International Journal of Progressive Education

Frequency: Three times a year; February, June, and October

ISSN: 1554-5210

Indexing/Abstracting:

1- OCLC-WorldCat: http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/default.htm
2- Journal Finder: http://journalfinder.uncg.edu/demo/
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Single Issues and Back Issues: $25 USA (Canada: $35; Rest of World: $35)

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Special Issue: The Future of Whole Language

This issue of IJPE is exciting and informative in that it reminds us not only of the roots of whole language, but also helps us understand what is happening in whole language today and what we might expect in the future. The pieces we have chosen mix theoretical considerations with classroom and even media issues.

We are challenged by Brian Cambourne and Jan Turbill in their "Looking Back to Look Forward: Understanding the Present by Revisiting the Past: An Australian Perspective" to carefully and honestly examine a major goal of this issue of IJPE, that is, to understand the past and current state of literacy education. They help us to understand the complexities of literacy education in the past and today.

Susanne Gannon and Wayne Sawyer in "Whole Language and Moral Panic in Australia" bring us face to face with the powerful role of the media in the discussion of education, particularly literacy education, in Australia. Their thorough documentation of the recent media coverage of whole language in Australia reminds us of similar media coverage in our own countries. Carefully examining this phenomenon helps us to understand how ideas are communicated by the media and the effects on the public.

The last two articles hone in on classroom applications. In "Core Values of Progressive Education: Seikatsu Tsuzurikata and Whole Language" Mary Kitagawa and Chisato Kitagawa introduce us to the Seikatsu Tsuzurikata movement in Japan, a movement that reminds us of whole language philosophy and practice. Perhaps these "distant cousins" aren't so distant after all.

Finally, a sixth-grade teacher, Gennifer Otinsky, and a teacher educator, Monica Taylor, create a partnership that results in a dynamic inquiry curriculum that investigates issues of social justice in their collaborative, "Becoming Whole Language Teachers and Social Justice Agents: Pre-service Teachers Inquire with Sixth Graders." This article shows us how critical literacy and social justice projects can develop and flourish.

Finally, Amy Seeley Flint brings us an in-depth look at *Whole Language Teaching, Whole-hearted Practice: Looking Back, Looking Forward* (Taylor, Ed., 2005). Readers who have enjoyed this issue will find that Taylor's book extends the conversation.

We have been informed and moved by these stories that span the globe and yet parallel our own experiences so closely. In them we see whole language principles at work in the curriculum and pedagogy in schools and universities around the world. Such stories give us new ideas, hope and renewed strength.

Carol and Dorothy

Looking Back to Look Forward: Understanding the Present By Revisiting The Past: An Australian Perspective

Brian Cambourne* & Jan Turbill**
University of Wollongong, Australia

Abstract

Cambourne and Turbill trace the growth, change and finally marginalisation of progressive approaches to literacy education by examining whole language philosophy in Australia from the 1960s to the present. Using a critical lens, Cambourne and Turbill describe how whole language has been positioned throughout the last nearly 50 years in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Cambourne and Turbill offer a personal history of whole language in Australia and draw connections of the educational changes occurring in their country to other western democracies. Their insights are valuable in order to examine other grass roots programs and to better understand how politics impact educational movements.

* Brian Cambourne is a Principal Fellow in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, Australia. His research ranges from alternate teacher education programs to language and literacy theory. He is the author of many books and journal articles and is a strong advocate for social justice in education.
Contact: bcambrn@uow.edu.au

**Jan Turbill is a Senior Fellow in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, Australia. Her research ranges from early literacy development to the professional development of teachers. She is the author of many books and articles and is President of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA).
Contact: jturbill@uow.edu.au

Introduction

During the trip back to Australia after the Whole Language Umbrella conference in Chicago in 2001 we were confused about the state of literacy education. In particular we were concerned about the steady marginalisation and ultimate demonisation of progressive approaches to literacy education such as whole language. "Why?" we asked, "How did this happen? What went wrong? What could be done?"

In the course of this discussion we revisited what we meant by *progressive approaches to literacy education.* We agreed that it meant using pedagogical ideas and practices that would make schools more effective agencies of democratic society. We agreed that progressive education had two core values, namely that each individual should be recognized for his or her own abilities, interests, ideas, needs, and cultural identity, and that the development of a critical, socially engaged form of 'intelligence' would enable individuals to understand and participate effectively in the affairs of their community by working collaboratively to achieve the common good. And finally we agreed that it meant teachers had to be thinkers and researchers in their own classrooms.

As our flight droned across the Pacific at 35,000 feet, we also agreed that the term *progressive education* could also be described as *child-centered*, and/or *social reconstructionist* or *Dewey-an* in orientation. Finally, before dozing off as we crossed the International Date Line we concluded that while the term *whole language* might have been the most commonly used descriptor of this kind of progressivism in North America, it had gone by different labels in other western democracies. In our country (Australia) it had been variously described as *contextualised learning, integrated learning, meaning centred learning, holistic learning, mindful learning,* and *constructivist.*

In hindsight we realise that our discussion was a reaction to two things: first, the dramatic decline of support for progressive pedagogies of literacy and second the simultaneous promotion of a much more traditional pedagogy identified by such generic labels as *explicit and systematic teaching of reading*, *direct instruction in the sub skills of reading*, (both with and without capital 'd' and 'i'), or *balanced literacy instruction.*

As the flight touched down in Australia we agreed we had identified an interesting phenomenon, that there were almost identical educational changes occurring almost simultaneously in several western democracies. We found this synchronicity intriguing. We still do. In fact this article was motivated by a need to understand it.

The specific purpose of this paper is to explore, and then try to explain, why the strong support for one particular pedagogy suddenly and dramatically declined, and why, and how, a distinctly different pedagogy suddenly seemed to be dramatically promoted and supported in its stead. We use Australia as our case study, in the hope that our colleagues who have had similar experiences in other western democracies might find some relevance. The hope is that greater understanding will inform our ability to deal with and respond to the rapid socio-political changes that will continue to impact on all aspects of education, but especially literacy education.

Looking Back

We will call our looking back our 'potted history' of Australian literacy education. It covers the period from when we both began our teaching careers to the present. It is important to realise that the term *whole language* was not used in Australia before the 1980s. We probably imported it from the USA and Canada. It has become a ubiquitous term that means many things to many people.[1] To define whole language, we think a more useful approach is to examine the emergence of whole language from an historical perspective. As both of us have been educators for more than four decades, we believe we are well positioned to provide a history, albeit a personal one, of language theories and practices in the Australian context. Whole language as we know it and its current status in Australia is inextricably linked to this history. [2]

We have organised our history across four decades from the 1960s to 2000s. We intend to discuss each decade from the perspectives of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Let us begin.

The 1960s (and before): The Skills Era

We both remember this era vividly. We were young teachers following the mandated NSW (New South Wales) Curriculum for Primary Schools (1961). This was a two-inch thick, blue, hard-covered syllabus document that contained the curriculum content for all subjects and all grade levels we were required to teach (K-6), including the number of minutes to be spent on each subject each week. The teaching of reading was predominately the domain of the Grades 1 and 2 teachers. By Grade 3 it was assumed children had learned to read and therefore could use reading for learning. The 'blue bible' (as this curriculum document was commonly called) was organised into discrete segments for these early grades: phonics, comprehension, supplementary reading, and reading-appreciation. The skills of spelling, handwriting and grammar were considered to be quite discrete but essential skills and were therefore to be taught as self-contained subjects.

Reading and writing were also viewed as quite separate curriculum subjects. In fact the term *writing* referred to *handwriting* or *penmanship*. The act of composing texts was referred to as *composition* or *written expression*. Children were required to compose complete sentences with correct spelling, handwriting and grammar in one draft, on prescribed topics. The general expectation was children would be able to write correctly one sentence in Grade 1 and two in Grade 2. By the time the child entered Grade 3 it was expected that "the average child compose and write three consecutive sentences" (Department of Education 1961. p. 89).

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[1] A Google search found 224 million references to the term 'whole language' in just 24 seconds.

[2] It is important to point out for our readers that while we will be drawing on examples predominately from the state of New South Wales (in which we live), all states in Australia have centralised education systems and their respective curriculum over the years have been and still are very similar.

For children in their first year of school, (called Kindergarten in New South Wales [NSW]), the teaching of reading was not a major focus. In fact the NSW Curriculum -the blue bible- (1961) stated that,

> No formal lessons [in reading] should be given in the Kindergarten. … Modern research has shown that the child is not ready to begin formal reading before he [sic] has attained the mental age of six years. The Kindergarten teacher will therefore plan a pre-reading programme rather than a reading program. (p. 83)

The listed activities included *oral expression* through science, social and artistic experiences*, story, poetry and picture reading, pattern reading* (visual and auditory discrimination activities) and *book handling* (p. 83).

Pedagogy

The pedagogy during this era reflected the belief that children must have control of the individual skills before they could put the pieces together and read or write. The Director General of Education for NSW in his opening section of the curriculum, *Statement of Guiding Aims and Underlying Principles*, stated that,

> "Careful planning and grading of basic skills and knowledge are essential. … Learning takes place more efficiently when there are prompt and regular reinforcements" (p.xi).

The teaching methods that were predominant followed the pattern *teach-practice-test* and were clearly underpinned by a learning theory that "came straight out of the experimental psychologist's laboratory" (Smith 1986, p.67). We did flash card drills (recognition of whole word), phonic drills (recognition of individual sounds and their blends), spelling drills and worksheet after worksheet so that children could practice, practice, practice and we teachers could check to see if the child had mastered the required skills.

It is important to note that during this time a heated debate erupted in Australia between what was called *whole-word* or *look-and-say* and *phonics-first* advocates (see Holdaway, 1979, Thomas 1985). While both methods were based on principles of behaviourist theory of learning (Skinner, 1957) whole-word pedagogy was underpinned by Gestalt theory that argues that people perceive objects as 'wholes' and can be best summed up with the axiom the "whole is more than the sum of its parts" (Hufnus, n.d.). Therefore whole-word advocates argued children needed to learn the pattern of the whole word hence the use of flashcards and all the activities that were put in place around these. Phonics advocates argued that children needed to learn to analyse words and their component sounds. This debate can be seen to still take place today with media and politicians confusing whole word with whole language.

Assessment

Assessment appeared to be relatively easy at the time as each worksheet or teacher-given test provided a numerical grade for each child. All teaching focussed on

getting it right. Mistakes were not acceptable and had to be ruthlessly rooted out in case they became "permanently fixed in the child's repertoire" (Cambourne, 1988, p.19). The Primary Curriculum (1961) stated,

> Evaluation at regular intervals is essential to ascertain the progress being made towards achieving the objectives of the curriculum. A variety of procedures will be followed: teachers own brief, informal classroom tests; more formal examinations at regular intervals; diagnostic and standardised tests (p. xi).

The two major stakeholders in the assessment of children outside the classroom were the Headmaster or Headmistress of the school, and the parents. Politicians seemed to have little or no interest in the teaching of reading, writing, spelling, grammar and written expression. During this era they seemed to be prepared to trust those of us who worked in the education system – a system that was directly accountable to the Minister of Education of the day whose responsibility was to manage the education portfolio.

How was whole language positioned in this era?

While the term *whole language* was not well known at the time, it was a time when many of us were questioning the prevailing teaching/learning philosophy. Immigrants and refugees from countries where English was not the first language were arriving in Australia in large numbers. We were forced to examine language learning from the perspective of the child, to observe children more closely in order to understand what they could do. While the joy of story reading to children had always been part of our teaching, we realised that children's literature could also be used to teach children to read.

Towards the end of the 60s Australian K-2 teachers were introduced to *Language Experience* (Ashton-Warner 1963). Language Experience is based on the premise that if children could tell their 'story' and someone could scribe (i.e. convert this story to written text) the children would then be able to read and re-read it. Ashton-Warner's book, *Teacher* (1963) convinced many of us to use this approach to teach our young students to read. Not only did we find it very successful, particularly with the non-English speaking background children, but we realised it was fun for students to create individual Language Experience booklets. We used these child-created stories to teach children phonics, high frequency words, punctuation and much, much more. We began to see the advantages of modelled writing—that is scribing the child's story and thinking aloud about the process we were going through to spell the words and so on. Class libraries filled with the children's created books and these were read and reread by them.

The 1970s – The Era of Reading as Meaning-Making: Emergence of Whole Language Curriculum

In this era the mandated curriculum in most Australian states changed dramatically. In NSW the thick 'blue bible' that incorporated all subjects was replaced with individual documents for each subject. The first of these for language and literacy was known as *Curriculum for Primary Schools: Language* (1974). This curriculum was considered radical with respect to content, philosophical

underpinnings, pedagogy, and assessment. Unlike its predecessor (the 'blue bible') this small green document (16 pages in total) comprised a philosophical framework of *guiding statements on language learning.* This was a dramatic break from the previous era which was based on the assumption that teachers needed to be told explicitly what to do with respect to the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and so forth. Rather, this new document assumed that teachers were professionally equipped to read and understand these statements and use their professional knowledge to develop relevant pedagogy. Influenced by two UK government reports, the Plowden Report (1967) and the Bullock Report (1975), the curriculum was child-centred, recognised that children all come to school with "an extensive working knowledge of his [sic] language" (p.3), emphasised that "language learning is part of a child's total development" (p.2) and that "the integration of language learning activities [talking and listening, reading and writing] is recommended" (p.2).

One striking comment made in a footnote in this curriculum had major ramifications in later years, particularly in the middle and secondary school years. It stated,

> This syllabus contains no requirement for the teaching of a system of grammar. The whole approach to language learning emphasizes the use of language in meaningful situations (p. 5).

Most teachers interpreted this to mean there was no need to teach the grammar of English at all – hence a generation of students went through the school system with no knowledge of terms such as, *noun* or *verb,* nor did they understand their function in a sentence.

With such a change in curriculum requiring teachers of all elementary age children not to simply *do* what the curriculum told them, but to understand the reasons for what and why they taught, there was a large increase in professional development opportunities, conferences, research and publications. All these experiences aimed to support teachers who were given a great deal more responsibility for what they did in their classrooms.

Chall's (1967) concept that effective decoding to sound was the *sine qua non* of effective reading was seriously challenged in this era. The writings of Ken Goodman (1982), Yetta Goodman (Wilde, 1996), Dorothy Watson (Watson & Allen 1976), Jerry Harste (1989), Connie Weaver (1980), Brian Cambourne (1988), Don Holdaway (1979), Marie Clay (1979), James Britton (Barnes et al., 1989), and many others, moved teachers from focusing on reading as a decoding process only to focusing on reading as meaning-making. The strong message emerging from these writers was that readers bring meaning *to* print in order to take meaning *from* print. Frank Smith talked about *reading from behind the eyes* as he and others demonstrated that reading is more than decoding print on the page (1978, p. 12). Ken and Yetta Goodman's work on miscue analysis (Goodman K. & Gollasch, 1982; Watson & Allen 1976; Goodman, Y. & Watson & Burke, 2006) showed us that all proficient readers use three major subsystems or cueing systems of language in order to construct meaning from text: the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic systems.

This research and writings informed the second NSW curriculum of the 70s, *Reading K-12: Curriculum Policy Statement* (1978). The quote below provides a visual representation of the theory underpinning this curriculum.

Reading can be viewed diagrammatically as follows:
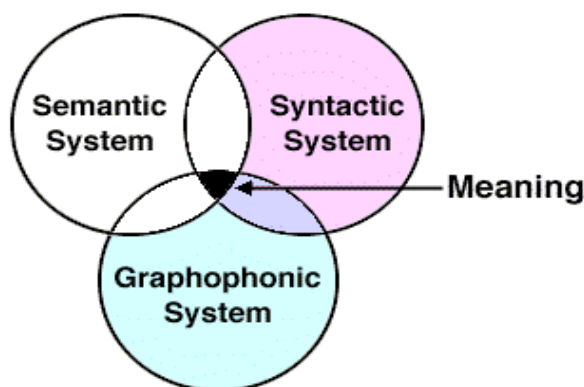
Effective readers use skills interdependently in all three areas – semantic, syntactic and grapho-phonic – as the need arises. Many ineffective readers tend to rely too heavily on symbol-sound (grapho-phonic) cues (p. 15).

Pedagogy

There was a notable shift in pedagogy in the teaching of reading during this time also. Although widely accepted now, the philosophical changes in curriculum meant a major pedagogical shift for teachers in their teaching of reading, particularly for teachers of the early years of schooling. (Some have still not made this paradigm shift but that is another story!) With the teaching of reading now being described as a *process,* it was argued that children continue to learn to read long after Grade 2. Thus, the focus of teaching reading broadened across the elementary years and all elementary school teachers were expected to be teachers of reading.

The concept that children learn to read so they can use reading for learning also emerged at this time. However, if children were to be successful at being able to use reading for learning, there were additional skills that needed to be taught in the upper years of elementary school. These included research or library skills, reading graphs and diagrams, using tables of contents and indexes, locating information in books, reading non-fiction and a variety of other genres.

While spelling, handwriting, and composition were in the main still taught as separate subjects, the teaching of reading saw the integration of its disparate components into organised reading groups or activities. Often this meant that the physical organization of the classroom needed to change so that children could work easily in small groups.

There was more reading *to* children from Kindergarten through to Grade 6. The choice of books to read aloud as well as those that the children were asked to read

themselves began to change; they were interesting, modern, and engaging. NSW Department of Education stopped producing their own reading materials, and publishers moved in with a plethora of reading programs in which there were many interesting and colorful books organized into levels. Published manuals to support teachers in what to teach and how to teach it tended to replace the syllabus as the main source of information on teaching reading.

Both the publishers and the state system provided teacher in-service on new and interesting ways to teach reading within a meaning-making focus. An important emphasis of these courses was to help the teachers not only learn new strategies to use in their classrooms but to understand the reading process and how readers read. Teachers were now becoming *thinkers* as well as *doers*, especially with respect to teaching reading.

While the graphophonic system was still seen as an important focus, the guiding force behind our teaching was to encourage readers to *go for meaning*. Children were asked to predict unknown words by drawing on the graphophonic system (rather than sounding out each letter), their syntactic knowledge (or feel for the grammar), as well as the meaning that they were already constructing; to read on or to reread to confirm the meaning; and to use the illustrations to support their predictions. At university we began to talk about reading at a *metacognitive level* with our student teachers. Miscues were acceptable as long as what was said made sense. Teachers created new activities in order to emphasise these reading strategies. The use of *cloze, repeated readings, readers' theatre, retelling*, and many others became prevalent.

This focus on reading for meaning meant that more 'real' reading was done. Classroom libraries with high-quality children's literature appeared and children were encouraged to read as many books as they could. Records were kept of what they read as well as the amount read. The practice of taking books from school to home began. Whole school planning for the teaching of reading saw the introduction of allocated time each day for everyone to read. This time had various labels, such as Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).

Two Australian professional associations emerged in the 70s in order to provide teachers with new understandings and teaching practices. The Australian Reading Association affiliated with the International Reading Association (now known as the Australian Literacy Educators' Association [ALEA]) and the Primary English Teaching Association (PETA) saw their memberships grow rapidly and teachers seized the opportunities to pick up new ideas.

Teachers began to program thematically often using children's literature as the focus. For instance, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1969) could be used to teach days of the week, counting, healthy foods, as well as the life cycle of a butterfly.

We remember these as exciting times for the teaching of reading.

Assessment

It was a period of mixed paradigms with respect to assessment. Teachers still gave many tests to check that students had learned what was expected. However they were also beginning to consider what the child could do rather than focus only on what the child couldn't do. This thinking then led to asking the question so what do I teach this child next? Assessment strategies such as *kidwatching* (Goodman, Y., 1978), *miscue analysis* (Goodman, Y., Watson, & Burke, 2006 2nd ed) and *running records* (Clay, 1979) became part of teachers' repertoires.

Such assessments highlighted for teachers what children needed to know and so informed the teachers' future planning and instruction at the whole class level and for individual children.

How was whole language positioned during the 70s?

The 70s certainly saw a radical shift in thinking about reading theory and practice that could be viewed as the emergence of whole language, although this term was still not widely used. There was greater interconnectedness of the language components and a focus on the child as a learner. This meant there was greater cultural sensitivity. However, there were many teachers and educators who challenged the focus on reading-for-meaning, arguing that it was teaching children to make wild guesses. Others argued that all children, especially those who had learning or language problems needed to be taught phonics and decoding quite explicitly before they could make meaning. The debate between *phonics-and-decoding-first* and *reading-for-meaning* groups resulted in the emergence of two distinct schools (some called them camps) of reading theorists and pedagogies. The phonics and decoding group became strongly aligned with special education.

Another major issue that was constantly contested during this time was the testing of reading. Many argued that standardized reading instruments only measured decoding skills and not the full spectrum of reading skills and strategies that proficient readers use. Miscue analysis, running records, retellings, cloze passages, and informal reading inventories were seen as more useful instruments for measuring reading progress while also diagnosing the child's reading needs. Others argued that these instruments were too subjective and allowed children to *fall between the cracks*.

The 1980s: The Era of Focus on Process and the Reading-Writing Connections

The 80s, we argue, was the zenith of whole language in Australia, particularly the early 80s. It was also a period where the focus shifted from reading and the teaching of reading to writing and its teaching. In 1980 Sydney hosted the International Federation for the Teaching of English (IFTE) conference. International speakers from all over the world arrived on our shores. We heard people speak whom in the past we had only ever read. We met new people who shared their new and exciting research. One such person was Donald Graves. His research into early writing development was a revelation to many of us in the audience (Graves, 1983; Walshe, 1981a). The Primary English Teaching Association (PETA) invited Graves back to Australia and many of us set up similar writing projects in early-years classrooms. R.D. Walshe released his book *Every Child Can Write* in 1981 (Walshe, 1981b). Walshe's book drew our attention to the work of Donald Murray, Graves and many others and linked their writing to the Australian classroom. He focused on what

he called the *process approach to the teaching of writing,* drawing on what professional writers do in order to compose a piece of writing to its final publication. PETA published many books in a few short years on this area (Turbill, 1982, 1983; Butler and Turbill, 1984; Cambourne and Turbill, 1987) and teachers welcomed the Australian nature of these books.

The focus on writing and its connections to reading was highlighted by Frank Smith's work. Smith introduced us to the concept of *reading like a writer* (Smith 1982, 1983) which in turn reinforced the notion that constructing meaning using alphabetic script, whether as a reader or writer, were all part of the same language process. This concept highlighted for teachers that they could teach many skills during reading lessons that could be used in writing lessons.

It was during this era that Cambourne introduced us to his *theory of learning* that he called *The Conditions of Learning* (Butler and Turbill, 1984; Cambourne, 1988). These conditions many would argue became the basis for what was known as whole language in Australia. They could be applied to all language learning, as well as to other curriculum areas.

One outcome of these publications was that the term *literacy* rather than *reading* and/or *writing* emerged and became integral to curriculum discussions.

Curriculum

The mandated NSW curriculum *Writing K-12* was launched in 1987 after wide consultation with teachers and educators. It was the partner to the *Reading K-12* curriculum published in the 70s. It too was revolutionary for a mandated curriculum. There were three components: Statement of Principles (K-12), Syllabus for Writing (K-6) and Support Statements (K-12). Throughout there were photographs and examples of children's writing. These served to demonstrate the curriculum requirements as much as the text did.

By the time this mandated curriculum hit the NSW schools many teachers had already begun to change what they did in the name of teaching writing. The many Australian publications, as well as some U.S. publications, had served as the curriculum in the early years of the decade.

Pedagogy

There was a dramatic change in pedagogy during this decade. Most classrooms were filled with books - children's literature as well as new reading programs that looked and sounded far more interesting and relevant than the old department-supplied texts. Colourful Big Books were everywhere, all featuring the '3 Rs' of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. These were used for teaching reading, but also used as models for teaching writing and spelling.

Teachers were reading more to children, and children were also reading more. Such activities became great resources for the teaching and learning of writing. Teachers began to examine what writers do - the process writers go through - and to apply this to the teaching of their children.

Observations of young children attempting to write gave us insights into how readers and writers learn to become literate, insights that we had not realised before, and thus raised our expectations of what young children could do. We became researchers in our own classrooms as we watched five- and six-year-olds dispel theories we had held about them as learners. We heard as well as saw these children unravel the graphophonic mystery as they *invented* their spellings in their attempts to write. Classrooms became what could be called *phonic factories*. Children were developing and using their phonemic awareness (we didn't call it that).

We began to understand the connections between reading, writing, and spelling. It became apparent that if we wanted our young writers to write, they had to be immersed in the language of books. This may seem obvious to us now, but we didn't always think this way. And so the pedagogy reflected this understanding and the literacy period seemed to be seamless with no distinct lessons on reading skills or spelling drills. Teachers attempted to teach these skills within the context of the reading-writing workshop which was usually a two-hour block each day.

Assessment

The impact of the Process Writing movement on our curriculum and pedagogy led to many changes in the way we thought about assessment. Teachers began to look for assessment practices that were more responsive to students' needs, were more qualitative, and which focused on both process and product. Teachers collected students' writings over time and analysed these to note their growth and progression. This information along with records of reading progression, using miscue analysis, running records and reading inventories became the basis for each child's portfolio. Teachers amassed so much information on each child that the problem arose as to how to store it all, and more importantly how to analyse and report the results to parents. It would be fair to say that it was a time of confusion for teachers with respect to assessment. Teachers were caught in a paradigm shift where the changes in understandings about assessment had not kept pace with the understandings in the learning and teaching of literacy (Cambourne and Turbill, 1994).

How was whole language positioned during the 80s?

It was during the 80s that the term whole language began to be used for how and what we were teaching with respect to literacy.

Towards the end of the 80s many of us began to recognize the importance of purpose and audience in shaping the different types of writing. Many teachers were frustrated with the quality of their children's writing and were beginning to ask: "What is 'good' writing?" and, "How do we teach students to write a variety of text forms?"

Australian functional linguists including Michael Halliday (1980, 1985), Jim Martin (1985), Frances Christie (1989) and Beverly Derewianka (1990) helped us understand how different texts are structured, and which texts are important for school success. They warned us that young writers tended always to recount or to create simply talk written down, unless they are encouraged to write other text types. This

led us to consider the need to introduce a wider range of text types to young children, to read fiction and non-fiction in the classroom. It also led us to reconsider the role that grammar played, and the need for our students to learn about the grammar of their language. It was imperative the linguists argued to have a language to talk about language. The label *story* was no longer acceptable for all types of texts children might write. Instead, they argued students should know and be able to write recounts, reports, narratives, descriptions, procedures, and so on.

This focus on structure of texts forced us to examine more deeply the syntactic system and what information about syntax or grammar students need to know in order to be more effective language users. It was the beginning of what we called *the genre movement.*

Toward the end of the 1980s, controversies were rampant. There were cries that students were not being taught spelling, that acceptance of invented spelling was creating a nation of illiterates, that our students were not being taught phonics, that student writing was too personal, and that there was a need for students to be taught the skills of reading and writing (including spelling and grammar) explicitly. The call for greater accountability in public spending led to the introduction in 1988 to the first statewide testing in New South Wales, and there were calls for a national curriculum and national testing. Claims were being made that standards were falling, that students were leaving school with insufficient literacy skills.

At the end of the era, whole language was beginning to be blamed for all these so-called shortcomings.

The 90s: Focus on Text Types, Genres and Critical Literacy

In Australia, this was the era that coincided with the marginalisation of whole language. In the competition for curriculum influence and government funding some writers in the genre movement turned on whole language describing it as "romantic", "progressive", and "idealistic" (Christie, 1989; Martin, 1985). At the same time they promoted Halliday's Functional Systemic Grammar model (Halliday, 1980, 1985) as the theoretical basis for the literacy curriculum. Those of us who had been promoting the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices of the 70s and 80s were confused by this attempt to marginalise whole language, as from our perspective we seemed to be promoting identical philosophies.

Elkind (1995) suggested that the 90s was the beginning of the *postmodern* period and therefore there was a strong move towards critical literacy (Luke, 1987; Comber 2001, 2003).

While there may be clear connections between these new movements, for most teachers it seemed that new fads were being introduced. Literacy was becoming a political tool. Grand rhetorical statements decreed that "no child would live in poverty" and "all children would read and write by Grade 3." Media headlines claimed literacy standards were falling and that whole language was to blame.

The word literacy began to take on new meaning, as indicated in the definition in the Australian Literacy Policy (Department of Education and Employment, 1991):

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 throughout 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. (p. 6)

Curriculum

Advocates who supported a strong focus on the teaching of text types and critical literacy seemed to base their argument on three principles. These were:

- Language and literacy are cultural capital which the less affluent can use to level the economic playing field (Luke, 1987; Comber, 2001),

- Control over a wide range of language genre (text-types) is a medium for accessing power (Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Martin, 1985),

- Social equity can only be promoted if schools develop critical intelligence in their students (Comber 2001, 2003; Comber and Barnett 2003; Christie, F., Devlin, B., Freebody, P., Luke, A., Martin, J., Threadgold, T, & Walton, C., 1991).

The NSW Syllabus, *English K-6* (1998) based on outcomes standards framework stated:

Competence in English will enable students to learning about the role of language in their own lives, and in their own and other cultures. They will then be able to communicate their thoughts and feelings, to participate in society, to make informed decisions about personal and social issues, to analyse information and viewpoints, to use their imaginations and to think about the influence of culture on the meanings made in language (p.6).

These curricula principles spilled over into the pedagogies that were strongly promoted in the Syllabus.

Pedagogy

The new syllabus *English K-6* (1998) was accompanied by support modules that were designed to help teachers focus on the teaching of a range of text types. The pedagogy now involved a great deal of time spent in identifying and categorising different genres (text-types), their generic structures and grammatical features.

This in turn, permitted the formal study of the relationships between context, purpose, audience, and linguistic choice as indicators being applied to all aspects of literacy teaching. Many teachers incorporated this pedagogy into their existing

repertoire of practices (Freebody and Luke, 1990). Many others however, moved into formulaic orthodoxies of teaching of text types.

For many teachers having to work within an outcomes framework was overwhelming, as there seemed to be so many outcomes for each of the four areas of reading, writing, talking and listening.

Assessment

The 'outcomes standard framework' was also to be used as a framework for assessment and future planning. The framework identified explicit indicators of achievement along a broad continuum of literacy development K-6. Teachers now had a clear direction for assessment and planning. It also meant that teachers could be held more accountable for their literacy teaching. This accountability was complemented by the introduction of a mandatory statewide basic skills testing regime for grades three, five, and seven.

How was whole language positioned during the 90s?

It was during this period that the concept of 'whole language' was marginalised and scapegoated to such a degree that the very use of the term invoked negative responses, especially from politicians and policy makers. Just how and why this occurred was both frustrating and at times very confusing. In order to understand this we need to digress and review the processes of scapecoating as we interpret these events.

When we look back and try to make sense of the 70s, 80s and 90s, we can recognise five distinct phases in the decline of support for whole language or what was often called progressive approaches to literacy education.

Phase 1: Progressive Forms of Literacy Education As The Dominant and Privileged Pedagogy

As indicated in our potted history of the 70s, 80s and 90s, progressive approaches to literacy education enjoyed a great deal of support and experienced a huge surge of popularity. As we wrote in 1997:

> During the 1980s, the whole language club was the club to be seen at and belong to, and many teachers quickly joined, with too many of them not really knowing or really wanting to know the basic philosophy underpinning the existence of the club (Turbill and Cambourne 1997, p.4).

Phase 2: The Decline Begins

In the same piece we noted,

> As we entered the 1990s, there were some who became dissatisfied with their membership and moved out to begin their own clubs. There were others who never joined the whole language club and remained suspicious of its philosophy and practices. These groups became the critics of whole language; some were useful allies, others were bitter and bigoted enemies (Turbill & Cambourne 1997, p.4).

The "bitterness and bigotry" reached a peak in late 90s. This phase was characterised by a series of events that were remarkably similar in the other countries in which this decline occurred. We like to call this the *Henny Penny syndrome*.

Aspects of this syndrome included claims that:
- A crisis or serious decline in literacy standards existed;
- The root cause of this literacy crisis was a serious inadequacy of current progressive teaching methods, namely whole language;
- This literacy crisis could be turned around, however any action must be quick and decisive; and
- There was a readily available, proven, non-progressive pedagogy that would reverse the literacy crisis if only schools and teachers would adopt it.

Evidence to support these claims was dubious or non-existent.

Phase 3: From Marginalisation to The Repression of Dissent

With whole language identified as the alleged cause of the crisis, those who were perceived to be its advocates were quickly subjected to a campaign of marginalisation. The techniques of this marginalisation took a number of forms, from personal abuse, to professional scapegoating, to professional harassment, to professional isolation by those in positions of power within state systems, to the introduction of infrastructures that are used to repress dissent.

Phase 4: From Rational Dissent to The Discourse of Denial

During this phase, advocates of whole language who had been subjected to the marginalisation processes described in Phase 3 began to recognise what was happening. As a consequence we began to respond to many alleged claims. Initially the discourse we employed was more one of polite rationality than adversarial debate. We described those who were trying to discredit whole language as being *genuinely misinformed,* or, *not understanding the full picture*. However, as the marginalisation process continued, the tenor of the discourse shifted to what Brennan describes as the *discourse of denial* (Brennan 1994). Brennan argues that the discourse of denial is a feature of all adversarial debate. It is exemplified in the discourse used by lawyers in cross-examination. Its purpose is to discredit a witness's evidence. During this phase both advocates and adversaries of whole language adopted strong adversarial postures. The tenor of the language shifted from suggesting that one's opponents were *genuinely misinformed* to accusations of *deliberately dealing in untruths,* or *deliberately spreading dis- and or mis- information*. A feature of the discourse has been an increase in *the rhetoric of certitude* or *the rhetoric of camouflage* (Cambourne 1994) by both sides.

Phase 5: Emerging Consensus

In a country with such a relatively small academic community we realised towards the end of the 90s that warring factions were detrimental to any forward thinking in literacy education. A spirit of inclusiveness emerged which we believe began with Freebody and Luke's seminal work on the "Four Roles of the Reader" (Freebody and Luke, 1990; Luke and Freebody, 1999). Their thinking gave us an

ideal heuristic for reframing the literacy debates. In turn we could begin to identify the key aspects of literacy philosophy and pedagogy and assessment that would most likely respond to the needs of the 21st century. An outcome of this inclusiveness was a move away from using the term *whole language* and simply using *literacy*. To us the principles underpinning the word literacy were similar but did not bring with it the negative connotations.

The 00s: The Era of Literacy For Social Purposes

As we moved into the 21st century the concept of literacy was recognized by most as involving a much more complex set of skills than had been understood in the past. Today's culture requires readers and writers to be able not only to read and write for pleasure and information but to ask questions of the text, to recognize how the writer tries to position the reader, and to understand that literacy is used for social purposes.

Literacy and the teaching of literacy have become more complex and reach out across wider and wider audiences, so that we now accept that we are lifelong literacy learners. We accept that we will need to learn new literacy skills in new contexts. It is a K-adult curriculum now.

However, it is an era when politics and politicians have taken control of the literacy agenda. This is not surprising, as those who don't have high levels of literacy are more likely to end up on some sort of social support and thus viewed as a burden to society. So, in order to save money in the long term, it seems politicians have agreed that literacy begins in the early years. And they are finally prepared to support this concept financially. This support includes mandating (even legislating) how early childhood educators should teach children to read and write and how and what pre-service and in-service teachers should be taught in teacher education and staff development programs. Each state in Australia has developed a literacy strategy that is supported by strong government spending. Teachers are once again required to use the materials written and published by their state systems. The government-initiated and -developed programs from Western Australia and Victoria are now marketed commercially across the world.

However, there is a danger that these programs will de-skill teachers, returning them to being simple *doers* of other people's thinking. There is a strong contradiction emerging here -- wanting teachers to be teachers of critical literacy yet not encouraging them to be critically literate themselves and making their own decisions about the materials and teaching strategies to use in their teaching of literacy.

Where there is political interference there are lobby groups, and one that has become very strong during this era includes those who never quite left the focus on the skills such as explicit decoding. These groups have been beavering away, many with their own small research projects that prove categorically that children must have a well-developed sense of phonemic awareness, must know the alphabetic principles, and must be taught phonics through systematic and explicit instruction. Their message has been passed down since the 60s. What is frightening is that the spin these people have put on their message today has convinced so many in positions of power and financial control that this narrow (and, we would argue, out of touch with the real

world) view of literacy is the only pedagogy for the teaching of literacy (Teaching Reading Report, 2005).

We, who have taught through these years, have observed children learning to read and write; we know that there is more to becoming literate than this narrow view. We have brought with us through the years what works for us in the teaching of literacy. We have learned a great deal more about literacy, about learning, about language as each era passed. There is so much that we know now, there are so many resources that we have access to, that it is often difficult to know where to start with our young readers, writers, and spellers. We certainly know a lot more than the politicians and media, although it is increasingly difficult for us to be heard.

There are still the contradictions that exist that create great frustration and uncertainty among teachers. Such anxiety leads to confusion, and it becomes easy for teachers to lose confidence in themselves and their teaching. We need reassure teachers that they can no longer simply be *doers*; they must be thinkers and researchers in their classrooms and schools. We are professionals -- better trained than ever before. We must take control. We must take time to work with one another, share with one another, collaborate, and reflect together on philosophy and pedagogy. We must learn from our students so we can develop programs and curriculum that best suit the needs of our students. Together with our students, we can take control, and can respond to the challenges and contradictions that emerge from the politicians and bureaucrats (and from narrow-viewed academics!)

Teachers and teaching do make a difference in the literacy education of students. It is important, as Luke and Freebody (1999b) suggest,

> To recognize that there is no evidence that literacy education could possibly "end poverty" or "solve unemployment" in Australia or anywhere else, despite the cyclical claims by politicians and others that literacy is both the cause and the solution to all that ails us. But there is evidence that literacy education can make a substantial contribution to transforming the social distribution of knowledge, discourse, and with these, real economic and social capital among communities, groups and individuals. (unpaged)

Where to next?

We think we have moved into a new era, *a focus on multiliteracies*. Meaning making now involves being able to read and write not only print text but also e-texts that include color, sound, movement, and visual representations. It seems there is much we need to learn about how readers and writers draw on these different symbolic, or semiotic systems to make meaning of their worlds. How do we read and write these different systems? What strategies and skills do we use? What do we need to teach out students if they are to become proficient readers and writers of today's texts that draw on multiple semiotic systems to represent meaning? We believe these are the significant research questions that we must urgently address, not studies of fragmented aspects of the literacy process.

Literacy is certainly a far more complex process in the '00s than it was in the '60s. It is imperative, we believe, that teachers of literacy -- and particularly teachers

of early literacy -- broaden their view of what literacy is in today's world. The digital world is here to stay, and it is a highly literacy-dependent world in which readers and writers need to have highly refined skills and access to multiple strategies that go beyond paper-based print texts (Turbill, 2001a, 2001b, 2003).

Whole language is still with us, strongly embedded in current curriculum, pedagogy and assessment strategies. Adversaries of whole language still complain that the term whole language may not be used however the philosophy is alive and well in each state system. These same adversaries of whole language are now lobbying governments to ensure that the content of pre-service teacher education be examined and scourged of any whole language principles, on the threat of withholding government funding.

Some in Australia lament that the term is no longer in vogue, others of us have moved on. There are and always will be battles to be fought; nevertheless, we are excited about where we are heading. We believe that in spite of all that has threatened progressive education in Australian classrooms and whole language in particular, four key principles are evident in today's Australian classrooms (Louden et al., 2005). These are a focus on:
1. Social justice,
2. Interconnectedness of language,
3. Cultural sensitivity, and
4. Teachers as researchers.

When the literacy curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are underpinned by these principles, whole language is still really with us. It has, like good wine, simply aged and matured.

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"Whole language" and moral panic in Australia

Susanne Gannon* & Wayne Sawyer**
University of Western Sydney

Abstract

This paper examines the media and political landscapes within which "whole language" is currently constituted in Australia. Through surveying the themes and rhetoric deployed in media texts over recent years, we consider how "whole language" has been taken up as part of a wider media campaign around education generally. We consider how this campaign has been instrumental in constructing a moral panic around literacy education in particular. We begin with an overview of how the literacy standards of Australia's young people compare on international measures with young people elsewhere. We consider how the media has bundled these with populist concerns about literacy pedagogy and other educational issues to create a sense of national crisis about education. We argue that the sociological concept of "moral panic" provides a useful and systematic theoretical framework for reading these discursive tactics of the media. Finally, we examine how a National Inquiry into literacy responded to this panic by reinscribing a familiar – and unhelpful - binary between "whole language" and phonics-based instruction. In the title and in the body of the paper we keep "whole language" in quotation marks to remind the readers that use of the term in the media texts that are analysed differs widely from its usage by literacy specialists.

*Dr Susanne Gannon is a Senior Lecturer in secondary English and literacy teacher education. Prior to this appointment she was a teacher and literacy consultant to primary and secondary schools for many years. Her research interests include media representations of educational issues and the impacts of neoliberalism on education. Susanne Gannon, School of Education, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith Sth DC, NSW, 1797, Australia, Ph: 61 2 47360292 Fax: 61 2 47360400

**Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer is Head of Secondary Teacher Education programs at the University of Western Sydney. He is a former high school Head of English. His research interests are in secondary English education, teacher education and the politics of literacy. He has published over 20 books on the teaching of English. Wayne Sawyer, School of Education, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith Sth DC, NSW, 1797, Australia, Ph: 61 2 47360795, Fax: 61 2 47360400

Introduction

Literacy instruction in schools, as with all educational practices, takes place within complex cultural, political and policy landscapes that ultimately determine the most intimate aspects of classroom life. In Australia at present a sense of moral panic around literacy instruction in particular, and education in general, fomented by the media and supported by influential political figures, threatens to derail significant advances in theoretical and practical understandings of the multifaceted nature of literacy development. One key target of the media's attack, as we will outline in this paper, has been a simplistic and demonised version of "whole language." As the rhetoric of the attack rests on an assumption that the literacy levels of children in Australia are poorer than they would be if "whole language" were abandoned, and as the attacks tend to valorise a "scientific" (i.e. quantitative, measurable, evidence-based) paradigm (cf. Lather, 2004; Lather & Moss, 2005) for educational research, we begin by examining the most comprehensive set of recent statistics available on literacy standards in Australia.

Literacy Standards in Australia

The two PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) studies which have been conducted in the first few years of this century suggest that Australia is a world leader in teaching literacy and that Australian teachers are achieving among the best results in the OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development) [1]. PISA 2000 compared the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy performance of Australian 15-year-olds with the performance of 15-year-olds in 31 other countries, including the United States, Canada, Japan, Korea and many European nations such as the U.K. and Russia. Some 265,000 students took part in this first PISA survey. In Australia, 6,200 students from 231 government, Catholic and independent schools in all states and territories were involved. The major focus of PISA 2000 was reading literacy. Only one country, Finland, performed significantly better statistically than Australia in this area. In fact, in reading literacy, Australia had one of the highest proportions of students of any country at the highest proficiency level (Level 5) and one of the lowest proportions of students at the lowest level (below Level 1). All Australian States and Territories performed at or above the OECD average (Lokan, Greenwood & Cresswell, 2001).

PISA 2003 repeated these results. It compared achievement in 4 areas (reading, mathematical and scientific literacy and problem solving) across 41 countries and 276,000 students. Just over 12,500 students from 321 schools around Australia took part in PISA 2003. In reading literacy, once again, only Finland performed significantly better statistically than Australia (Thomson, Cresswell & de Bortoli, 2004). Comparative results from Australian States and Territories were similar to 2000, with the only change being that the Northern Territory (NT) performed relatively better. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT), New South Wales (NSW), Western Australia (WA) and South Australia (SA) achieved statistically similar top mean results (Thomson et al, 2004).

Literacy as Crisis

Such figures, if they suggest anything about Australian teachers and teacher training at all, suggest that Australian teachers of English and literacy ought to be lauded as among the world's very best. Yet, 2004-6 saw one of the most sustained public campaigns of crisis rhetoric around education that Australia has ever seen – with the strongest focus on teachers and teacher educators in the fields of English and literacy.

The curious nature of this paradox is reflected in the public statements of the then Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson [ii]. In January 2004, reporting on another set of statistical data generated by his own Department, Minister Nelson announced:

> Today's release of the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services* provides further assurance that school students are achieving foundation literacy and numeracy skills.
> The 2001 National Reading, Writing and Numeracy results for Year 3 and Year 5 students contained in the report confirm evidence from international studies that Australia's schools are well placed to provide their students with the necessary skills to participate effectively in the workplace and community.
> The 2001 results show the overwhelming majority of students are performing over and above national benchmarks of minimum literacy and numeracy standards. (Nelson, 2004a)

However, just 10 months later, such was the state of Australia's literacy teaching that the same Minister had to announce a National Inquiry into the teaching of literacy, or "teaching of reading" (Although the name changed in various reports, the terms of reference of the Inquiry were firmly fixed on reading) [iii]:

> One in five Year 5 students could not pass a basic reading test in some parts of Australia, federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson said yesterday when announcing a national inquiry into literacy in primary schools.
>
> And he said employers were "sick and tired" of university graduates unable to spell or write, and teaching graduates who struggled with grammar. (Maiden, 2004b; cf Nelson 2004b)

What was said to have changed between January and November was signalled by a specific focus on "whole language" when *The Australian* newspaper published on April 21 an edited version of a letter (hereinafter referred to as the "Nelson letter") to Minister Nelson from 26 psychologists and special education academics [iv] (Anderson et al., 2004) which attacked "whole language" methods as failing Australian students, especially those struggling with reading. This letter was itself later both implicitly and explicitly constructed as the rationale for the Minister's change in attitude (Maiden, 2004c, 2005a). In a radio interview [v] on the day after his announcement of the inquiry, the Minister signaled his explicit concern that "whole language" was the cause of the supposed problems with literacy (Nelson, 2004c). The counter example of good practice that he provided in this interview was a phonics program developed by some

of the psychologists at Macquarie University who had written the Nelson letter. The influence of educational psychologists, funding regimes that favor so-called "evidence-based" research[vi] and single solutions to problems have also been documented recently in the U.S.A. by Sanacore (2007) who stresses that this occurs "even though literacy educators have known for decades that effective classrooms are based mostly on effective teachers who focus on children's individual needs rather than on any singular approach to teaching reading" (p. 8).

The announcement of the National Inquiry continued – indeed, strongly increased – a sustained public campaign against teachers, teacher educators and methods of teaching reading. Especially demonised in this process, as signalled by the letter and the Minister's radio interview, was "whole language." In the following section we trace the themes represented in an archive of articles from *The Australian* newspaper collected over the last three years, since the appearance of the Nelson letter (Anderson et al., 2004) and which specifically refer to "whole language." This represents 55 separate articles published in *The Australian* between April 2004 and August 2006. *The Australian* is a Murdoch newspaper, a broadsheet and Australia's only national newspaper (all others are city/state-based). Thus, this textual corpus enables a national reading of how this particular media agenda has played itself out in Australia. The 55 articles represent only a fraction of the articles critical of educational practices published in *The Australian* over this period (cf Sawyer, 2006), but they do include all of those with specific reference to "whole language."

To be fair, most journalists from *The Australian* tended to try to represent views from both proponents and opponents of "whole language." Cooper (2004a), Macnamara (2005a), Maiden and Hart (2005) and especially Meiers (an academic researcher) (2004) for example, run against the general trend. However a number of well-known neoliberal commentators[vii], some of whom are *Australian* staffers and some of whom are not, were also given many column inches. In any case, the sustained focus on the reading debate within the context of the larger, very extensive coverage of the failures of education carries suggestions of a campaign.

"Whole Language" in the Media

"Whole language" was firstly derided as "ineffective for new or struggling readers" and for groups who traditionally score badly on reading tests in Australia – boys, indigenous students and those from low socio-economic groups (Buckingham, 2004a; Editorial, 2005b; Kolker, 2006; Maiden, 2004b 2005a, 2005c[viii]). "Whole language" might work with children who are already good readers or who come from privileged backgrounds, but it is allegedly negligent of the problems of the disadvantaged (Cooper, 2004b; Editorial, 2006; Pearson, 2004; Roberts, 2004).

"Whole language" from the first was seen as neglecting the strategy of "sounding words out", substituting instead, "memorizing words", "recognizing words" and "guessing" (Albrechtsen, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Buckingham, 2004a; Cooper, 2004b and others[ix]). Part of this strategy is the representation of "whole language" as something called "whole word" (Albrechtsen, 2004b. cf also Nelson, 2004c). Predictably, then, stronger phonics instruction became the panacea advocated by those attacking "whole language" (Albrechtsen, 2004b; Bremner, 2006; Buckingham, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c 2005 and others[x]). On its release in December 2005, the Report of the Minister's Literacy Inquiry, *Teaching Reading*, was presented

as containing an explicit warning that Australia's schools should embrace "systematic, direct phonics instruction so that children master the essential alphabetic codebreaking skill required for foundational reading proficiency" (Maiden, 2005c. cf Maiden, 2005a).

"Whole language," of course does not "abandon" phonics, as anyone genuinely acquainted with the approach knows – hence its name. "Whole language" sees reading as consisting of a number of cueing systems, of which phonics is one. We would argue the essential difference between strongly phonics-centered approach and "whole language" is the beginning point of instruction – one begins with bits of language and build up from them, the other begins with meaningful language in whole texts and derives sub-skills from these: "top-down vs. bottom up" in an earlier parlance.

As in the United States, phonics was seen to have the advantage of "evidence" behind it and the National Reading Panel and Reading First were continually held up as based on "rigorous" studies in advocating intensive phonics instruction (Buckingham, 2004a, 2004c; Hempenstall, 2004; Kolker, 2006; cf Editorial, 2005c). The implication – and often directly stated claim (Editorial, 2005c; Hempenstall, 2004) – was that there was no evidence to support "whole language" success. "Whole language," in fact was represented as "guarantee(ing) reading failure" (Donnelly, 2005d. cf Donnelly, 2006d).

"Whole language" was said to have been abandoned by educators in Britain and the United States (Donnelly, 2005b; Hempenstall, 2004; Maiden, 2004b;). Part of the rhetorical strategy, then, was to suggest that Australia was falling behind other nations – despite the fact that in the PISA tests Australia strongly outscored the United States and numerous comparable nations. (The response rate from the United Kingdom was too low to report.) In the face of the implication that Australia was riddled with "whole language" teaching *and* had achieved such strong results in PISA, the PISA results had to be forgotten. Claims were made that "30 percent of Australian children entering high school still cannot read or write properly"[xi] (Hempenstall, 2004 and others[xii]). In addition, the validity of current testing regimes such as benchmark testing, which, it will be remembered, showed Australian students doing well, had to be called into question by those opposing "whole language" (Buckingham, 2004d; deLemos, 2004; Donnelly, 2005d). Donnelly even questioned the validity of the PISA tests themselves (Donnelly 2005b, 2005c, 2006c), or, alternatively, simply implied that Australia was falling behind other (named) nations in international testing (Donnelly, 2004b).

Phonics was seen not only as a cure for reading problems, but even for spelling problems[xiii] (Donnelly, 2005c; Ferrari, 2006a; Lane, 2005b; McDonald, 2004; Roberts, 2004). In this way, "whole language" was positioned as responsible for a whole series of problems in education.

Moreover, mixed methods were seen as not really good enough. Phonics could not happily sit alongside "whole language," but needed to be "direct … structured, systematic and scripted" (Buckingham, 2004a[xiv]). "Synthetic" or "systematic" phonics became the buzz phrases (Buckingham, 2005; Maiden, 2005a, 2005c).

"Whole language" was portrayed as a hangover of the 60s and 70s and this, in

itself, was enough to render it discreditable, especially in the eyes of neo-conservative commentators such as Donnelly and others (Donnelly, 2004a; Editorial, 2006; Maiden, 2004b; McDonald, 2004; Ritchie, 2004).

Crucially, "whole language" was presented as a technique of neglect, since teachers and parents are encouraged not to correct every mistake a child makes or to do nothing, relying instead on "immersion" in language (Albrechtsen, 2004b; Donnelly, 2004a; Maiden, 2004b).

Nelson and others went beyond an emphasis on struggling and new readers, however, and charged that "whole language" had also damaged prospective teachers themselves (Donnelly, 2005e, 2006c; Maiden, 2004a, 2004b, 2005c; Ritchie, 2004). Undergraduate literacy across the board was seen as deficient (Donnelly 2006c), but trainee teachers were themselves portrayed as having suffered from "whole language" instruction in their own schooling. Reports claimed that trainee teachers did not know what a syllable was (Maiden, 2004a), and were having to enroll in remedial literacy programs at university (Maiden, 2005c)[xv]. This last rhetorical move enabled the demonising of "whole language" to be broadened beyond just being "ineffective" for *specific groups* of students to being a definite and *general* force for bad in education.

This move also made possible the attack on teacher educators and university Faculties of Education (Albrechtsen, 2004a, 2004b; Buckingham, 2004a, 2004c; Cooper, 2004b and others[xvi]). Academic expertise was accorded to the 26 psychologists who were signatories of the Nelson letter while other academics were portrayed as politically motivated, left-wing ideologues.

"Whole language" also became "bundled," by which we mean a tendency to collect together and simply dismiss a number of educational theories and strategies as weird and dangerous fads – a strategy in which "whole language" becomes implicated. Chief among the bundling strategists was Donnelly who has extended this strategy into populist books (2004d; 2007) as well as the media articles that are referenced here. "Bundled" with "whole language" were:

• The Reading Recovery program of Marie Clay (Donnelly, 2005d; Maiden and Warne-Smith, 2004),

• The work of John Dewey (Buckingham, 2004a, Donnelly, 2004a) and other "radical educators" such as Freire, Young, Graves, and Britton (Donnelly, 2004a),

• Problems in indigenous education (Illing, 2004; Pearson, 2004),

• Alleged moves away from teacher authority (Donnelly, 2004a),

• The alleged "dumbing-down" of education (despite Australia's PISA results) (Donnelly, 2004b, 2004c),

• Accompanying alleged moves away from examinations, direct instruction and rote learning (Albrechtsen, 2004a; Donnelly, 2004a, 2005b),

• Alleged moves away from traditional subjects (Donnelly, 2004a, 2006a, 2006f),

• The alleged valorising of creativity and self-expression (Donnelly, 2004a),

• Radical teacher unions (Albrechtsen, 2004a, 2006; Donnelly, 2004a, 2004b),

• Radical teacher professional associations (Donnelly, 2004a, 2005a, 2006b, 2006c),

• Political correctness (Albrechtsen, 2006; Donnelly 2004b, 2004c, 2005a, 2005c and others),

• Critical literacy and postmodernism (Donnelly 2004b, 2005a, 2005e, 2006b, 2006c and others[xvii]),

• Public education (Donnelly, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; 2006a),

• English syllabuses (Donnelly, 2004a, 2006c; Roberts, 2004),

• Education bureaucrats and academics who are wedded to fads (Albrechtsen, 2004a, 2004b; Donnelly, 2005c),

• "Fuzzy maths" (Donnelly 2004b, 2004c, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a and others[xviii]),

• Being wedded to "facilitating" instead of teaching (Donnelly 2005b, 2006b),

• Groupwork (Donnelly 2005b, Donnelly, 2006b),

• Constructivism (Donnelly, 2006f; Slattery, 2005).

• Outcomes-based education (Donnelly, 2004b, 2004c; Donnelly, 2005c, 2005e and others[xix]).

The vituperative flavour and the breadth of the media campaign evoke elements of what has been called *moral panic*. In the following section we take up this sociological concept as an analytic lens that might provide some insight into how the attack on literacy and literacy educators has progressed.

The Operations and Features of Moral Panics

According to sociologist Kenneth Thompson (1998) we live in a time of moral panics. The concept of moral panic has been linked to various educational issues in the past, particularly television and popular/consumer cultures (see for example, in the U.K.: Buckingham, 1993; Davies and Machin, 2000; Marsh, 2000; in Canada: Cook, 2001; Kline et al., 2006; in the USA: Thurlow, 2006). Moral panics are often constructed around childhood and risks to (or from) young people (Critcher, 2003) inside and outside educational contexts. Prominent literacy educators in Australia have referenced earlier media and political flurries with the label moral panic. Green (1999), for example, notes an early such event around literacy in the 1980s, also conducted in Murdoch newspapers (*The Australian* and *The West Australian*), that demonstrated what he calls the "classic 'moral panic' pattern" (p. 393) where "'politically motivated teachers'" function as "'folk devils'" (p. 394)[xx.] Although the term has been widely and sometimes loosely used, Thompson (1998) provides five defining characteristics for the "phenomenon of moral panics":

The first is that they take the form of campaigns (crusades), which are sustained over a period…Second, they appeal to people who are alarmed by an apparent fragmentation or breakdown of the social order, which leaves them at

risk in some way. Third, that moral guidelines are unclear. Fourth, that politicians and some parts of the media are eager to lead the campaign to have action taken that they claim would suppress the threat. Finally, the … the moral campaign leaves the real causes of social breakdown unaddressed. (p. 3)

In this section of the paper we trace the elements of Thompson's schema through our corpus of media texts. In an earlier article, Luke and Kapitzke (1999) remarked on the "remarkable stability and tenacity" of "educational fields of disciplinary knowledge and power" (p. 472) in the face of "populist" moral panics. We argue, on the contrary, that alternative narratives and opposing evidence have not been sufficiently robust to counter moral panics around literacy. Rather, at an increasing rate and with greater effects, media-powered moral panics have exacerbated and begun to reframe literacy pedagogy and public policy in Australia.

Thompson's (1998) first criterion for moral panics is that they tend to "take the form of campaigns (crusades), which are sustained over a period" (p. 3). Thompson's use of *crusade* reflects the fervour with which such campaigns are conducted. Part of what sustains this fervour is the all-pervasive quality of moral panics. Whereas "earlier panics tended to focus on a single group…Contemporary panics seem to catch many more people in their net" (Thompson, 1998, p. 2). Those people and organisations who are caught in the net of blame in this case include "progressivist educators", primary and secondary school teachers, especially in public schools, both of the relevant national professional associations (the Australian Literacy Educators Association (ALEA) and the Australian Association of Teachers of English (AATE)), teachers' unions, literacy researchers and academics in university Faculties of Education and occasionally state education bureaucrats. Against these suspects are arrayed the victims: the children of Australia, their families, and, by implication, the future of the nation, which is at risk as a result of their pernicious effects.

The character of this panic as a long term crusade has been enabled and sustained by the breadth of the attacks which have, for example, targeted educational standards generally; the alleged neglect of grammar, spelling and punctuation; the teaching of critical literacy and the apparently associated "jargonistic" postmodern theory; the teaching of low-grade popular culture instead of the canon; trendy "new age" curricula; alleged left-wing ideologues in university education faculties, education bureaucracies and classrooms, and even extended to implicit links to the promotion of terrorism (cf Sawyer, 2006)[xxi]. The targets in the larger campaign, in fact, shift across all levels of education and across a number of discipline areas from early reading pedagogy to secondary history, science and geography textbooks and syllabuses, to the infiltration of senior English syllabuses with postmodernism and popular culture and on to "values education." Likewise, the attacks had/have a geographic spread as they whirl about the country, targeting spelling in South Australia, across to the west coast to outcomes-based education in Western Australia and back to the east to English exams in New South Wales. The constants remain the people, groups and organisations who are demonised.

Secondly, moral panics "appeal to people who are alarmed by an apparent fragmentation or breakdown of the social order, which leaves them at risk in some way" (Thompson, 1998, p. 3). Luke and Freebody index these fears as relating to

"new technologies, fast capitalism, and globalization" (1999a). Such appeals have currency with parents who are already anxious about their children's futures in the increasingly competitive markets for schooling and for work in contemporary Australia. Elements of literacy have long been associated with panics around broader social change. Green and Hodgens (1996) have argued that grammar, for example, in the history of English teaching has become code for a set of "manners and morals." A tight nexus of "literacy, grammar and power" has operated to create a discourse in literacy debates of "us" in relation to "them," of "our proficiency" in relation to "their deficiency" (Green and Hodgens, 1996, p. 211). In late-Thatcherite Britain, for example, the Kingman Report firmly put grammar back on the agenda and in what Cameron has called an "extremely divided and unstable society" (in Green and Hodgens, 1996, p. 211), grammar became imbued with highly charged social meanings and "anxieties about grammar (were) at some deeper level anxieties about the breakdown of order and tradition, not just in language but in society at large" (Cameron and Bourne in Green and Hodgens, 1996, p. 211). Grammar is a "disciplining of the flesh…punishing of the rebellious spirit, and the ultimate guarantee of a stable society" (Wilkinson, 1986, p. 34). Arguments over the place of grammar in English become, in effect, arguments over a particular view of society. Grammar – and, indeed, the place of the canon (cf Editorial, 2005; Lane, 2005a; McIlroy, 2005; Rowbotham, 2005; Macnamara, 2005b) – have played just such a role in the current moral panic. The implication that "whole language" is a pedagogy of neglect, in comparison to more traditional methods of instruction, parallels these concerns.

Thirdly, Thompson (1998) argues that moral panics tend to leave the "moral guidelines…unclear" (p. 3). In the current neoliberal economic order, education is market-driven and the mantra of "choice" is pervasive. Apple (2001) argues that in the U.S. today the twin neoliberal policies of the marketisation of schooling and the emphasis on tougher standards are "part of an attempt by the middle class to alter the rules of competition in education in light of the increased insecurities their children face. 'By changing the process of selection to schools, middle class parents can raise the stakes in creating stronger mechanisms of exclusion for blue-collar and post-colonial peoples in their struggle for equality of opportunity'" (p. 78). And already in Australia, some have questioned whether the 2005 education panic was not also "designed to restrict profound learning to certain groups in our society" (Hooley, 2005, p. 4). Moral questions about the effects of reductions in investment in public schooling[xxii] remain largely unasked and unanswered when public schooling and those who deliver it are consistently demonised.

Fourthly, Thompson (1998) notes that "politicians and media are eager to lead the campaign to have action taken that they claim would suppress the threat" (p. 3). Once the threat has been constructed (as, in this instance, a literacy crisis) then the emphasis becomes public action, directed largely at correcting the errors of those who have been constructed as responsible for the crisis. The action in this case was the Minister's call for a National Inquiry into the teaching of literacy in Australia. This maintained the focus on what might be wrong and in need of correction. Its media coverage reinforced the demonisation of individuals and groups. Indeed, as explored in the following section, on publication the National Inquiry (DEST, 2005) was presented in the media in such a way as to reinstate the binary between phonics based

instruction and "whole language," often ascribing the faults of schooling to "whole language" and those teachers, teacher educators and organisations that promulgate it.

As Thompson's (1998) fifth and final criterion suggests, "the moral campaign leaves the real causes…unaddressed" (p. 3). Today, where Australia does not fare well in international testing is around equity: the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and educational achievement. There is, of course, a link between SES and literacy achievement in all countries. Nevertheless, there *are* countries who appear in the PISA results as *both* "high-quality" *and* "high equity." The existence of such countries demonstrates that there is no necessary trade off between quality and equity in educational provision. It is possible to achieve both together. Australia is not among these countries. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are much better provided for by the education systems in other high performing countries like Finland, Korea, Japan, Canada and Ireland.

Barry McGaw, an Australian and until recently Director of Education for the OECD, shows that Australia is a "high quality, low equity" country educationally. McGaw argues that Australia may be guilty of conveying educational advantage where social advantage already exists (McGaw, 2006) – the rate of payoff in increased literacy from increased social advantage is greater at higher levels of social advantage (McGaw, 2006). In other words, the more you already have, the more education in Australia adds to your advantages. Moreover, McGaw argues, PISA results show that early stratification into schools of different types, while it might be intended to provide in the most appropriate way for individual differences, tends to exacerbate differences among students, to produce low average performances and to reproduce the existing social arrangements with the socially disadvantaged placed in low- status schools where they achieve low-level results[xxiii].

Governmental retreat from supporting public institutions since the rise of monetarism has exacerbated the relative disadvantage of low SES groups. The most recent analysis of social and economic disadvantage in Australia, *Dropping off the Edge: Social Disadvantage in Australia* (Vinson, 2007), confirms that pockets of severe social disadvantage have become entrenched at the very time the nation has enjoyed buoyant economic growth. Vinson identifies targeted policy reform and long-term investment in key areas, particularly education, as essential for overcoming disadvantage. Access to early years of schooling, free preschool, and incentives for experienced teachers to work in disadvantaged areas are his recommended strategies. It is public policy, not teachers, that creates relative disadvantage and makes Australia a low equity country. Thus, as Vinson's report confirms, it is public policy around lost notions of equity that need to be addressed if Australia is to turn around its real areas of need in literacy.

Attacks on "whole language" such as those we have documented in this paper do not add to the equity debate, rather they serve to obscure a number of issues that are likely to be more important. These issues include teacher recruitment and retention, the way in which educational disadvantage is identified and addressed, and public funding of schools. One critical issue in education that rarely appears in media coverage is the public funding shift towards private education[xxiv]. Where it does appear, it is usually accompanied by a push from those fuelling the moral panic for the introduction of a voucher-based funding system (Donnelly, 2006a). Despite the

larger proportion of school funding that comes from the states, economic analysts argue that the funding shifts at the federal level and the subsequent "drift" of middle class students from the public sector in every state of Australia has concentrated socio-economic disadvantage in public schools, and is the direct result of changes to national funding formulas in 2000 (Ryan & Watson, 2004). In particular - substantiating McGaw's suggestion that educational equity is poor in contemporary Australia - Ryan and Watson (2004) note that the most advantaged elite private schools are those that have reaped the highest rewards from increased government funding (p. 10).

Conclusion

Although many of the submissions to the *Teaching Reading* Report, notably the 27 or so that came from current teacher educators[xxv], stressed that the phonics/"whole language" dichotomy is outdated, unhelpful and inaccurate, the Report was certainly presented as reinstating this binary. A number of these submissions made reference to the influential "four resources" model (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999a, 1999b) of literacy development – an approach that underpins all state syllabuses and the national electronic resource *MyRead* (ALEA/AATE, 2002) - and that identifies literacy as entailing a repertoire of practices including: *code breaking* (coding competence), *meaning making* (semantic competence), *text using* (pragmatic competence) and *text critique* (critical competence) (Luke & Freebody, 1999a). This model couples together the sociocultural and cognitive elements of literacy practice, positioning literacy firmly as a meaning-based and purposeful activity. The four resources model positions teachers as professionals who are responsive to the needs of individual students and to the range of evidence to which they have access. Teachers undertake analyses of student weaknesses. As Luke (2005) explains, teachers select from a repertoire of literacy pedagogies as they "make principled decisions based on analyses of their analysis of student performance data and student linguistic and community resources" (p. 677). These decisions would tilt the program balances between "coding," "semantic," "pragmatic" and "critical" practices of literacy.

Each of the dimensions of the four resources model foregrounds particular practices and skills and a balanced literacy program entails the development of all of these skills (cf. ALEA/AATE, 2002 for the most comprehensive elaboration of the model in terms of classroom practice). With this approach teacher professional knowledge is not about delivery of a commodified curriculum, but about developing shared vocabularies and theoretical and analytical models. It requires continuing professional development and refinement so that teachers are best prepared to select and tailor literacy learning experiences for their students.

Nevertheless, the model was dismissed in a footnote of the report (DEST, 2005) as lacking "empirical support" (p. 37). The Committee noted, furthermore, that it was "not confident that sufficient numbers of teachers have the necessary knowledge, training and teaching strategies to provide their students with the essential alphabetic code-breaking 'resources'" (DEST, 2005, p. 37). Rather than making recommendations about increasing resources to enure that teachers *do* acquire sophisticated understanding and practical skills in all the dimensions of

literate practice, the Report is constructed as opting for a more "teacher-proof" and technicist adoption of phonics as the core literacy pedagogy.

Our use of an archive of texts in this article allows us to consider how media criticism of "whole language" has gained momentum and influence over time at the highest policy levels. We do not disregard the importance of sound knowledge of the phonological elements of language; rather, we object to a campaign that that favours phonics as sufficient pedagogical substitute. Like the literacy educators who prepared submissions to the National Inquiry, we advocate a "balanced" approach to reading instruction, such as the "four resources model" (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999a, 1999b) which has been endorsed by the Australian Literacy Educators Association, the Australian Association of Teachers of English and DEST, who funded the development of *MyRead* (ALEA/AATE, 2002). As secondary educators, we are also particularly cognisant that early reading pedagogies are often inappropriate for adolescent first language weak readers. Rather, we advocate a repertoire of strategies for the reading teacher's use.

What can be done in the face of moral panic? One obvious long-term answer to this is the creation of a citizenry critical of the way in which the media constructs such debates. However, a key problem here is that the creation of such a citizenry through critical literacy practices appears to be a horrifying prospect to most of the media commentators we have discussed here. Any attempt to argue for the importance of a critical citizenry is immediately attacked as party-political and "dismissed as either irrelevant or unprofessional" (Giroux, 2000, p.4). Critical literacy was a particular target of attack in the bundling strategy discussed above. This becomes part of a larger question about the kind of democracy we want to have – one which consists of a 3-4 yearly visit to the ballot box, or one in which citizens are active, critical questioners of the texts they come up against every day? Other questions about equity – about public policy priorities and social cohesion – might then begin to be more widely asked.

In the short-term, teacher activism on two fronts also seems obvious. One is to do with public education about the realities of "whole language" – what it really does, what it really means, as opposed to the straw man purveyed in the media. This is where professional associations might play a key role on the local level. The second is to greet data head-on. In Australia, as we have shown, we are told that we are infected with the virus of "whole language." Yet our PISA results are outstanding. Ergo? Notwithstanding the narrowing definition of what counts as "scientific" in the education community (Delandshere, 2006), hard data that both defines in a sophisticated way what "success" in reading means and that investigates the *actual* specific strategies being used in classrooms to achieve such success ought not be difficult to come by.

Ultimately, though, we are not starry-eyed about this. The "whole language"-phonics debate is hardly new and will always be exploited by politicians and the media who have a series of agendas to run that may or may not actually concern educational quality. Perhaps, as George Lakoff (2004) argues, resisting moral panic is, finally, a question of how we frame our values in the public arena.

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Notes

[1] The OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development) is an international
organisation established in the 1960s with 30 core member countries including most
European countries, as well as Canada, USA, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and
Korea. Member countries are characterised by their commitment to democratic governance
and market economics and provide a stable base for comparative international research on
social and economic indicators of national wellbeing amongst member countries and beyond.
The OECD conducts research across a range of areas but the most interesting to educators
has been PISA. This program began a three year cycle of testing of 15 year olds in 2000 and
continued in 2003 and 2006 with between 4,500 and 10,000 students tested in each
participating country using equivalent test instruments. The number of countries involved has
expanded with each round of testing with fifty-seven countries in the most recent round.

Rather than being embroiled in the local politics of curriculum instruction and assessment, PISA measures the extent to which young people have mastered literacies in reading, mathematical and scientific domains of knowledge by this point in their schooling and how well they can apply these literacies to the real world. PISA also collects a vast array of information about student backgrounds.

[ii] Public school education is largely controlled and funded by the states in Australia, who manage most elements of curriculum, assessment and reporting. However the federal (national) government has considerable and increasing control via its capacity to allocate additional special purpose grants to schools and its more general funding of the states. Schools in the rapidly expanding private sector receive direct funding from the federal government (Ryan and Watson, 2004). Universities, and thus teacher education, have always been funded and directly controlled across the nation by the federal government, though recent policies are increasingly forcing "public" universities to depend on private sources of income. In the period 2004-2006, while nationally a conservative Liberal Party government was in power, every state government in the nation was under Labor Party control. Education has thus been one of several sites of skirmishes between these levels of government in recent years.

[iii] For an analysis of the actual announcement of the Reading Inquiry and a discussion of the motivation behind the crisis rhetoric, see Cambourne, 2006a and 2006b.

[iv] It is important to note that the signatories were – and signed themselves as – clinical hospital-based psychologists or neuropsychologists (4), academic psychologists (13), clinical speech therapists (3), general academic researchers (1), special education academics (4), medical researchers (1). Half of the number came from three universities. Thus, none appeared to be, or at least none signed themselves as, academics associated with mainstream schooling. The Macquarie University psychologists, Kevin Wheldall and Max Coltheart, were named by Minister Nelson (2004d) as the key authors of the letter.

[v] With a well-known Sydney-based "shock-jock" and frequent Liberal party advocate.

[vi] For a discussion of the role of "evidence-based" research in literacy teaching, see Delandshere, 2006.

[vii] For example, though now a regular opinion writer in *The Australian*, Kevin Donnelly was a staffer for another Minister in the current federal government until 2004 when he published the book *Why our schools are failing,* for the conservative think tank, the Menzies Research Centre. He recently released a companion volume *Dumbing down. Outcomes based and politically correct: The impact of the Culture Wars on our schools.*

[viii] In the discussion which follows, some of the attacks on "whole language" are made by the article authors and others are simply the relevant journalists quoting the opinions of others. Direct advocates against "whole language" include Albrechtsen, de Lemos, Donnelly and Hempenstall. deLemos and Hempenstall were academic signatories to the Nelson letter, Albrechtsen and Donnelly are neoconservative commentators and Albrechtsen is an *Australian* journalist. In this section of the paper, extended lists of citations to media articles and press releases have been truncated in the text and shifted to Endnotes for easier reading.

[ix] Also de Lemos, 2004; Donnelly, 2005d, 2005e, 2006f; Ferrari, 2006a, 2006b; Kolker, 2006; Maiden, 2004b, 2004c; Roberts, 2004; Yaman, 2004.

[x] Also Cooper, 2004b; Donnelly, 2004a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2005e, 2006b, 2006e; Ferrari, 2006a, 2006b; Hempenstall, 2004; Illing, 2004; Kolker, 2006; Lane, 2005b; Maiden, 2004b,

2005a, 2005c; Maiden and Warne-Smith, 2004; McDonald, 2004; Pearson, 2004; Roberts, 2004; West, 2005; Yaman, 2004.

[xi] This 30% figure surfaces often in attacks on Australian education. It is largely based on a 1995 national survey conducted as part of the *Longitudinal surveys of Australian youth* (LSAY). In 1997, the Australian Council for Educational Research published a study of reading comprehension and numeracy among (largely) 14 year-olds based on a comparison of four large and four small sets of data gathered between 1975 and 1995. The tests were based on "mastery", defined as the "competence... necessary for active participation in society". The percentage of correct items that represented mastery on these tests was approximately 80%. Thus, in 1995, 70% of 14-year-olds gained 80% or better on tests of reading comprehension and, given that this result remained static since 1975, as the Australian population became composed of far more NESB students, it ought to be seen as a net improvement over similar results in 1975.That would seem to be the most accurate interpretation of the levels of reading among Australian school students over that 20 year period, as represented by this research. Readers are left to decide for themselves to what extent this constituted a "crisis". cf Sawyer, 1999.

[xii] Also implied in Albrechtsen, 2004b; deLemos, 2004; Donnelly, 2004a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006b.

[xiii] In one rather odd argument, the lack of interest in a national spelling bee was regarded as "ominous" and indicative of Australians valuing education less than Americans (again, despite the relative PISA results) (Roberts, 2004). The same article did reveal, however, that the alleged "lack" of interest was due to "only" 25,000 students entering a national spelling bee, while 800 students entered a state-based spelling bee at the same time.

[xiv] Also implied in Albrechtsen, 2004b; Buckingham, 2004b, 2004c; Donnelly, 2004a; Maiden, 2005b, 2005c; McDonald, 2004; Roberts, 2004

[xv] Nelson called for mandatory literacy testing of trainee teachers on both entry and graduation (Maiden, 2005a, 2005c) and Donnelly (2005e) added that they should also be tested on knowledge of methods for teaching reading - teachers who had not been taught to teach reading, nor experienced proper teaching of literacy themselves, were having to "make it up as they go along" (Maiden 2004b)

[xvi] Also Donnelly, 2004a, 2005e, 2006c; Editorial 2005b, 2005c Hempenstall, 2004; Maiden, 2004b, 2005a; Maiden et al, 2005; Ritchie, 2004.

[xvii] Also Donnelly 2006f; Farrelly, 2005; Editorial, 2006.

[xviii] Also Donnelly 2006e, 2006f; Farrelly 2005; Slattery, 2005.

[xix] Also Donnelly 2006a, 2006f; Editorial, 2006; Slattery, 2005.

[xx] Green himself, Cambourne, Luke and Sawyer , amongst other educationalists, have been repeatedly named in media articles in ways that might be considered as attempts to construct 'folk devils'.

[xxi] An example of the ideologically loaded and bizarre nature of these attacks can be seen in one particular article (Bockman, 2006), which slams Australian teachers for daring to suggest that Cuba had a high literacy rate. No argument is put forward to deny the claims – it is apparently enough to deserve criticism to suggest that a communist nation might be successful at anything.

[xxii] See Ryan and Watson (2004) for a summary of the changes to government funding arrangements in education and an analysis of their effects.

[xxiii] Apart from gender in relation to reading literacy, the most important student background variable in relation to achievement in Australia is socio-economic status (SES), based on parents' occupations. Variance in achievement between schools in Australia is largely explained by differences in SES at both student and school levels, with the SES of a school's student population in Australia an even stronger predictor of student performance than individual background. School related variables associated with student achievement are also dominated by SES.

[xxiv] McGaw, speaking on ABC Radio National in 2006 said, " …if you're disadvantaged in Australia, the education system doesn't serve you as well as it does in a number of other countries, countries that we'd like to think we're similar to…The biggest problem is perhaps the extent to which we are now depending on private investment in education. If you look at the proportion of national wealth, of GDP spent on education Australia ranks 18th in the OECD, if you look at the proportion spent from private sources, we rank 3rd …so we're shifting balance of expenditure towards private capacity which I think reinforces the capacity of people who are socially advantaged to care better for their own children" (Broadcast ABC RN, 8.15am, Nov 20th).

[xxv] We surveyed submissions from individuals and teacher education faculties at: the Australian Catholic University, University of Technology Sydney, University of New England, University of Ballarat, Deakin University, Curtin University, Monash University, Finders University, Sydney University, Charles Sturt University and Macquarie University (where the Education faculty made a separate submission to that provided by the psychologists associated with the Nelson letter). Most of the 453 submissions are available online   at: http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/submission_index.htm

Core Values of Progressive Education: Seikatsu Tsuzurikata and Whole Language

Mary M. Kitagawa*
Mark's Meadow Elementary School, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Chisato Kitagawa**
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Abstract
Seikatsu tsuzurikata is a grassroots movement in Japan that has many parallels to the whole language movement, but it developed completely independently, beginning in the late 1920's. Our research into this movement was conducted in 1984 and described in Kitagawa and Kitagawa (1987). We are now updating our earlier research. Seikatsu tsuzurikata is fundamentally a writing education movement designed to help students develop a strong sense of self by having them write descriptive, detailed compositions about their daily life and the world around them. We want to describe how seikatsu tsuzurikata and whole language are similar and different, just as any set of "distant cousins" might want to know how they are related.

Key Words: Seikatsu Tsuzurikata, Whole Language, Co-spectatorship Role, Belonging Identity, Development of Personhood

*Mary Kitagawa is now retired. She is the author of *Enter Teaching* (Heinemann, 2000) and many professional articles.

**Chisato Kitagawa is a professor emeritus of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His field is Linguistics, specializing in Japanese.

Core Values of Progressive Education:
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In the 1980's, Mary was teaching fifth- and sixth- grade in a Tucson, Arizona school. The famous writing education researcher, Donald Graves, visited her classroom one day and joined a small group of students engaged in an authors' circle. He leaned forward in his chair with his elbows on his knees, his eyes focused intently on the boy who was reading his journal entry to the group.

"The cat rattled in the garage," Geraldo read.

"Wait a minute. I want to be sure I got that right. 'The cat rattled in the garage?'" Graves interrupted.

Mary thought about how shy Geraldo was and worried that he'd freeze, but he confidently explained how the cat must have knocked over some cans.

Although Graves had not heard of seikatsu tsuzurikata or its proponents in Japan, his words and posture represented an ideal in their philosophy. Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers strive to read and respond to students' texts taking the same attitude: "I'm here to see what you saw, hear what you heard, feel what you felt."

Seikatsu tsuzurikata basically means 'writing that comes from one's personal experiences or observations.' The word "seikatsu" represents daily life and the word "tsuzurikata" comes from a rather old-fashioned word for making connections like sewing two items together, which may also mean composition writing. Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers encourage journaling as a way to ground oneself in one's own reality. They begin by asking children to base their writing on "what occurred to me on a certain day, at a certain time" or to "Write so that we can hear and see exactly how it was." However mundane the topic, the teacher-reader's interest is guaranteed. What makes this movement remarkable is the degree to which teachers succeed in making of themselves the sort of trustworthy co-spectators that James Britton, et al (1975) have advocated. As Britton defined it, writing expressively allows the writer to take an onlooker stance, and in a "co-spectator role" the reader can read without any other purpose than to appreciate what has been expressed. Our use of the term is more simplistic than Britton's, but we are borrowing it because of the way teachers word their responses to sound like co-observers of what their students describe.

Commonalities of Seikatsu Tsuzurikata and Whole Language

As unaware as Britton was of seikatsu tsuzurikata or seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers of his research, they have much in common. Furthermore, as unaware as the proponents of either seikatsu tsuzurikata or whole language have been of each other, they share some fundamental tenets. One that immediately stands out is that both start from what the student already knows. In the "process approach" to writing for which Graves is considered a major advocate, teachers recognize innate skills of self-expression in beginning writers (Graves, 1983). Even before the child has learned many conventions of written expression, the teacher reads the text according to the child's purpose in writing it. She considers the text as communication, instead of judging it or seeking mistakes to correct. In fact the reception and support a whole

language teacher provides is often compared to how parents support their toddler's acquisition of spoken language. Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers talk about how to support the student's nama no koe, raw voice, meaning that the sort of language that is blurted out in natural situations represents the type of directness that they want to foster. While nurturing toddler speech and supporting direct expression are certainly not the same, it is significant that both whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata look to language in the non-school world for guidance in teaching.

Whole language proponents often link their goals to authenticity, and seikatsu tsuzurikata advocates stress the need for individuals to be able to position themselves objectively in the real world. Other commonalities include grassroots foundations, teacher support systems, the use of qualitative data in development of theories, and the valuing of classroom learning communities with proactive teacher-student relationships. In this paper, as an extension of Kitagawa and Kitagawa (1987), we explore some current activities of seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers as a grassroots manifestation of progressive education that is uniquely embedded in Japanese culture. We will compare whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata as "cousins" to learn which essential traits they share and how the experiences of each might inform the other in the twenty-first century.

History

In the late 1920's, during the Great Depression, teachers in rural Japan found themselves agonizing over mismatches in relevance between the national curriculum that they were required to teach and the desperate poverty of their students. Some of them attempted to ameliorate that disparity by encouraging students to write detailed descriptions about their daily lives. Students wrote about their hardscrabble farm life, describing their parents' toil in specific terms. For example, one student depicted his father's gnarled, soil-encrusted fingers as looking almost like the edible roots he was pulling from the ground. Another described the cracks in her mother's chilblained feet. A small boy's description of his grandmother's horrified reaction when he and friends playfully cut up earthworms contrasted with his textbook models of children's writing about esoteric experiences that poor, rural children never had. The goal of having the students write from personal experience rather than following those textbook models was to empower the students within the realities of their impoverished situations, not for the sake of writing education but for survival strength.

From that beginning, a grassroots movement began which broadened and spread as teachers discovered that all students benefited personally from expressing their own lives in writing. Teachers compared notes to learn how to nurture the journal entries by providing a supportive audience intensely concerned with the reality of the students' lives, whatever the circumstances.

After World War II, seikatsu tsuzurikata enjoyed a period of public recognition and popularity. There were even novels and movies about it. Some people ruefully speculated that children raised to think independently might have been just what Japan needed as an antidote in the lead-up to the war. Since that brief post-war period of public acknowledgement, however, the movement has quietly gone back to relative anonymity except among its zealous proponents. Some administrators and

school boards associate the movement with the progressive national teachers' union and disapprove of seikatsu tsuzurikata to the extent that teachers who work in those schools or districts must be circumspect about what they are doing. It has continued to the present in Japan as a small, teacher-to-teacher movement, rarely taught in teacher education courses and never countenanced by the Ministry of Education.

According to Shiro Murayama, a longtime chairman of the executive committee of seikatsu tsuzurikata's national organization, Nihon Sakubun no Kai, the Association of Writing Education in Japan, there are many people in Japan who know only of the movement as a way to help poor, rural children, so they erroneously assume that Japan's prosperity has rendered that type of teaching unnecessary. Teachers dedicated to this philosophy, however, see no less need for seikatsu tsuzurikata among today's young people than in the past (personal communication, January 2007).

One sign that politicians and progressive teachers may have differing perspectives is the emphasis apparent in education reform legislation passed in 2006, Kyoiku Kihon Ho, Fundamental Directive of Education. The reform language declares that one of the most critical goals of education is to provide the educated workforce the nation requires. This education reform is the first since 1947 when the constitution was revised under the direction of the post-war occupation of Japan. Among the details of the 2006 reform is a statement about the importance of promoting national pride and loyalty. One would see that as an innocuous goal except for the history of nationalistic extremism in Japan's past. While polls among the general public show moderate support for the educational reform, editorial opposition includes warnings that the effort to "teach patriotism" could lead to abuses of freedom of thought and expression. An effect of this reform will be to increase the authority of the central government and decrease regional or local control over educational decisions, including textbook approval. The fear among educators and others who are opposed to this reform law is that such restrictive control will increase, limiting the professional decision-making of teachers and the freedom of expression among both teachers and students. According to Murayama (1985), the time is ever more urgent today for the seikatsu tsuzurikata movement to persist in advocating education as the means by which individuals realize self-actualization.

Our Involvement

We, a linguistics professor and a whole language teacher from the United States, decided to investigate this philosophy in 1984, attracted first by the strength of voice in some writing samples we read. Our research then involved six months of classroom observations and discussions with proponents as well as attendance at study groups, conferences and two national conventions. That research revealed a kinship between the Japanese seikatsu tsuzurikata movement and whole language that transcends many situational differences described in this article. We are currently revisiting Japan in order to explore the parallels between the two philosophies at this point, their supporting organizations, and the leaders' visions for the future.

At the time of our research in 1984, no teacher that we met in Japan had heard of whole language and we were the first educators from abroad to attend the seikatsu tsuzurikata proponents' meetings or observe in their classrooms. Since then the whole

language philosophy has become known in a few educational circles but not among most teachers or the general public in Japan.

One day in March, 1984, in a break during a seikatsu tsuzurikata leadership conference in Tokyo, Mary began chatting with a Japanese professor, Yogo Shima, whose research interest includes that movement. She described one of her students in Tucson, Arizona, a Native American sixth grader whose writing weighed heavily on her mind. The boy, Joaquin, wrote about his life in ways that were powerful to classmates and anyone else who knew the cultural background he incorporated into his texts. But, Mary told Shima, when she tried to help Joaquin adapt his writing for a wider audience by, for example, asking him to explain what he meant by "dancing with Paul at the funeral," he was completely unable to fathom an audience that would not know the Yaqui ceremonial life. His culture was his world and he could not bridge to an audience that did not share the culture. The dilemma Mary described to Shima was this: Should she primarily promote Joaquin's sense of self by having him continue to explore his own reality through writing without regard for distant audiences or should she focus on getting him ready for junior-high school and beyond where teachers were bound to insist on less expressive, more transactional writing (to use the terms of James Britton et al, 1975). At that point in the conversation, Shima seemed to accept Mary as a "seikatsu tsuzurikata compatriot," not because that philosophy offers an easy answer but precisely because seikatsu tsuzurikata proponents agonize over the same type of issue.

When he learned that she was a proponent of something called whole language, he became very interested in what philosophical similarities there may be between whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata. We continued discussions with him in Japan, and later in the United States when he came to do some more research and observations, attending the first Whole Language Umbrella Conference in St. Louis in 1990 and bringing with him a number of seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers and another professor.

What makes two educational movements recognize each other as "cousins" -- even though neither was aware of the other for so many years, and even though there are distinctions between them that might make them seem totally unrelated at times? Why did Mary feel she was in a TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) meeting when she attended small support circles of seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers in Japan? How can looking at the similarities and differences help us recognize what might be the crux of what we, whole language practitioners or they, seikatsu tsuzurikata proponents, hold dear?

Seikatsu Tsuzurikata in the Classroom

Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers believe that writing is a way for children to solidify their sense of self. When they read a child's text, they look for evidence of the student positioning himself objectively. They value writing based on looking straight at daily experiences, at the world around the child, and eventually, at world issues. Teachers ask even first graders to be explicit, but they recognize that whatever a child is motivated to write is that child's best topic. It may need to be noted here that a phonetic Japanese alphabet taught in kindergarten or first grade allows beginning writers to write almost anything they can speak. When teachers exhort first graders to,

"Try to report what remains strongly in your mind," the children can transfer a lot of details into text.

Once the children have written and turned in their journals, the teachers give themselves the sort of challenge Graves would appreciate: to read so as to, "get it right." They try to attain the perspective of the writer and respond accordingly. One strategy for gleaning just what a particular text may mean to its writer is to picture the child's posture or activity while writing, perhaps with her head bent over the paper or struggling to find the right word or scribbling quickly without stopping to reread; a handwritten text often hints at how its writer produced it. Teachers recognize that writing can be a lonely process, so they support the writer with carefully chosen responses written along the margin or at the end, or both. Those responses should be more like "supporting a soliloquy" than participating in a dialogue. Linguists refer to something similar in conversation as "back-channeling." Teachers in the West might think of this as a good way to develop "voice" in our student writers, but in seikatsu tsuzurikata circles teachers talk more about how it helps children become grounded as individuals.

The margin-written responses are called akapen, red pen, but the word has none of the sense of judgment it has in other places. Teachers often use present progressive tense to give an over-the-shoulder tone to their response. "Ah, here you are recalling just how amazed you were to see the layers inside the onion." Or, they join the writer as if they too were experiencing what is being described. "Isn't it hard to be short and unable to see the parade!" "Oh, until you wrote this, I couldn't imagine that odd sound." We can assume that whole language teachers say similar things in writing conferences or authors' circles, and some whole language teachers engage students in dialogue journals with the same sort of support. The only difference here in Japan is the extent to which seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers all devote themselves to their role as responders.

Over time, the relationship between student and teacher transcends even the inevitable impersonality of large classes in Japan. Young students often begin with "Sensei, ano ne" which is something like, "Hey, Teacher, guess what?" It reflects the way that regular journaling along with personalized responses show children that the teacher is genuinely interested in whatever they are motivated to write. And, by writing on a regular basis, children start seeing their daily lives as sets of potential topics. That happens to make for proficient writing, but, from the seikatsu teachers' perspectives, the most important result is that it brings the students' world into school with personal benefits that go beyond literacy.

Visit some seikatsu tsuzurikata classrooms and you might see a classroom journal being passed around for a different middle-school or high-school student to write in as homework and other students to read and write responses later that week. Or you might see a group of students discussing a journal entry duplicated and shared, with the author's permission, while that author sits and listens in without commenting until the end. There are many variations, but they all seem to begin with independent expression or opinion followed by the teacher's, or the teacher's and the classmates', appreciation of that unique perspective.

Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers are educators whose theories come from direct work with actual students in classroom settings. Like whole language teachers, the professional articles they write for publication and the presentations they make to each other in both informal and formal conferences are never about hypothetical students or abstract theories. Organizationally, almost all of the leadership comes from current or former teachers. And, without calling their classroom observations "kidwatching," as whole language teachers are prone to do, what teachers discuss in their evening and weekend study groups is the same sort of qualitative data that whole language teachers share in their meetings.

At their meetings and conventions you see teachers comparing student-written journal entries and teacher-written responses. They bring copies of their class anthologies to trade and they discuss how they decided which entries to include. A large part of the agenda, whenever they gather, is consideration of how to read and respond so as to preserve in the child the natural voice. A teacher's presentation might be to share many of one child's journal entries along with the context of that child's life or relationship with peers. Another session might be based on the class dynamics occurring when middle-school students explore their views on sociological topics, such as violence or war, through compositions they write and share. These activities are not the total of seikatsu tsuzurikata, but they mark the essence of the movement, we believe.

A Common Ancestor?

The subtle but vital differences in the teacher-student relationships that seikatsu tsuzurikata and whole language movements both advocate, and the norms of education promoted by the Ministry of Education in Japan and the No Child Left Behind mentality of the United States Department of Education, can be seen as the difference between education designed to provide the learner with tools to expand the self, and education designed to enable or certify an outsider's entrance into an inner circle. In the latter, typically accomplished by traditional, usually transmission, models of teaching, the "filling of the empty vessel" approach is appropriate. It is assumed that students taught that way supply the country or economy with the type of citizens it needs. In addition, such education is a process by which society is stratified, a means of sorting students appropriately to fill all the roles of an economic or socio-cultural entity. Standardized testing is deemed the appropriate means of accountability, because it accomplishes the goals of certification and stratification. Education to supply the type of citizens needed by the nation of Japan was clearly the goal of the Ministry of Education before World War II, but the seikatsu tsuzurikata philosophy was antithetical to the extreme nationalism that developed in pre-war Japan. In fact, during the war teachers who continued to espouse seikatsu tsuzurikata were criticized. Of these, 135 were imprisoned; at least ten teachers died as a result of the harsh imprisonment (Namekawa, 1983; Kokubun, 1984).

In contrast to education seen primarily as a means to inculcate national values or to generate a country's workforce, whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata have goals of nurturing each learner for the sake of that individual. We often use the term "authentic" and contrast it with "artificial" because we see learning as a natural phenomenon. Whole language teachers like to talk about developing children into "lifelong learners." Seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers have many ways to express their goals, but all of them might be summed up in a phrase we heard from Yukihiro

Kawaguchi, a professor whose research and teaching centers upon seikatsu tsuzurikata. He described the goal as helping each student "become the author of his own life" (personal communication, January 2007). Learning to think independently, to question what is presented by others as reality, and to express a perspective that may not be shared by the group; these are valued in progressive education philosophies. Thus, the zeal which whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers share is the same passion that fuels human rights campaigns, and for the same reasons.

Culturally Bound Manifestations

Community building is a common goal among teachers worldwide, and in Japanese elementary schools an observer might wonder if it were not a greater priority than literacy, for all the efforts most teachers put into making their students appreciate teamwork and friendship bonds. But what marks seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers is their linking of that objective with writing and the way they use writing to help children learn to be an individual while still being a member of the group.

The national curricula of Japan today are usually considered pedagogically sound and the system is seen as a model of equality, especially at the compulsory levels through ninth grade. However, the overall system in Japan is geared toward what Adam Curle calls "belonging identity" and "competitive materialism." Japanese schooling seems less successful in general at education for personal enrichment than at education as "the commodity which enables him to buy into the system" (Curle, 1973, p.28). It is beyond the scope of this article to explain Japanese society enough for non-Japanese to understand the extent of group-centeredness fostered in children from the time they are toddlers. We present here a too-simplistic way to explain the difference: American teachers stress community building in order to get their individualistic children to feel responsibility to the class community, but Japanese teachers, embedded in the powerful tradition of the "wa," peaceful and mutually respectful community, ideal, actually find it easy to get their group-oriented students to work as a unit. So, in seikatsu tsuzurikata, what community building means is learning to retain independence in the face of group identity, or how group membership can include appreciating those who deviate from the norm. Obviously, community building contains those threads in both countries, but societal tendencies make for different challenges.

The term used for sessions of listening to each others' writing is "kansho," appreciation, and the format is geared toward discerning the perspective of another person. There is a word in Japanese, "yomitori," that can be translated to "read in order to perceive the writer's intention." That kind of reading goes beyond seeing the text as an abstract entity, and it is this "yomitori" that children are encouraged to do in appreciation sessions. We think that it is a small but significant difference to read a text primarily to perceive the writer's purpose and point of view rather than to judge the plausibility of the text.

There is something about literature study discussions in the whole language model that reminds us of the appreciation sessions in seikatsu tsuzurikata classrooms. Book clubs allow students to express and compare their understanding without concern for any orthodox response that a teacher might provide in traditional literature

classes. Here too students need not agree with classmates in literature circle discussions as much as they need to acknowledge each other's views. There is an assumption that any reader is expected to have unique interpretations because of the particularity of background he brings to the reading experience. Any book club member who presents a sincere interpretation of a novel must be taken seriously by the others. Whole language teachers who engage their students in such literary activities are providing the same sort of democratic formats that seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers provide to help their students appreciate each others' writing.

An appreciation session we observed in 1984 illustrated to us the community building that must have preceded it. Fifth graders listened to a classmate read a detailed description of life on her family's dairy farm. Then this girl proceeded to listen quietly as each student related what he or she had thought while listening to her. Their contributions were detailed and personal. One boy ruefully admitted that, when she began to read, he thought, "Oh, no, there she goes, writing about cows again." Someone else commented, "I realized that you cannot take a day off when you have cows to milk." And so it went with every child contributing a highly specific question or comment. They all seemed to have listened with the same "I want to get it right" respect that Graves demonstrated in Mary's classroom. It can be assumed that they were reflecting the sort of reactions their teacher had always penned into the margins of their own writing. What was striking was that their commentary focused more on the girl's life experiences than on the quality of her description.

Incidentally, the teacher of those fifth graders, Noriko Niwa, was one of the seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers in her area of Japan who were known to contend that honest writing could not be forced. They would invite students to write in journals but would not mandate it. Some students resisted for a long time, but almost all eventually wrote. Another well known seikatsu tsuzurikata teacher in Tokyo, Goro Kamemura, only required that the journal be turned in on time; a blank page for the day's entry in the journal was not a problem as long as the student passed it in along with everyone else. In this way, he not only avoided calling attention to the ones who did or did not write, but he had a chance to write back to the student. He would find something to comment on. He said that, sooner or later, even the most stubborn non-writers would probably be unable to resist writing in their journals, but even if they were too thick-skinned and never wrote at all, he wanted to write to them in any case (1979, pp.117-23).

The quality of effective seikatsu tsuzurikata teaching that we consider to be mirrored in whole language education may be the determined search for personal growth on its own behalf that educators, whose dedication begins with the student, share the world over. As a grassroots movement, it is rooted in the culture of its locality. As a manifestation of progressive education, it is reflective of ideals that are universal. Listening in on teacher-to-teacher talk highlights both the local and the global dimensions of the philosophy.

Meeting with Fukushima Teachers

An informal meeting of public school teachers in Fukushima Prefecture, a northeastern region of Japan, on January 20, 2007 provided us the opportunity to hear what teachers now talk about when they meet as a support group. As a grassroots

movement that has never been anything but grassroots, seikatsu tsuzurikata continues to be energized only by teacher-to-teacher communication. So when Shukuko Sato invited us along with Prof. Yogo Shima to Fukushima City where eight teachers from the city and two from Kitakata in the same prefecture were willing to meet with us, we were grateful to make the ninety minute bullet train trip north from Tokyo. Sato, now retired, was a middle-school teacher and a primary organizer of the annual convention of the national organization that was held in Fukushima City in July of 2006. She was also one of the seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers who attended the Whole Language Umbrella convention in St. Louis, Missouri in 1990.

Prof. Shima chaired the informal discussion. Here is a translated version of what we consider the nub of each teacher's contribution to the discussion. Rather than a transcript, the italicized portions slightly indented are encapsulations of each person's extended part in a three hour dialogue. All but one were either middle-school language arts (MS-LA) teachers or elementary school (ES) teachers, three of them now retired. In our introductory remarks we indicated that they should share what they would normally discuss when they get together, but we also indicated that we would like to hear about their relationship to parents, administrators, other teachers and the general public.

> Shuji Sato, MS-LA: *Teachers here are relatively free to pursue seikatsu tsuzurikata; if there is administrative pressure against it, it is soft pressure and not an obvious impediment.*

Fukushima Prefecture is known to be unusually supportive of seikatsu tsuzurikata. Teachers also cited examples of colleagues who, though they did not call themselves seikatsu tsuzurikata proponents, followed the same journal writing practices. This confirms our previous research finding that, although Nihon Sakubun no Kai has a small membership, the philosophy has had a substantial impact on writing education in Japan.

> Shin'ichi Takahashi, MS-LA: *I can cite the example of a college professor here who criticized seikatsu tsuzurikata saying that students' "writing from the heart" does not constitute good writing. Rather, he feels that it is the textual quality that makes writing successful. That is one of the types of criticism that we have to contend with, even in a place like Fukushima.*

> Michiko Fujita, MS-LA: *Kids like to write and want to contribute to class journals, but one of my concerns is that students tend to write what they assume teachers expect, even sometimes telling lies in their writing. I want to shift that by letting them know I want to read what they sincerely want to express. What makes a difference to kids is who the reader will be. If they are going to write what they assume is expected of them, then the most important thing I can do is convey that my expectation is for them to sincerely express their own view of reality.*

> Kimie Tokue, ES: *In my school genre writing has become the norm, with first and second graders writing primarily personal narratives. From third grade on expository writing is stressed, but most teachers continue to have children keep journals.*

Kumiko Kanno, ES: *The time allotted for language arts has lessened, but many teachers in my school continue to have children write in journals because they feel they can make connections with students through writing back and forth with them.*

Teruko Nikaido, ES: *Many of my fellow teachers complain that children always write the same things, so they said that responding to their writing is boring. For seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers, though, we know that the 'akapen'* (supportive responses described earlier in this article) *makes all the difference. Parents get involved, too. Upon reading their child's writing and the teacher's responses, parents become aware of the impact of such writing on their children and that relieves any concerns they might have about children describing out-of-school experiences with honesty.*

This last was in response to our question about parents' possible reservations about children describing their personal lives in journals.

Fumihiko Kikuta, MS-LA: *I teach in a small village with only 140 middle-school students in all, so my classes are small, as few as nineteen students. You might think that in this rural area, students would not have feelings of alienation, but actually they do. We have a high percentage of students who simply refuse to come to school. Four never attend at all, and five others rarely come. I want all students to be able to overcome the sense of alienation many seem to have. What I find with journals is that kids really want the teacher to know them as an individual. If I don't return the journals at the end of the day that the students turned them in, they are disappointed, so I know that my response is important to them. Even if they said they didn't want to write, they look forward to my response.*

Shukuko Sato, MS-LA: *It is not surprising that you recognize a sense of alienation. Small villages in which the same families have maintained the same household in the village over a long period are not necessarily easy to live in. Most people know each other well, but that in itself can be a reason for a child growing up with a sense of alienation*

Takuji Tadaki, MS-LA: *I agree. In a small village, more than in a big city, the household is such a powerful unit that children can lose their sense of personal identity. It can be like living in virtual reality. To overcome that sense, it is important that students write honestly. When I have students for three years of middle-school, it takes the whole three years to get to that point with some students. For me, the day when a student writes in his journal how much he hates writing, I feel that such honesty is the beginning I have been looking for.*

Seiya Fujita, MS-Social Studies: *I want to have kids think, "We can change the world. We can change society." So in my social studies classes, I have students do investigatory reports, for example about war experiences people have had.*

Fumihiko Sato, MS-LA: *Exactly. My goal is to produce students who wouldn't just pass by if things are strange or not acceptable. Through writing they develop in that way. They see themselves as responsible individuals.*

Shukuko Sato, MS-LA: *When* (a person she was tutoring after she retired) *showed me her writing, I realized that she had not had any training in writing the facts. I helped her to write by looking at facts and seeking to depict them without attempting to make any explanation. And I also showed her what I meant by sending her to see Michiko Fujita's class. After that observation, she said to me, "Oh, that's what 'byoosha' is." Byoosha means describing the scene as it is but without explanation; look at the facts until you recognize with certainty what you are observing and then write just what you are moved to express.*

Teruko Nikaido, ES: *I gave a questionnaire to fifty college students asking about their experience of writing education in public school. All of them indicated that they had never had a chance to write in such a way that they would feel: "I'm glad to have written that." Teachers should be aware that their students do really want to write no matter what they may say. I have met adults who describe their experiences as students in seikatsu tsuzurikata classes. Even years later they recall, "We were connected by writing."*

Shukuko Sato, MS-LA: *Yes, students look back and say, "When we were in middle-school, we could communicate with each other frankly. In our workplaces now, we don't dare to do that. So, when we have days off, we just go fishing."*

As the discussion began to wind down, several teachers passed to each other copies of some compositions their students had written. This fits the pattern at all the circle-group meetings we attended. What really matters is what the students want to express and how best to respond. As classroom teachers, it is classroom evidence that matters.

A Seikatsu Tsuzurikata Teacher's View of Language Arts

Michiko Fujita, one of the teachers cited above, points out that today's language arts textbooks for Japanese middle-school students no longer contain personal experience compositions as models for students. In our 1984 research we heard from both seikatsu tsuzurikata proponents and one staunch opponent that one striking bit of evidence of the impact of seikatsu tsuzurikata on writing education as a whole was that a large number of model compositions used in textbooks were compositions by children in seikatsu tsuzurikata classrooms; they had come from seikatsu tsuzurikata anthologies. That is no longer the case.

For her part, Fujita incorporates seikatsu tsuzurikata by conveying expectations different from those implied in the textbooks. The textbook models lend themselves to communication with a reader without first laying the foundation of what Fujita considers the grounding of the self. So, following the textbook, a student might learn how to compose an organized letter, how to use a comic book format for a graphic report, or how to write a newspaper article. If there were a rubric to judge

such compositions, it would not include the qualities Fujita values such as self-motivation and a sense of personal connection to the facts. Fujita says that, when a student finishes a piece, he should experience satisfaction at the way he was able to express himself sincerely.

The prescribed curriculum has slots at the end of each unit for students to write reflective pieces. Recognizing how easily many students churn out rather abstract but superficial writing once they get used to this assignment, Fujita substitutes her own expectations. At the beginning of the term, she assigns the "certain day, certain time" descriptive writing that enables writers to write concretely on the basis of specific personal experiences. At the end of each unit, she assigns similar writing based upon the "aha" moments the student recalls experiencing in the course of the unit. In this way she follows the curriculum she is required to teach and also the seikatsu tsuzurikata qualities in which she believes.

Another example from Fujita's class demonstrates a research model that reminds us of Kenneth Macrorie's "I-Search" papers (Macrorie, 1980). She reports the way that one boy's decision to use bamboo in making a visual display about a prehistoric period in Japan, and her question, "Did they have bamboo in Japan at that time?" led him on a quest similar to those Macrorie described. The resulting paper was a factual, chronological sequence of the investigations and discoveries he made, all described with the concreteness of "a certain day, a certain time." Fujita would not have read Macrorie's books, but it is interesting that she too has discovered the merits of such an approach to research.

Is Seikatsu Tsuzurikata Language Arts or Self-Actualization Guidance?

The history of that question might show how a grassroots movement develops theory even while being enmeshed in daily practice. Although the issue was already under discussion in the fifties, it heightened in the next decade. In the post-Sputnik paranoia that rocked education in the United States in the early nineteen-sixties, educators found themselves defending their pedagogy in terms of the space race. In Japan the same dynamics led the public to question "the scientific basis" for curricular policies, and seikatsu tsuzurikata teachers were under similar scrutiny, especially from other progressive teachers' associations specializing in disciplines other than language arts. Perhaps the need to show writing education as a "discipline" explains why five levels of abstraction defined principally under the leadership of a seikatsu tsuzurikata pioneer, Ichitaro Kokubun, were officially adopted in 1962 by Nihon Sakubun no Kai as being the appropriate developmental sequence in the seikatsu tsuzurikata writing curriculum -- over fierce objections from some members (as articulated in Murayama 1985). Here, at the risk of over-encapsulating a complex subject, are the basic categories. Step one begins with straightforward personal narrative of a single event. Step two allows an explanatory style of writing with an actual or implied time span that is longer than step one writing. Step three is a combining of steps one and two in order to achieve generalization with concrete examples. Steps four and five include research papers, formal exposition and fiction writing; however, with examination pressures taking precedence in middle- and high-school, where presumably those higher levels of abstraction would be achieved, they are not well developed in most language arts classes.

It should be noted that the levels, or steps, are not taught to children. They are simply goals by which teachers make curricular decisions. While young children are encouraged to write straightforward description, teachers know that they will also naturally express themselves in steps two and three ways. Furthermore, it is assumed that writers avoid overgeneralization when they have a level one (straightforward) connection to factual reality, if only as some kind of prewriting. Those teachers who emphasize steps one to three and those teachers who consider any definition of steps to be antithetical to their self-actualization aims are often similarly successful as language arts teachers because, in either case, their students' compositions ring with voice.

While we do not have room in this paper to explore the language arts versus guidance issue fully, what is most important is that it is a topic; it shows the grappling that accompanies both classroom decisions and profession-wide dialogue. Grassroots teachers, who confront issues about practice every single day in the classroom, cannot always be theoretical purists. Still, the repercussions over the adoption of five steps split the organization badly in the subsequent years. By the time we did our research in 1984, however, reconciliation was beginning and has continued. People can still tell us which famous teacher adhered more to the language arts domain and which person or area was noted for emphasizing self-actualization. For our part we suspect that there is enough overlap to answer the questions, "Is it language arts?" and "Is it life guidance?" with the single answer, "Yes."

Core Values of Progressive Education

The language arts versus life guidance issues described above have been controversial topics discussed in seikatsu tsuzurikata journal articles and at conventions, but in the classroom, advocates of one or the other emphasis differ very little. Similarly to whole language, teachers may disagree rather significantly about this or that practice, but their classrooms reflect fundamental values of the philosophy. Identifying these linking ideals enables us to avoid distracting battles over incidental differences.

Mary calls herself a whole language teacher but has not been involved in the so-called "reading wars" that are often cited as conflicts between whole language advocates and opponents. As an upper elementary-grades teacher, she has been less concerned with the place of phonics in reading instruction and more with how literature study empowers readers.

The essence of whole language that keeps her attention is on the level of teacher-student dynamics. Mary recognizes in whole language classrooms something she calls, "the democratic politics of a learning community" where the parameters of responsibility and investment are more mutually shared between teacher and learners than in traditional settings. When she sensed the same dynamics at work in seikatsu tsuzurikata classrooms, she realized that all the obvious differences between these and whole language classrooms would not prevent her from implementing some version of seikatsu tsuzurikata into her whole language classroom, which she did.

The Future

This article is being submitted by electronic mail, crossing the Pacific Ocean in an instant that anyone cramped in an airplane seat over the same ocean can only envy. It can be transmitted to readers at the same speed. While we were doing the research, a teacher friend, Keerthi Mukunda, in a school in India emailed us about a project she is doing with eight- and nine-year olds. It reminded us that whole language and seikatsu tsuzurikata are merely two of many manifestations of progressive education.

Keerthi's students visited the rural village near their school and after meeting the villagers they compiled questions and curiosities to investigate in future visit. She said she wanted them to raise their own questions, and she was initially surprised at how few of their curiosities involved the past. Back at her school, however, she showed them an Internet view of the area and suddenly they wanted to know things like, "Were those rivers always dry?" "Did people in the past live over there instead of over here?" "Did this area ever have more trees than it has now?" We use this illustration from a school that is neither whole language nor seikatsu tsuzurikata by identification to show that its teachers agonize over similar questions as those of teachers from both those movements. The school in India, Centre for Learning, is one of many alternative schools in various countries dedicated to the educational philosophy of J. Krishnamurti. On the homepage of our friend's school is this quote.

"Surely education has no meaning unless it helps you understand the vast expanse of life, with all its subtleties, its beauties, its sorrows, and its joys"
– J. Krishnamurti

In an increasingly electronic world where everything seems communicatively possible, grassroots teachers dedicated to progressive causes have to get to know each other. As whole language and its cousins exchange insights in ways that modern travel and communication make possible, we recognize more of what we value and stand ready to advocate in our own cultural contexts. We all stand together with teachers like those in Fukushima and "want to produce responsible individuals who, when things are unacceptable, won't just pass by." We know we each can speak in our nama no koe, raw voices, because we will understand.

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Becoming Whole Language Teachers and Social Justice Agents: Pre-service Teachers Inquire with Sixth Graders

Monica Taylor*
Montclair State University

Gennifer Otinsky**
Grover Cleveland Middle School

Abstract

As we strive to help pre-service teachers understand both why and how to teach for social justice, we face the challenge of making whole language teaching less abstract and intangible. Frequently pre-service teachers understand the principles of teaching for social justice but have no sense of how to infuse them into their teaching. They accept that these theories can be utilized in their education courses but they are doubtful that they would work successfully with children or even be accepted in K-12 school environments.

*Monica Taylor is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching in the College of Education and Human Services at Montclair State University. A former middle school teacher, she received her Ph.D. in language, reading, and culture from the University of Arizona. Her research and publications include: middle-school literacy and inquiry, teaching for social justice, professional development school partnerships, and methods of self-study such as co/autoethnography.

**Gennifer Otinsky is a sixth grade language arts/social studies teacher at Grover Cleveland Middle School in Caldwell, New Jersey. She received her B.S. at James Madison University in middle school education and French and has a M.A. from the College of St. Elizabeth. She is interested in teaching for social justice, adolescent literature, and the integration of the arts across the curriculum.

Introduction

We speak often of generating a sense of agency in young people; and it seems evident that this mode of teaching is at least likely to communicate a sense of agency, if the young can feel themselves engaged with those around. Once awakened to concrete examples of injustice they might, together, invent a project of remediation, palliation, repair (Greene, 1998, pp. xx).

We are a teacher educator in a curriculum and teaching department and a sixth-grade language arts/social studies teacher who have grown to know one another while our schools, a suburban middle-school and a state university in New Jersey, prepared to establish a professional development school partnership. Grappling together with issues of democracy, in a two-week Summer Leadership Associates program sponsored by the university's Agenda for Education in a Democracy, we realized how powerful our collaborative inquiry was and we wondered how we could replicate this type of exploration for our students. Through coordinating pre-service on-site courses with sixth grade social studies classes, we have devised an inquiry unit that explores social justice issues tangibly and safely.

Rationale

We know from our own process of becoming teachers, as well as from much of the research in teacher education (Anders & Evans, 1994; Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000) that it is through constructing one's knowledge, negotiating curriculum, engaging in inquiry, and critically examining the world (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Cochran-Smith, 1991) that a teacher is able to find the best practices for her students. Engaging in inquiry with middle schoolers, examining and researching authentic questions collaboratively, and sharing and discussing their findings may open up the possibility for our pre-service teachers of creating their own whole language framework within their content area. As Whitmore and Goodman (1996) wrote, "The same principles that underlie whole language also apply to teacher education. Our teaching of teachers must be consistent with the principles we advocate" (p. 2).

We search for ways to disrupt the pre-service teachers' traditional notions of teaching, learning, and curriculum. We model these constructs from whole language and social justice lenses, highlighting the theoretical, practical, and political. This is important because although our teacher education program emphasizes social justice, the pre-service teachers have a difficult time translating it into practice. This challenge is augmented by the pre-service teachers' experiences both within their individualized content areas as well as in their field experiences in school settings. Too often they fall back into the direct instruction model with which they feel comfortable. They are unsure of the ways to diverge from transmission teaching, and with little power, are fearful of veering from the norm. We understand how high the stakes are, but we strive to use practices that open up conversations about whole language, social justice, and inquiry. Inviting both groups of students to scaffold for one another enhances their efforts to, "read the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). We encourage our pre-service teachers to develop their own frameworks rather than a uniform way of social justice teaching because just as whole language, "looks very different from teacher to teacher" (Whitmore & Goodman,

1996, p. 2) so should their philosophies (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991; Goodman, Hood, & Goodman, 1991).

Additionally, our pre-service teachers need to develop their social justice lens because they, as well as our sixth graders, are primarily white and from suburban communities. They have little to no experience with people who are different from them and take their positions of privilege for granted. They are unaccustomed to examining their world critically and view racism as isolated incidents rather than institutionalized or societal norms. They have had mixed experiences with whole language in school, and social justice is a significant leap of faith. Having opportunities to examine the world from multiple perspectives (in our eyes one of the primary goals of inquiry) invites them to reexamine texts and the world with fresh eyes so that they are able to begin to identify stereotypes and absences of voices. We feel strongly that in order to promote social justice, a teacher must first, "understand the roots of injustice and the ways in which inequalities are perpetuated so that they can grow to make informed and ethical decisions as citizens in our society" (Taylor & Otinsky, 2007, p. 106). We are in accord with Edelsky (1999) when she writes, "If whole language is to promote democracy, justice, and equity, whole language educators must recognize the undemocratic nature of the existing political system in the United States. Despite secret ballots, rhetoric, and governmental structures, the United States is a long way from being a democracy" (p. 9).

How Do We Define Inquiry?

As Short, Harste, with Burke (1996) point out, to understand inquiry we must look at how, "learners actually go about inquiry in their lives outside of school" (p. 257). They explain, "Inquiry comes from exploring and being interested in the world. Through their active explorations of their world tensions arise and they ask questions about aspects of the world that puzzle them" (p. 257). Inquiry involves constructing knowledge, building upon prior experiences, and critically engaging with information. It operates from the understanding that knowledge is dynamic, ever changing, and multiple, and is not static, does not reside in textbooks or with experts, and cannot be simply transmitted to students. To invite learners to engage with authentic questions and construct their own knowledge and perspectives, we have to share the authority of the asking, the process, and the end products (Weaver, 1990). "Students," according to Wells (2001), "need to be given the opportunity to develop personal initiatives and responsibility, adaptable problem-posing and –solving skills, and the ability to work collaboratively with others" (Dewey, 1916, p. 173).

Inquirers are not encouraged to accept information as truth, and they cannot make unsubstantiated claims; they have to question, investigate, and justify. They are, as Freire (1985) insists, "problem posers, not just problem solvers" (Short, Harste, with Burke, 1996, p. 257). When inquiry drives the curriculum, learners are pushed to think as researchers. Part of being a successful researcher involves being immersed in a topic, "wondering and wandering" (Short, Harste, with Burke, 1996, p. 265), designing and redesigning a question and then articulating "understandings" (p. 260). Questions are defined and explored in an environment of uncertainty and learners are invited to resist their human desire to confirm knowledge. Rather they look for shades of grey instead of viewing the world in black and white.

Learners cannot be engaged in inquiry alone. Inquiry is a relational process: it relies on the give and take of questions, ideas, perspectives, and even explanations to draw conclusions about the world and raise new questions and ideas. So inquiry flourishes when the student/teacher relationship reflects the authority and expertise of both parties. Equally important is the collaborative relationship of the students (Vygotsky, 1978). In dialogue, students can examine a question from multiple perspectives. Often the dialogue leading both to and from the inquiry process is quite rich. Inquiry requires a dialogical community of students and teacher where ideas are shared, discussed, examined, and reformulated (Stock, 1995). In dialogue, learners construct new understandings and questions of the world. Both students and teachers share reciprocal authority and alternate roles as knowers and learners, depending upon the question, the expertise, the prior knowledge, and the mode of exploration (Taylor & Coia, 2006). Ultimately, "knowledge building takes place between people doing things together, and at least part of this doing involves dialogue" (Wells, 2001, p. 186).

Whole Language and Social Justice Teaching

We believe that whole language is not limited to teaching language and literacy. It promotes critical, pro-justice, and democratic teaching (Shannon, 1990; Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 1998). The whole language movement, "is inherently democratic: the power of the philosophy resides in the ways in which teachers and their students take ownership of their learning and teaching" (Taylor, 2007, p. 5). Our whole language beliefs cannot be separated from our commitments to teaching for social justice. We believe that the two philosophies share common objectives. As whole language teachers we teach through, "a range of social and cultural practices which assist students to question the truth of texts, to ask different questions about texts, and indeed to seek out conflicting texts" (Boran & Comber, 2001, pp. viii-ix). Whole language teachers encourage students to use language and literacy critically to problematize the social and cultural norms that are produced and reproduced in texts (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Goodman, 1986; Cambourne, 1988). They accept and respect their students regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, and believe in their abilities as learners. They care about their students and often act as advocates. In a whole language classroom, "inquiry is not simply finding right answers to old and familiar questions," but also entails interrogating the questions and resources investigated (Boran & Comber, 2001, pp. vii-ix). Whole language focuses on the individual student so that inquiry is relevant.

In our whole language classrooms, students ask the following essential questions: "Who makes decisions and who is left out? Who benefits and who suffers? Why is a given practice fair or unfair? What are its origins? What alternatives can we imagine? What is required to create change?" (Bigelow, Harvey, Karp, & Miller, 2001). We strive to uncover the ways in which some people are privileged and have access to wealth and power and others live as objects of discrimination and injustice. Using inquiry as a habit of mind in classrooms produces, "a more equitable, a more just, and a more thoughtful world" (Harste, 2001, p. 1). Inquiry promotes social justice because it, "begins with voice, inviting all learners to name their world. It ends in reflexivity and action, inviting all learners to interrogate the very constructs they are using to make sense of their world" (Harste, 2001, p. 15).

What's In a Name?

Our challenge grows as we struggle to find appropriate ways to name whole language and social justice teaching principles. Within both the field of teacher education as well as within the middle-school, the term whole language raises political red flags or misconceptions. Used among colleagues we find ourselves either on the defensive or in need of clarifying our position (Dudley-Marling, 1999). At the university, democracy is considered the foundation of our program, yet there is disagreement among faculty about its interpretation and many students find our social justice language uncomfortable and too political. They have difficulty accepting that teaching is political (Shannon, 1992; Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). Whole language is deemed a part of the literacy education program and not appropriate for our curriculum and teaching courses.

Because the pre-service teachers are more familiar with the term teaching for social justice, we have named our project a social justice inquiry. Trying to translate our own enriching collaborative experiences of inquiry around issues of social justice led to our alternative teacher education practice, a whole language model that focuses on teaching "curriculum as inquiry" (Short, Harste, with Burke, 1996).

Who Are Our Pre-service Teachers?

Our pre-service teachers, who are enrolled in either the undergraduate teacher education program or the masters of teaching program at our suburban state university, are predominantly white (75%). We have a small percentage of African-American (12%), Hispanic (10%) and Asian (3%) students. Economically their backgrounds range from lower, middle to upper incomes and for many of our students, they are the first in their families to be college educated. They are two-thirds female. These pre-service teachers are receiving their certifications to be able to teach students in grades K-12 in a number of diverse content areas including English, social studies, sciences, mathematics, art, music, foreign language, physical education, or speech. Each spring semester we have between twenty-five and thirty pre-service teachers. The data for this particular study primarily involve the pre-service teachers who were enrolled in the spring of 2004 and 2005.

The Social Justice Inquiry Project

The social justice inquiry unit takes place each day over the course of three weeks. The pre-service teachers are in their professional seminar during which they take an intensive teaching and learning course for the first three weeks and then proceed to student teaching. During this course, Monica encourages them to move from theory into practice. The pre-service teachers write lesson plans, plan ways to differentiate instruction, discuss classroom management and assessment strategies, develop a philosophy statement, and attempt to prepare for their student teaching experience. They are required to maintain a reflective journal throughout the entire inquiry experience and as a final reflection they write a teaching for social justice philosophy statement. Several of the readings address issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and teaching for social justice (Students read *The Complex World of Teaching,* 1997). Monica and the pre-service teachers meet daily for two course hours and then work

with the sixth graders for a course hour. This course setup gives them the opportunity to discuss strategies or concepts and then try them out with sixth graders.

The unit coincides with the sixth graders' theme of civil rights with the hopes that the various activities of the unit act, as Greene (1998) writes as, "a series of occasions for individuals to articulate the themes of their existence and reflect on those themes until they know themselves to be in the world and can name what has been up to then obscure" (pp. 18-19). This principle of naming the obscure resonates on many levels with both the sixth graders and their adult co-inquirers. At the beginning of the unit, groups are formed with two pre-service teachers and four sixth graders. The unit incorporates a variety of whole language teaching strategies including brainstorming, poetry writing, reader response to texts, films, and visual images, role-playing, and inquiry projects. Specifically our unit covers the following topics: building community, identity sharing, explorations of race, class, and gender, examination of stereotypes in the media, introduction and discussion of the term social justice, models of young social justice activists, and social justice inquiry projects.

After introducing the inquiry cycle (Short, Harste, with Burke, 1996), and some large group brainstorming of possible social justice questions, individual groups develop a shared open-ended authentic question. Narrowing a group question involves negotiation and collaborative decision-making. Then, in the media center, students plan their methodology and carry out their research. They must use at least one periodical, book, Internet site, and interview for their investigation. They not only find information, but they synthesize different perspectives and draw conclusions. They create a poster board that presents their findings visually. The board shows the original open-ended question, their methodology and bibliographic information, their results and findings, a social action plan (something that they can do themselves to raise awareness or make change) and finally, any new questions that they have.

The inquiry topics are very diverse. One sixth grader's uncle ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate and lost to a millionaire, which prompted her group to ask the question: If a person can't run for office because they don't have money, then is it a democratic society? Another group, comprised of five females and only one male, asked the question: Why hasn't a woman ever been elected president in the U.S.A.? Other groups wondered about the following: How does Title IX affect sports? Are athletes more important than teachers? Does the media portray stereotypes and how can we protect ourselves from it? Why are there more African Americans than whites in jail? Why is there world hunger? Why do some school districts have more money to spend on education than others?

The students share their findings along with their proposed action plans. Action plans range from student-run after-school events designed to raise awareness about homelessness, racism, or bullying, to collection boxes to raise money for the Sudan, to letters to local papers sharing concerns that there are no women presidents in the US, to pamphlets on ways to prevent accepting stereotypes in the media, and lists of resources against bullying. Sharing their findings leads to new questions.

Methodology and Analysis

Throughout these projects, we collect data to understand the impact of participating in the social justice inquiry project. We gather and photocopy reflections that are written after each session from all student participants. We conduct a series of three 45-minute phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1991) with a small representational group of students. These interviews are tape-recorded and then transcribed. We digitally videotape and photograph the students during the inquiry cycle, while they present their findings, and once they debrief after presentations. We photocopy the pre-service teachers' philosophical statements on social justice teaching. The pre-service teachers also discuss their reflections on Blackboard, the university's digital discussion community. Additionally, we record our own observations and reflections as field notes.

Our data analysis is recursive and generative. We attempt to analyze data as they are collected as well as after. We meet once a week to discuss the progress of the project and to read and reflect about the data. Using constant-comparative methods, we continually look for emerging themes, categories, or patterns that span across the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We attempt to triangulate data (Gordon, 1980) by seeking themes that are represented in multiple forms of data.

We Are Doing What With the Sixth Graders?

The pre-service teachers enter into this inquiry with great apprehension. They display disbelief at the sixth graders being interested and motivated to think about social justice issues. They state, "We are doing what with the sixth graders? A social justice project? Why would we ever do that? What do they know or care about stereotypes and social justice? Why should they know about these things? They are so young and immature." They believe that sixth graders cannot think critically because of their age and lack of maturity. We wonder how there can be such a great disconnect between our courses and the pre-service teachers' responses. We worry about how they will teach for social justice in their own classrooms. At what age or level will they deem their students old enough to critically examine texts or the world?

Interestingly, this disbelief quickly vanishes once they begin working with the sixth graders. As Anna illustrates, the pre-service teachers begin to value the critical potential of children almost immediately. She writes, "I learned that we don't give enough credit to students. Kids are never given a chance because they are seen as too young to learn about things like this."

Sixth Graders Can Wrap Their Brains Around Complex Issues

It is relatively easy for us to emphasize the potential of students as learners and thinkers, but it is much more powerful to provide pre-service teachers opportunities to experience the seriousness of a sixth grade discussion or critique of a text. We believe that these principles of believing in learners, and understanding that

they come to the classroom with prior knowledge and critical dispositions to examine texts and the world, are fundamentally whole language principles. The theme of surprise and amazement at the level of sixth grade engagement pervaded the pre-service teachers' reflections. Claudia admits that she did not know what to expect when she first heard about the project: "Initially I underestimated the abilities of the students. I didn't realize how knowledgeable, sensitive and perceptive they were to understanding social justice issues." As the project progressed, Marcie writes, "They continue to amaze me with their ability to wrap their brains around these complex issues." Robert echoes, "So far I've been impressed and fascinated with how insightful the kids are. Their awareness of issues like stereotyping and identity is amazing." After the inquiry presentations, Janice writes, "I was very surprised that they had so many questions for the groups and that their minds work much more critically than I expected."

Engaging in social justice inquiry clearly helps the pre-service teachers think about their students differently. They realize that their students are equipped to think critically and discuss difficult and complex issues of social justice. They begin to recognize the legitimacy of a curriculum that moves beyond factual recall. Through "talking back" to the world, students may discover their own voices as active participants in the world. Jennifer writes, "I think without seeing this, I would not have given kids enough credit. I would have assumed I would need to be more cautious about what topics I brought up in my classroom." They begin to rethink what topics are considered appropriate for the classroom and how these topics can be discussed from multiple perspectives.

Supporting the notion of being an avid "kidwatcher" (Goodman, 1985), Dina remarks, "Don't give up on your students so fast. They tend to surprise you." She continues, "You need to constantly assess learning as it is happening." Lesley advises teachers to kidwatch when she states, "Watch your students and see what works. Observe how they learn and use that to your advantage to work on new teaching methods." The pre-service teachers reflect that teaching should be child-centered and revolve around the needs and talents of the students. They are aware of the importance of both flexibility and adaptability.

Ownership Opens Possibilities

The pre-service teachers have hands-on experiences that strengthen their understanding of the need for learners to have ownership of the learning process. They acknowledge that learners can be, "trusted to assume responsibility for their own learning" (Whitmore & Goodman, 1997, p. 3). Susan demonstrates this trust: "Students will come up with a lot of ideas on their own. You don't always have to push them towards a certain conclusion." Julie writes, at the conclusion of the project, "This is a very important project to do because by these students discovering the information for themselves, they can see the proper information from some of the misconceptions that they have." Melanie adds, "I learned that when students take ownership of what they learn, they will get more out of it." Felicia also addresses the issue of ownership, "Students can direct their own learning. They took charge of what they wanted to do and how they wanted to go about it." Through learning alongside adolescents, the pre-service teachers move from teacher as provider of information to

the role of, "facilitator and coach," where they have to, "step back" and let the students come to know.

Teacher/Learner Reciprocity

We model our inquiry after Freire's (1994) idea that, "The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (p. 67). This principle of sharing the roles of teachers and learners seems natural to the pre-service teachers as they learn collaboratively with the sixth graders. Jack discusses his surprise at learning research strategies from the sixth graders, "It was interesting seeing how students half my age do things. They were so savvy about the Internet. It showed me that my process is also a little one-sided and that I need to re-evaluate my research methods." "Working with the students reinforced the idea that our students will teach us as much as we teach them," reiterates Debbie. Laura concludes, "The children really teach you to see things from a different perspective."

Debbie continues, "Working alongside the students was a great experience because they helped me to think about the inquiry process and question things that I would never have thought of." Luisa concludes, in her philosophy statement, "Contrary to traditional methods of education where the teacher provides the information and asks students to 'get it,' when students construct their own meaning based on what they may already know, they have potential to move beyond the conventional student role and become a teacher."

Inquiry Curriculum as Evolving

As they shift their perceptions of learners, the pre-service teachers begin to rethink the ways in which they will approach curriculum. As they move to value their learners in the teaching equation, they realize that curriculum is not fixed but rather evolves with the students. This re-examined understanding of curriculum resonates with Goodman's (2005) description of whole language curriculum: "Whole language puts the focus in curriculum on starting where the learners are. The curriculum builds on the language, experience, interests, and cultures of the learners. The curriculum is based on problem solving and inquiry" (p. 91). Lesley notes, "I will use my curriculum as a guide but it can and will be changed if I see that something else has intrigued my students but doesn't follow exactly what I had planned. Textbooks should be a resource not a lesson plan or guideline."

Social Justice Teaching as a Lifestyle

The social justice inquiry helps pre-service teachers think about whether or not they are committed to teaching for social justice on a personal level before entering the classroom. Lily writes, "Social justice is so multifaceted that as a classroom teacher I must begin at its core. First, in my personal and professional life, I must want to live in a socially just manner and want to see others around me being treated with justice. I must be willing to reflect honestly on my own hidden biases." Susan echoes these sentiments as she thinks about her future identity as a special educator and a, "facilitator of social change." She reflects, "We must first examine our own

assumptions, perceptions, preconceived notions, and prejudices that we have learned about disabilities through the course of our lifetime. Once we face our beliefs and our fears regarding physical and mental differences in people then we can guide young children to do the same." These reflections resonate with the objectives of the project: to invite our students to first examine their own positions in society, the positions of others, and the interplay of the two. Before promoting social justice, teachers must first unpack their positions.

"Truth Tellers and Change Makers"

Our pre-service teachers demonstrate that social justice teaching involves two interrelated dimensions: providing content knowledge that represents multiple voices and perspectives through the filtering of curriculum and materials and developing critical lenses through their content areas that expand students as learners, thinkers, and moral citizens. Dana believes that social justice teaching, "includes helping students learn how to recognize injustices within society, not just those on the surface; how to think critically about how those injustices affect the subordinate groups, themselves, and society as a whole, and finally how to find their voice as part of society to help them become 'truth tellers and change makers.'" Sam, a future social studies teacher, begins to think about valuing alternative historical perspectives. He gives the example of World War II and the Japanese American perspective: "Japanese Americans were put in prison camps because of the war with Japan. For Japanese Americans this may be the biggest event of the war. It is important to look at social studies from a variety of perspectives so that all people's pasts are included as part of the vital issues of history." Justin realizes that his students may have little exposure to oppressed people. He reflects, "It is important for students to understand social justice through the eyes of people who may not be represented in their student population. A different way to introduce students to other cultures is learning about the struggles that other groups of people had to face in order to obtain better equality."

Lily believes that studying art naturally lends itself to talking back to texts. Thinking about art as literacy, she reflects, "By decoding messages in our visual surroundings my students gain an understanding of contexts such as institutionalized, interpersonal, and internalized racism and sexism. This practice of visual literacy will enable my students to "talk back" to their surroundings by critiquing and evaluating visual messages that constantly bombard them." She hopes that in recognizing these messages, her students will be able to resist maintaining the status quo and perpetuating stereotypes.

Jennifer, a future art teacher, moves beyond the curricular content and reflects on her moral responsibility to promote informed and engaged citizens. She hopes to push students to, "value more than just the familiar." She does not want to change their opinions rather she hopes that they will come to know on their own. This idea of opening up spaces for her students to discover for themselves their moral voices is a more complicated teaching objective, but one that clearly values the authority of the learner. She eloquently explains:

I believe that we are not just teaching our students facts and how to combine

them but how to live. We live in a country where our laws are written so that we have the ability to change if it is needed and we need to teach our students to take advantage of this. If students are confident and capable of inquiry they will keep exploring the world around them. I see students who come to my classroom with negative stereotypes imprinted in their thinking, as a challenge but not bad or someone I try to keep quiet. Allowing students to have their opinions but insisting they know why they think the way they do forces them to look beyond the, 'it's right because my Dad said so' or 'my friends said.'

Nurturing Activists

Inquiry connects learners to the real and pressing problems of the world. It enables them to name those problems, and leads naturally to their engagement in those problems. Thus, inquiry leads to action in the world both inside and outside of the classroom. In classroom-based inquiry we acknowledge that action or experience is a fundamental part of thinking and learning, or as Dewey (1997) argues, "The material of thinking is not thoughts, but actions, facts, events, and the relations of things" (pp. 156-7). This expanded notion of thinking and learning is inherently democratic in that it values the unique and infinite actions and experiences of all learners. Both Sam and Justin conclude that raising awareness about injustice is just the first step of social justice inquiry. Students need avenues by which to take action once they understand about injustices, otherwise they become hopeless. Justin illustrates: "Teaching for social justice also means that teachers have a responsibility in teaching students who will become critical enough to make rational decisions on their own and participate to make a change." Sam reflects similarly about the sixth-grade inquiry project, "We did not only raise a question, we were also required to create an action plan. This is important in regards to social justice because not only are we drawing on the past but we are creating ways to change injustices in the future." We agree that action is a vital part of social justice teaching.

Diana, as she thinks about her future language arts classroom, identifies promoting social justice as a way to unearth, "truths about the world." She feels responsible to investigate the issue of power with her students and help them to devise ways to become agents of change themselves. She hopes to have her students, "ask questions about decision making and the repercussions of negative choices, fairness, and most importantly power dynamics." She continues, "I want to make them understand how and why some differences will 'translate into wealth and power and others will be a source of discrimination and injustice.' By creating situations where students can think critically about ways to apply the tools to real life, there is still a chance that students will try to make change beyond the classroom."

Our Views on Inquiry

Inquiry is often a risky and uncomfortable endeavor, for there is no predicting what twists and turns the process takes, nor can we be sure of the final product. Each time we invite learners to engage in inquiry, the ingredients of the process emerge with the investigation and more importantly the investigators. Allowing for the unpredictable in our classrooms through inquiry is a drastic change from the traditional ways that we view teaching and learning, but it is inherently democratic.

Teachers do not construct democratic classrooms using a transmission model of teaching. If they hope to promote democratic principles then they have to trust that inviting their learners to take ownership of their learning will promote a more in-depth and critical understanding of the world. Inquiry necessitates the space and time for learners to develop and explore their own authentic open-ended questions.

We want to make it clear that coming to understand and incorporate inquiry in our classrooms as a habit of mind does not occur overnight nor is it easy. It is a process in which we take one big leap and several small steps. We believe that we take the jump each time we open the class to inquiry. It involves a type of letting go – letting go of the reigns of control in terms of focus of the class. It involves trusting the students as learners and trusting the learning process. It also involves providing structure to help students when they struggle or need some redirection.

Implications: Finding One's Agency

Although we continue to adjust to meet the pre-service teachers' needs, we believe that collaborative inquiry with adolescents helps them re-examine issues of power and equity and develop a disposition toward promoting social justice. Ultimately we hope that our project raises consciousness and encourages pre-service teachers to consider their roles as whole language teachers and moral change agents in a democracy. We believe that this is just the first step. We realize, as we send our pre-service teachers out to student teaching and later teaching, that there are many obstacles that can obstruct their actualization of these whole language principles.

We know from our seminar discussions during student teaching that some pre-service teachers struggle to incorporate these principles into their teaching. Alan, a technology pre-service teacher, is unsure what social justice means to his teaching. By the end of his inquiry, he begins to embrace social justice practices but is frustrated when he realizes that his cooperating teacher does not have the same beliefs. He recognizes the political implications of his new framework:

> Now that I have started student teaching, I am not sure how to teach for social justice. The sixth graders were given projects that stimulated research, critical thinking, and fostered a sense of inquiry. The students that I am working with are asked to sit quietly, take notes, do well on assignments and not cause disruptions.

Alan's experience represents the voices of many pre-service teachers. Felicia, a pre-service English teacher, expresses concern about finding a job in a school where she can really "carry out" her social justice beliefs. She wonders if her whole language practices will be appreciated in all schools.

These reflections raise serious questions as we continue to examine what preparing social justice teachers involves. We believe that transparency is essential in terms of our own political activism and advocacy in the field of education. We must model the ways in which we navigate bureaucracy, teaching our pre-service teachers both the appropriate language and strategies necessary to work within the system.

How do we currently do this? We strive to demonstrate the means to publicize our social justice work. We attend and present our projects to the local school boards, we meet with parents within the school, and we contact local newspaper journalists to write articles about our social justice inquiry projects (Moore, 2005). We attend multiple local and national professional conferences and we attempt to publish about our inquiries in professional journals. We also share with our pre-service teachers our own instances of struggle within the university and middle-school settings so that they are aware of the methods that we use to make change.

We strive to help our pre-service teachers understand that their roles as teachers include a political dimension. We know that this is particularly difficult to embrace as a new teacher with many pressures to conform to the system or to gain tenure. This is an aspect of teacher education that we specifically need to further develop. How can we support our pre-service teachers politically once they are student teaching and later teaching? How can we equip them to be advocates of social justice teaching? In what ways can we strengthen their political voices as whole language teachers?

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Book Review

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Reviewed by
Dr. Amy S. Flint
Indiana University, Bloomington

Whole Language Teaching, Whole-Hearted Practice…

Whole Language Teaching, Whole-Hearted Practice: Looking Back, Looking Forward (Taylor, Ed., 2005) is an edited collection of narratives authored by teachers, teacher educators, and researchers as they recount the impact of whole language on their teaching and learning. The essence of the book is captured in the subtitle, *Looking Back, Looking Forward.* There are chapters devoted to the history of the whole language movement, as well as chapters highlighting the current and future practices of whole language. Important to recognize is that this book is not just a chronology or timeline of the whole language movement. Each chapter also addresses the multilayered dimensions of social justice activism involved in whole language teaching. Education, and in this case, whole language, is never a neutral practice, but rather reflects the social, cultural, political, and historical milieu of the society and the times. Readers come to appreciate the commitment that whole language teachers have to teaching, to their beliefs around language learning, and to initiating change in their communities and schools. They learn that whole language teachers are committed to social justice and critical thinking through their beliefs about teaching, learning, and curriculum. As the narratives unfold, it is also possible to see that whole language teaching is a collaborative practice with students, families, and colleagues. Collaboration is powerful and can lead to social change and action. The narratives invite readers to examine their own practices and activism and to continually strive for equitable, just, and empowering contexts that children and teachers deserve.

The book is comprised of nine narratives. The first chapter, authored by Monica Taylor, establishes the connections among the chapters and lays out for the reader the multidimensional nature of whole language teaching. She notes that whole language teachers: (a) interact and build relationships with students; (b) are grounded in their beliefs about teaching, learning, and curriculum; (c) find ways to "teach against the grain;" (d) engage with parents and others in the community; (e) collaborate with other teachers; and (f) see their role as leaders of change. The first chapter also reminds us that whole language was founded during a time of political, social, and cultural upheaval and tension. Teachers and researchers were responding to the mechanistic view of literacy and the reading process.

Chapters two and three by Debra Goodman recount the beginnings of the whole language movement in the urban center of Detroit from the early 1980s through the 1990s. Debra, the daughter of Ken and Yetta, grew up with language, literacy, and linguistics as part of the dinner conversation. Because of this, she knew many teachers and researchers instrumental in whole language, including Dorothy Watson, Dorothy Menosky, David Bloome, and Carolyn Burke. Debra reflects on the initial conversations among a community of teachers to tell the story of how she and a colleague, Toby Kahn Loftus, brought whole language to the classroom. They collaborated on a variety of projects and organized their curriculum around theme cycles, research, community studies, and oral presentations instead of "reports." In 1989 at the peak of whole language interest, the Dewey Center for Urban Education opened. The school was a place to rethink language learning and teaching practices. While the Dewey School was an oasis of pedagogical possibilities, it also faced ambivalent teachers, questioning parents, and administrators with little vision of whole language curriculum. The chapters conclude by reminding readers that even in a climate of political attack, teachers must continue to advocate on behalf of children for curricula and environments that are transforming. Moreover, teachers do not do it alone. Debra notes that we, "speak out and proudly identify ourselves as whole language teachers but also a part of a transformative teacher's movement" (p. 41).

Carole Stice, Nancy Bertrand, and Maryann Manning offer a historical view of the reading research process that eventually led to winter workshops. The chapter provides a picture of the educational context of the 1960s through the 1980s. Basic skills dominated the instruction; children were taught with basal readers that were solely constructed to teach reading. By the mid 1970s, however, teachers began to rebel against the bits and pieces of reading instruction. The work of Ken and Yetta Goodman, among many others (Dorothy Watson, Carolyn Burke, Jerry Harste, Brian Cambourne, Dorothy Menosky, to name a few) was beginning to be noticed. Teacher educators, such as the three authors, wanted access and opportunities to learn from these researchers. The winter workshops became the venue for such work. The first workshop focused on miscue analysis. Participants learned they were right. The reading process was highly complex-- more than sounding out, recognizing sight words, and applying structural analysis. For the next 12 years, the workshops flourished. Each workshop offered sessions on miscue analysis, but additional topics were added —reading writing connection, whole language evaluation, kidwatching, authenticity in learning engagements, transactional model of reading, and ethnography in research. There was international participation. By the mid 1990s, however, the climate had shifted. Whole language was under attack from the Back to Basics movement and other conservative forces. A final workshop in 2000 returned to the foundations of whole language and liberatory pedagogy. Throughout the years, the workshops were a place to learn, to understand the reading process more deeply, and to be energized and empowered.

Chapter five, then, brings us into the 21st century with the work of Monica Taylor and Gennifer Otinsky. Monica and Gennifer engage in a conversation about their histories, backgrounds, roads to teaching, and becoming whole language educators. The collaboration between Monica (a teacher educator) and Gennifer (a sixth-grade teacher) highlights how social justice and whole language cannot be accomplished in isolation. The collaboration began by co-teaching a personal memoir unit in Gennifer's classroom with Monica's pre-service teachers. Following this

success, they moved to teaching a collaborative unit on social justice. In teaching a unit on social justice, both Monica and Gennifer strengthened their own views of whole language. They were able to grapple with issues of democracy, race, ethnicity, stereotypes, hate and agencies of change. Monica and Gennifer saw social justice and whole language as being intimately connected — risky, time consuming, challenging, and ever changing.

Chapter six by M. Tamzin Sawyer opens with an interview with a student after completing an inquiry project on Egypt. The child indicates that the project was fun and that he learned how to do research. This opening sets the stage for M. Tamzin's narrative on her own struggles and challenges of becoming a whole language teacher. She began her career as a pre-service teacher in a whole language block taught by Yetta Goodman. Her initial experience was in a first grade where each student was engaged in inquiry. What M. Tamzin discovered was that kids learned much about their topic because they were engaged and interested. When M. Tamzin accepted her first teaching job, she was in a school with a more traditional approach to literacy instruction. For the first two years, she dutifully followed the school's literacy program of a basal reader, workbooks, and teacher's manual. As she began her third year, M. Tamzin returned to graduate school under the advisement of Yetta Goodman and rediscovered what she learned in her whole language block, but had not yet put into practice. She implemented a range of reading and writing activities along with inquiry projects. Administrative changes, designation as an "underperforming school" and pressures from the district required that the school move to a PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) model that had teachers teaching the same performance objective at the same time. This shift had taken the power and trust away from teachers like M. Tamzin and the students she taught. The chapter ends on a hopeful note of working within the system to do what is best for students.

The chapter authored by Lian-Ju Lee and Wen-Yun Lin provides readers with an international focus. These authors detail the whole language movement in Taiwan. They begin by sharing the educational practices that were in place when whole language was introduced. Test directed teaching and learning were rooted practices, along with a strong presence of unification. Both of these are significant obstacles to overcome when shifting to whole language pedagogy. Lian-Ju and Wen-Yun share the history of those initial years of whole language in Taiwan when academic papers and presentations were first presented to the educational community in the early 1990s. As the country engaged in various reform efforts through the 1990s, whole language principles influenced curriculum and teacher development. In their chapter, Lian-Ju and Wen-Yun present two case studies of classroom teachers implementing whole language. The case studies are helpful in demonstrating the change in teachers' and children's learning processes. Additionally, this chapter chronicles the development of Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL) of Southern Taiwan. The group is registered as a nationwide educational association, with over 200 members.

Chapter eight, authored by Denny Taylor, is clearly centered on both the historical and the political lenses of whole language. Denny takes readers back to an interview that was conducted between Ken and Yetta Goodman and James Collins, a reporter for *Time Magazine*. While reading the chapter, readers learn more about the epistemological foundations of the miscue research and their research on reading as a

transactional, sociopyscholinguistic process. The Goodmans offer their own understandings of the differences that exist between teachers and researchers who are holistic in their practices and teachers and researchers who focus more on a skills approach. Throughout the interview, there is a sense that James Collins does not quite understand the complexity of the reading process that Ken and Yetta are talking about. Following the *Time Magazine* interview, Denny then crafts a fictional interview between an investigative reporter and a retired teacher, dated 2027. In this interview, readers come to see that whole language was eradicated along with other liberatory and progressive pedagogies of the late 20th century. The resulting future is bleak. The Reading Excellence Act, No Child Left Behind, the National Reading Panel and a number of articles and essays critiquing whole language are seen as ways to mandate and control curriculum. As Denny offers commentary on the interviews (both real and fiction), she reminds readers that it is essential that we carry on the work of the Goodmans, Margaret Meek Spencer, Louise Rosenblatt, and Maxine Greene, among others. We cannot afford to sit back and wait.

The final chapter in this edited collection of narratives is by Yetta and Ken Goodman. The chapter opens by listing the central principles of whole language philosophy. These principles are evident in each of the preceding narratives and in whole language teachers' classrooms throughout the country and world. The Goodmans return to Monica's themes in chapter one as a way to acknowledge the connecting threads that run through each piece. They talk about how whole language teachers know language as well as the content they teach. Whole language teachers also build close relationships between teachers, students, students' families and community members. Whole language teaching and activism are not isolated events. Participating in a democracy is also at the crux of the whole language movement. Teachers must discover ways to engage the public in making more informed decisions about liberatory pedagogy and achieving the original goal of universal public education.

To conclude, this book is an excellent resource for those new to whole language philosophy and those who are familiar with whole language but want to have a more detailed picture of the events and histories of the movement. As a past president of the Whole Language Umbrella, I found the chapters to be informative and inspiring. The historical lens is necessary as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers continue fighting for liberatory and progressive pedagogies in the 21st century. I enjoyed getting to know how my mentors took risks and persevered (even when the climate was more tolerant and accepting of diverse perspectives). By knowing our past and the political decisions made by those instrumental in the early years, we can begin to shape the future of education in democratic societies.

Miscellany

Scope of the IJPE

International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

The IJPE welcomes diverse disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological perspectives. Manuscripts should focus critical pedagogy, multicultural education, new literacies, cross-cultural issues in education, theory and practice in educational evaluation and policy, communication technologies in education, postmodernism and globalization education. In addition, the *Journal* publishes book reviews, editorials, guest articles, comprehensive literature reviews, and reactions to previously published articles.

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All submissions will be reviewed initially by the editors for appropriateness to IJPE. If the editor considers the manuscript to be appropriate, it will then be sent for anonymous review. Final decision will be made by the editors based on the reviewers' recommendations. All process -submission, review, and revision- is carried out by electronic mail. The submissions should be written using MS-DOS or compatible word processors and sent to the e-mail addresses given below.

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*There are two kinds of members - voting members and nonvoting members. Only the members who pay their dues before the election call are called Voting Members and can vote in all elections and meetings and be candidate for Executive Committee in the elections. Other members are called Nonvoting Members.

*Dues will be determined and assessed at the first week of April of each year by the Executive Committee.

*Only members of the association can use the University of Illinois Community Inquiry Lab. In order to log into the forum page, each member needs to get an user ID and password from the association. If you are a member, and if you do not have an user ID and password, please send an e-mail to the secretary: secretary@inased.org .

For membership information, contact:
1965 Orchard Street Apt.-D
Urbana, IL 61801, the USA

Phone number:
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1 (217) 721-8437
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