phonics approaches in schools the committee recognised the importance of a whole school approach to raise teaching and learning expectations and performance.

The **essential ingredients** they identified were:

i) Multisensory instruction (see, hear, say, write)
ii) Sequential and structured learning where clear teaching and learning objectives are understood by teachers and students alike.
iii) Explicitly taught phonic word attack skills
iv) Students verbalising their thinking during learning

Once again, they emphasised the need for balance where intensive explicit teaching in phonics as a fundamental and essential ingredient, needs to be foundational to a holistic and integrated approach to literacy. (p.115–120)

Recommendation 8

> The committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory education authorities ensure that teacher education places much greater emphasis on the pedagogy of teaching literacy and numeracy. Further, pre-service training in literacy should involve an **integrated approach which includes explicit, intensive structured phonics as an essential element** in early and remedial literacy instruction. (p. 120)

Similarly, one of the instructional components identified as essential for successful reading instruction from The Report of the National Reading Panel was:

Phonemic Awareness

> Phonemic awareness training was the cause of improvement in students' phonemic awareness, reading and spelling following training ... Importantly the effects of Phonemic Awareness instruction on reading lasted well beyond the end of training. Children of varying abilities improved their Phonemic Awareness and their reading skills as a function of Phonemic Awareness training. (p. 7)

A further recommendation of the "Boys: Getting it Right" committee addresses the need for teachers' professional development towards a literacy focus.

Recommendation 9

The Commonwealth recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory **funding for teachers' professional development** be increased on a dollar for dollar basis and that it be directed towards a greater focus on literacy and on early diagnosis and intervention to assist children at risk. This should **involve developing skills in intensive phonics instruction** as part of an **integrated approach** to teaching literacy.

Further significant developments have occurred in 2004. An article was published in The Australian, on April 21, 2004, indicating that a group of researchers, psychologists, linguists and educators associated with the field of cognitive psychology had written a letter to The Honourable Brendan Nelson, the Federal Minister for Education, expressing their frustration. Max Coltheart from Macquarie Centre for Cognitive Science stated that theirs was a field of scientifically validated research which, although largely silenced in the field of education here in Australia, was being implemented overseas. Their concern was that even though Whole Language experts claim to use explicit and systematic phonics, these approaches were not supported by the wealth of research evidence in this field. (The Australian, p.21-22).There were 25 signatories to the letter from universities and research institutions around Australia. They are a group of professionals who understand the pieces of the research "jigsaw puzzle" for the teaching of Reading. These are not clearly defined in Education in a holistic curriculum framework and so go largely unrecognised.

Another area which has had continual coverage in the media is that of the education of indigenous students. One of the recurring themes is low levels of literacy due to poor attendance, health problems and methods of instruction which fail to meet their socio-cultural needs. This is another area which has come to the notice of the committee through training and is one which they have also considered an important focus for the use of Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction.

Those of the WRAP committee have come to the recognition that the theory which informs Metacognitive Learning Strategies is an essential component for instruction of students in the exploration of the Writing/Reading link. Having followed with interest the developments in the United States in response to The Report of The National Reading Panel the committee has considered those elements of the research which should define the structure and focus for training in Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction. The importance of the National Reading Panel study was that they had chosen to examine thousands of pieces of quantitative research evidence in order to define the specific curriculum focus needed for teaching children to read.

On November 30, 2004, the Federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, announced a national inquiry into teaching children to read. The inquiry will examine how reading is being taught and tested and how teachers are trained. Once again the research is to be reviewed, but now in

Australia, under the guidance of Dr Ken Rowe, a research director at the Australian Council for Educational Research. This inquiry has a broader coverage than the previous inquiry into boys' education.

Why was this training course developed?

> ...**attending to the literacy development of all learners will demand long-term commitment and support, across all age ranges and all areas of the curriculum**. Teaching which explicitly addresses language across all areas of the curriculum and therefore which requires a sustained commitment from the whole school is needed to achieve the acquisition of literacy capability...
>
> (Lo Bianco & Freebody, 2001:51)

It is the express intention of the committee responsible for the development of Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction that this training course will find a niche in ongoing professional development, a stated intention of the accountability requirements for the newly developed Institute for Teachers in New South Wales. Integrating theory and practice ensures ongoing development of teaching/learning skills and the theoretical foundations that underpin them. It is our belief that these teachers, whose practice is informed by quantitative as well as qualitative measures, respond to the demands of the classroom with a greater capacity to effect change. They have a better understanding of their own practice, can examine this in the light of theoretical underpinnings and can redirect their teaching/learning focus to produce better learning outcomes.

The following course outline has been submitted to VETAB and is in its final stages of development. (See Appendix 6) The structure of the program allows for a Certificate IV qualification to be granted:

- **Training Course I** – A Statement of Attainment towards Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading
  Title: A course in Preparing for Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction - A Parent and Teacher Introductory Course covering Basic Phonemic Awareness Development

- **Training Course II** – A Statement of Attainment towards Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading
  Title: A course in Applying and Integrating Strategies which support Spelling for Writing and Reading - A Teacher-Training Course in Advanced Phonemic Awareness and Integration into Spelling for Writing and Reading

- **Training Course III** - Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading – Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction
  Title: A course in Writing and Reading Strategies supported by Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction - A Teacher-Training Course in 3 Stages:
  - The Spelling Lesson to Sentence Level – Grammar for Writing
  - The Writing Lesson and Text Structure – Writing and Text Types
  - The Reading Lesson and Text Comprehension – Metacognitive Strategies for Comprehension

The Certificate IV qualification is dependent on 100 hours practice in a school or centre where Integrated Systematic Literacy Instruction is taught.

The purpose of the committee was to support those schools who wish to teach their students using Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction. In the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to maintain staff who have been trained in this way in schools. One of the major problems has been expense. Smaller numbers in training classes in Australia have pushed the costs too high and excessive fees have loaded schools with a burden which limited training funds will not cover. Unfortunately it is these schools with limited budgets which usually have the greater need for such training. It is our intention to deliver courses that will enable greater access for all schools. From September we have trained and issued certificates for 160 people in four states.

To this end wide consultation has been engaged in and includes city and regional centres. The most recent training requests have come from SE Asia and New Zealand. Several hubs have been formed and several more centres have expressed interest in participating in this way. Centres could include:

- Sydney NSW
- Melbourne VIC
- Brisbane QLD
- Northern Rivers NSW
- Armidale/Tamworth, NSW
- Central Western NSW
- Tennant Creek NT
- Darwin NT
- Riverland SA
- Singapore
- New Zealand

One of the essential ingredients for VET training courses is flexible Delivery. Whilst the initial focus is on Teacher/Instructor delivery, the further development of materials could lead to shorter face-to-face interaction and e-learning. This would assist those many country centres which are widely distributed, thus limiting easy access to major training centres. Another factor in Flexible Delivery is the arrangement of training time. It is possible to structure courses to suit specific needs of schools or individuals who require training.

The most significant addition to the reasons for developing this training course is the fact that through The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF), a major corporate sponsor has donated $100,000, matched by $100,000 from DEST to promote the use of the WRAP courses to improve the literacy standards of indigenous students in outback Australia. This money will be used to train teachers of indigenous students, teacher assistants and indigenous aides in the use of the WRAP approach to provide for the teaching of indigenous languages as well. These indigenous units of competency could then be added as electives in the WRAP course.

One only has to read the daily press to recognize that significant educators and researchers in the field of cognitive science are definite about the need to develop phonemic awareness approaches for the teaching of literacy. We believe that WRAP is a course that will make a major contribution in this area of training in literacy instruction by providing teachers and education specialists with the tools needed to bring significant improvements to all children including students with disabilities and indigenous students in remote areas.

In Conclusion. . .

> ... school systems need to anticipate the impact on literacy demands of the transition from primary to secondary schooling. To this end, programs involving **collaboration between primary and secondary school teachers** need to be developed more explicitly and as a greater priority than is now generally recognised.
>
> (Cairney *et al* 1994 in Lo Bianco & Freebody, 2001: 63)

WRAP is not just another technique to apply in the classroom for Literacy skill development. Its genesis lies with a committee who represent a team of primary and secondary educators and specialists who have seen the need for the availability of ongoing training here, in Australia. Those who have formed the Committee have worked within schools which have used this approach successfully for several years. The approach is effective across the **early and middle years of schooling**.

These courses provide not only support in Systematic **Phonemic Awareness for the teaching of Reading**, but continue to **develop Literacy Skills in Spelling and Writing for Reading**. They are based on the premise that if students focus on the sub-skills of Reading in Spelling and Writing Instruction, then Reading lessons focus on Comprehension and strategies which support students' development of skills for Comprehension.

To identify WRAP as a technique or methodology would limit its true effectiveness and reduce it to a series of teaching procedures with narrow applications. **WRAP is a teacher's kit bag of Spelling, Writing and Reading strategies for the development of Literacy skills. It has broad application and teaches skills for Instruction, that is, how to teach effectively for foundational Literacy skills.**

The introduction to this submission outlines perceived problems with Teacher Training based on the experiences of one school. The main focus of this project outlines a developed and working solution towards one aspect of training for Literacy Instruction used by a wide range of practitioners in a number of schools in Australia. It is our hope that the committee would give this project serious consideration in their deliberations for Teacher Training. Training of this kind is written around the research on the Psychology of Reading and Reading development. It is this focus that is necessary to the development of training in any educational practice. Having a broad coverage of widely diverse views is inconsiderate of new teachers when it comes to the definition of practice. The question identified at the beginning of

this submission is testimony to that. What is needed is a blend of the academic and some training in skills for instruction. (SRT 7.vii & 10)

This focus specifically highlights the need for the recognition of an academic course of study with a practical teaching component outside of the practicum which provides training in skills for instruction for developing practice in classroom settings. The training of teachers should be of primary importance if we seek to develop meaningful practice for our Teachers through that training. The Training Framework is a worthy mechanism for developing training either as a part of a University Degree or for acquiring Professional Development hours for practicing teachers. If we have the capacity to work within a known framework and it has been proven to be a potential source for such planning, then it should be a consideration. Training should not be a threat to the academic and, from our experience, it can be said that it is still possible to train a teacher.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Cited in Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics

Secretariat Report on Review Visit (October 2003)

Appendix 2:

THE HABERMAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Star Teacher Qualities (Pre-Screener) and Star Administrator Dimensions (Questionnaire)

Interview for assessing potential Teacher Candidates

Appendix 3:

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING COGNITIVE APPRENTICESHIP ENVIRONMENTS

Collins, A., Brown, J.S., and Holum, A. (1991). "Cognitive Apprenticeship: Making Thinking Visible." *American Educator*

This framework forms a basis for designing instructional environments and was used in planning this literacy training course. Whilst the Collin's framework recognises the sociology of the classroom, it is only **one** part of the bigger picture.

The four aspects included are:

- CONTENT: types of knowledge required for expertise
- METHOD: ways to promote the development of expertise
- SEQUENCING: keys to ordering learning activities
- SOCIOLOGY: social characteristics of learning environment

The dominance of Socio-Cultural Literacy practice has skewed educational approaches away from evidence-based research in favour of holistic approaches to Writing and Reading instruction. A focus on research-based instruction allows for the development of language skills which form the basis for learning to read. Incorporation of these principles for designing English Language and Literacy programs provides equitable means to instruction for all students regardless of socio-cultural literacy differences.

Appendix 4:

OVERVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES FOR TEACHING READING

Types of Instruction for Spelling, Writing and Reading.

from Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading – Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction

Appendix 5:

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER TRAINING

This is one example of a framework which expresses teaching practice informed by the research on the Psychology of Reading and Reading Development from **"Teaching Reading *Is* Rocket Science – What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do."** This framework was one focus for the development of Training Courses in Instructional practice towards Certificate IV in WRAP: A Writing Approach to Reading – Integrated, Systematic Literacy Instruction because it was seen to be informed by an understanding of the research based on the Psychology of Reading and Reading Development.

Appendix 6:

UNITS OF COMPETENCY
including
APPLICATION STATEMENTS, ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

This document outlines the teaching skills being developed through training for instruction. The highlighted content in the Application statements describe how theses areas identified in the research are applied in the classroom and expressed through teaching practice.

NOTE: The Units and Elements of Competency and the Performance Criteria are still under review by VETAB and are not to be quoted or published in any other context.

Appendix 7:

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This document was created as a focus for Parent Information and expresses the WRAP approach in relation to the different areas expressed in the research. Some work samples are included.

Appendix 8:

TRAINING COURSE REFERENCE TEXTS

These books have been used in the preparation of Application Statements which express the application of the research.

Appendix 9:

COURSE TEXTS

These are the Texts used for Training Courses.

Appendix 10:

MEDIA ARTICLES AND TRANSCRIPTS

These articles and transcripts represent the recent attention in the media identifying the need for choice in relation to the teaching of Reading.

Appendix 11:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Resources reviewed for the development and expression of Instruction for Spelling, Writing and Reading.