Portfolios: Narratives for Learning.
Assessment Processes and Phenomenon Across
Multiple Environments.

A portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of the degree of

Doctor of Education

from

University of Western Sydney, Nepean

by

M.Ed.(Hons).

October 1999
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Statement of Authentication

No part of this portfolio has been submitted previously for a higher degree or similar award to any other university or institution.

Signed __________________________

Date_____________________________
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My appreciation to my supervisor and friend Dr Janice Hall for her encouragement over the duration of this degree.

A deep sense of gratitude to Dr Catherine Sinclair, my co-researcher, my co-author, my second supervisor, a friend and a colleague with an extraordinary capacity for support and understanding.

I am greatly indebted to all the teachers, students and colleagues without whose assistance, support and patience this study would not have eventuated.

My gratitude to my mother and my children, Scott and Danielle, whose encouragement has given me reason to complete this degree.
ABSTRACT

This document is a portfolio about portfolios and a narrative about narratives. It is a meta-portfolio and a meta-narrative. It breaks new ground by providing a conceptual framework that supports assessment processes and phenomena across multiple environments. It is a portfolio, a narrative for learning.

The fundamental premises initially established in this study are constantly revisited throughout the document. These premises focus acutely on the value and worth of the portfolio authors as they negotiate their learning and develop their understandings of assessment and reflection. As the study encounters new environments it investigates the parallels between the established methodologies of assessment and equates them with the new situation. Research, literature and practice support these methodologies.

The research within the study critically investigated reflective journal writing within the pre-service teacher education context and, in addition, looked at the collaborative nature of the university/school partnership. Further study into portfolio assessment across three environments established boundaries for subsequent portfolio development.
Investigation into the constructs of narrative process and phenomenon led to the development of a conceptual framework that was synonymous with portfolio process and phenomenon across pre-service teacher education, primary school education and teacher professional development. Alignment of this framework with the Doctorate of Education portfolio showed a further equivalence. As well as the possibilities of the framework being useful in the development of portfolios in different environments the symbiotic nature of narratives and portfolios has subsequently shown that learning is not only demonstrated by the evidence in the portfolio but that learning occurs in the telling of the story: in the presentation of the portfolio.
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

The articles in this portfolio are incisive and interconnected and demonstrate the interrelationship between innovative practice and current research. The focus of the articles is on the evolvement of assessment processes and practices across multiple environments with the co-authorship of four articles demonstrating the strength of the author’s collegial research and writing ability.

The articles in this portfolio form a chain of relevant literature, description of programs and courses and related research. In some cases the links overlap but the chain remains strong and purposeful as the content demonstrates the learning of both the author and the participants, the development of that learning over time and responses to needs of the educational learning community. These links, overlaps and development, and the nature of the co-authorship will be briefly described giving background for the reader and coherence to the portfolio.

Academic writing for the purpose of publication has to be deliberate, informative and well structured. Any resulting article must be able to stand alone in regard to background, information, content, purpose and conclusions. While there are similarities within and across some of the articles in this portfolio, the uniqueness of each article is demonstrated as it meets the needs of the educational community for which it has been written.

The literature supports the single theme, throughout this portfolio, of assessment, in particular assessment through reflective journals and portfolios. It is drawn from consistent, rigorous, well recognised and at times classical sources, creating links
across these articles and beyond, for example, Zeichner (1989), Calderhead (1989) and Dobbins (1993). The consistency of the literature about reflective journal writing, for example, is evident in “The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development” and “A journey into journalling”.

The ‘uniqueness’ of the cross discipline, three year reflective journal and portfolio program in Teacher Education at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, researched and described in this portfolio needed to be detailed in each article to give background to the research. The resulting overlap across articles is demonstrated in varying degrees of explicitness depending on the purpose of the article. Examples of this overlap can be seen in “Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment”, “Contextual variants for portfolios”, “The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development” and “Reflective journal writing. Can student teachers be taught to be reflective?”

The articles “The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development” and “A journey into journalling” showed two stages of research into reflective journals within the context of the Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. “Exploring collaborative ventures for improved teacher education and school reform in Australia” moved to researching the nature of the partnership between the University and the schools. “Contextual variants for portfolios” is clearly an exploratory text that laid the foundation not only for the next article (“Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment”), but also for the final article, “Portfolios: Narratives for learning”. “Insider versus outsider assessment in schools: Are we going to follow or are we
going to lead?" stepped aside and surveyed some of the influences that impinge on assessment processes and practices and while "Reflective journal writing. Can student teachers be taught to be reflective?" was drawn from previous research and publications, it was written in response to the need in both research and practice to explore the reflective practice implementation debate. The two final articles (Portfolios: Narratives for learning and "Assessment is serious business: children as equal partners") drew together my journey within the field of assessment. They focus clearly on the vital issues of 'who is involved in assessment processes and practices' and 'how such assessments can become learning opportunities'.

The following table (1) demonstrates the focus and uniqueness of each article and the connections between articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Article</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Uniqueness</th>
<th>Connection</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development</td>
<td>Research into reflective journals and stage 1 analysis</td>
<td>Investigates the value of reflective journals in a Teacher Education program through questionnaires showing that the journals promoted professional development and actualised the students learning</td>
<td>1. Precedes A journey into journaling (Stage 2 of the analysis) 2. Contributes background to Reflective journal writing. Can student teachers be taught to be reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring collaborative ventures for improved teacher education and school reform in Australia</td>
<td>Research into the school/university partnership</td>
<td>Investigates the nature of the partnership between the schools and the university.</td>
<td>Background literature on university programs in schools is supported by the literature reviewed in The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual variants for portfolios</td>
<td>Begins to explore the possibilities for portfolios across different environments. Establishes initial principles for portfolio development</td>
<td>The issues of cross environment portfolio assessment are discussed. The initial 'cut' of the principles for portfolio development are established</td>
<td>Lays the groundwork for the emerging principles for portfolio development in Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment and Portfolios: Narratives for learning. It initiates the concept of multiple environments for portfolios that is further developed in Portfolios: Narratives for learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Article links overlaps and development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Article</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Uniqueness</th>
<th>Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment</td>
<td>Uses the principles for portfolio development and describes the reflective journal/portfolio program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur</td>
<td>Other articles describe either the reflective journal program or the portfolio program. This article details how the two fit together. It initiates the concept that portfolios are learning experiences.</td>
<td>Reflective journals 1. The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development. 2. Reflective journal writing. Can student teachers be taught to be reflective Portfolios 1. Contextual variants for portfolios 2. Portfolios: Narratives for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insider versus outsider assessment in schools: Are we going to follow or are we going to lead?</td>
<td>Investigates the literature on alternative assessment models</td>
<td>Views both the qualitative and quantitative sides of assessment.</td>
<td>Draws qualitative examples from literature across all previous articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journal writing. Can student teachers be taught to be reflective?</td>
<td>Describes the reflective journal program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and focuses on the 'should reflection be taught' debate</td>
<td>Responds to the debate about issues of whether reflection can or should be taught.</td>
<td>Draws some material from 1. The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development 2. Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A journey into journaling</td>
<td>Research into reflective journals and stage 2 analysis</td>
<td>Further investigates the value of reflective journals through analysing students' journals, lesson feedback sheets and practicum reports. The results showing the difference between first and third year students' ability to reflect and the topics on which they reflected.</td>
<td>Continues the research initiated in The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment is serious business: children as equal partners</td>
<td>Children as partners in their own learning and assessment</td>
<td>Shifts the emphasis from the program to the participants and emphasises the importance of their participation.</td>
<td>Bring to the fore issues initiated in previous publication Negotiated Evaluation (1993) and leads into Portfolios: Narratives for learning by emphasising the value of the participants voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios: Narratives for learning</td>
<td>Portfolios as learning opportunities using the principles for portfolios and the development of a framework to support this theory</td>
<td>It makes the connection between portfolios and narrative and gives form to the concept of a framework for portfolio development. It further develops the concept of portfolios as learning opportunities</td>
<td>Principles for portfolio development: Contextual variants for portfolios Portfolios as learning opportunities Reflective journals and portfolios learning through assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Article links overlaps and development
Co-Authorship

The mark of good co-authorship is the seamlessness of the text and the uniformity of the writing style. Both seamlessness and uniformity have been achieved in the four co-authored refereed articles in this portfolio. To clarify the depth of my involvement my input into the co-authored articles in this portfolio is demonstrated in the following table (2).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Processes</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development and A journey into journalling</td>
<td>Background knowledge and literature base about reflective journals; Background knowledge and literature base about field experiences; Writing literature review; Designing the research; Collecting the data; Collating the data; Analysing the data; Writing up the research for the article; Editing the article</td>
<td>Woodward; Sinclair; Woodward and Sinclair; Woodward and Sinclair; Woodward and Sinclair; Woodward and Sinclair; Woodward and Sinclair; Woodward; Woodward and Sinclair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring collaborative ventures for improved teacher education and school reform in Australia</td>
<td>Literature search on field experiences partnerships; Writing literature review; Designing the research; Collecting the data; Collating the data; Analysing the data; Writing up the research for the article; Editing the article</td>
<td>Sinclair; Sinclair; Woodward; Woodward; Woodward; Woodward; Woodward; Sinclair and Woodward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal Writing. Can Student Teachers be taught to be Reflective?</td>
<td>Collecting information and writing literature review; Collecting information and writing about the program; Editing the article</td>
<td>Sinclair; Woodward; Woodward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Co-authorship Responsibilities

The articles that constitute this portfolio demonstrate my learning about assessment processes and practice across multiple environments. It is a narrative for learning.

---

1 Initially my work with Catherine Sinclair began in a mentoring role and soon developed into a partnership that produced the above research, articles and conference presentations and is the basis for the alphabetical order of the authorship of the first three articles
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2 Research and publications written with Sinclair do not have a first author. Authorship is presented in alphabetical order with the exception of Woodward and Sinclair (1998).
*Brook Teacher Education Journal. 7(1) 59-79*  
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Article 41

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Article 73

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*Reflect: Journal of Reflection in Learning and Teaching. 4(1). 32-38*  
Reflection 98  
Article 100
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   *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education. 3 (2) 45-56*
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8. Woodward, H. (Accepted) Assessment is a serious
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Orientation

Portfolio development is synchronous with learning and as such the process of constructing a portfolio should not only demonstrate learning but also be a learning experience. Such is the claim made throughout this study. The research and the studies contained within this portfolio narrate the discoveries made, as I researched, practiced, taught and learnt in my endeavour to demonstrate the above assertion.

In the pursuance of the premises developed within this study and the emerging principles refined through the process of this portfolio, the context for the study will be explored through professional recognition of my work in the education. The development of assessment processes and phenomenon, in particular reflection through reflective journal writing and portfolios, will be documented and the research developed across numerous, relevant environments will be discussed.

Context

In education change is always on the horizon and while assessment frequently leads some of that change the reality is that there is much work in this realm to be investigated and implemented. In the eighties my study and my work, as a teacher, initiated me into the field of qualitative assessment. This burgeoning interest further developed when I began researching for my M.Ed. (Hons) in 1988. Two issues predominated my thinking during this time; the underlying principles of qualitative research methodology and the assessment of literacy in primary schools (children
aged 5 to 12). The beliefs emanating from these two issues were the basis of my work and were interwoven into my research, my writing and my practice. These beliefs along with my personal experiences in life and as a teacher, allowed me to position myself substantially in the field of assessment generally, and in the domain of portfolio assessment in particular.

The conclusions drawn from my M.Ed. (Hons) thesis were that:

- teachers were aware of the purposes of assessment of literacy in the classroom but resorted to using assessment only for reporting to parents. It had no apparent effect on their teaching program;
- the checklists they used recorded only the completion of an assessment item not the quality of the work or the development that had occurred;
- anecdotal records of most children’s work were kept but not used;
- time management was an overwhelming constraint leading to assessment tasks being left out as they were seen as extras and not part of the teaching learning continuum;
- teachers saw themselves as the only assessors, others (children and parents) did not know enough to be able to make sound judgements; and
- reports to parents were not indicative of the child’s progress and were at best records of compliance.

The emerging of tenets of classroom assessment resulted in the following assumptions:

- that any assessment that was set up outside the normal environment was invalid (in situ);
that no one assessment strategy was valid by itself. Two or more strategies needed
to be used to validate conclusions (triangulation);
that children and their ability had such individual worth and intrinsic value that
they did not deserve to be described or ranked by a number or a letter; and
that assessment needed to be in line with the theory of teaching and learning.

It was these conclusions and assumptions that drove me towards the development of
the assessment program published in the book Negotiated Evaluation (Woodward
1993). The basic premise of this program was to instigate an assessment program
that:
• was socially and educationally just to all children;
• involved all the stakeholders (parents teachers and children);
• assisted teachers in the organisation of both their time and their classroom routines;
• ensured some measure of success for every child;
• looked at reporting children’s precise progress throughout the year;
• made assessment useful; and
• introduced a variety of assessment strategies e.g. portfolios, student-led
conferencing, focussed observation, student self assessment.

As with any research or developing program many things were discovered and many
outcomes were achieved that were not originally envisaged (Woodward, 1993). The
implementation of the Negotiated Evaluation program showed that it greatly increased
the teachers’ awareness of individual children’s progress and demonstrated their
ability to use this information in their planning and teaching. The teachers became better observers in that they were now more cognisant of what the children in their class could do. Previous observations had focussed on what the children could not do (Drummond 1994) which meant that former procedures had embedded the teachers' thinking in a deficit model of both learning and assessing (Ames 1992). The teachers working in the Negotiated Evaluation program also were using this well substantiated evidence in descriptive reports that later paralleled the findings from the Records of Achievement initiative implemented in the United Kingdom (Broadfoot 1998). Broadfoot also discussed issues of empowerment and emancipation of students in the United Kingdom program. These issues also emerged as a positive influence on the students during the Negotiated Evaluation program.

**Recognition in the profession**

As a result of the publication of Negotiated Evaluation (Woodward, 1993) those involved with assessment in primary schools, the focus of this program, enlisted my expertise and assistance in the implementation of similar programs in their school environment. This involvement included workshops within schools, presentations to a variety of educational organisations and invited keynote presentations at national and international conferences (Appendix A). The need for continual input and the devising of these workshops assisted in reinforcement and further development of the aforementioned premises of Negotiated Evaluation. The resulting recognition and my work in primary education at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, led to the transfer of some of the established concepts, from this work, to the Bachelor of

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1 In the Woodward 1993 publication the term Evaluation was used. In light of the changing understandings about this terminology the term Assessment is currently replacing the previous concept of Evaluation.
Teaching degree. The development of the ensuing program led to a series of collaborative and individual conference presentations and publications (Gaffey & Woodward, 1994; Woodward, 1994 (a & b); Sinclair-Gaffey & Woodward, 1995). Continued work within the profession led me to focus more specifically on the development of assessment procedures in teacher education. The two issues that warranted closer investigation were reflection through journal writing and portfolios.

**Reflective journals**

An initial inquiry into reflective journal writing within the university undergraduate teacher education program found that there was plethora of journals but not a lot of reflection. Most of the so called journals were little more that diaries of activities carried out in order to pass a particular subject. Surbeck, Han & Moyer (1991, p.25) contended that while “taking time to write a journal meant also taking time to reflect” seemed plausible, my research proved otherwise. Students were going through the motions of writing journals but were not really being reflective (Woodward 1994). When devising the Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, decisions had to be made as how best to organise reflective journals within this program as a whole, and in particular within the various subjects across the entire program. Questions asked were ‘what was the relative value of reflective journals’, ‘why should we use them’ and ‘how can we coordinate them across the entire three years of the program’.

The literature on reflection and reflective practices dated back to Dewey (1933) with renowned writers such a Schon (1983) and Smyth (1986) adding weight to the debate about the value of reflective journals for teachers and teacher education students.
Much of this literature not only supported reflection but emphasised that ‘reflection in action’ and ‘reflection on action’ (Schon, 1983; Smyth, 1986) were vital to the process. Reflection as a form of assessment also attracted much attention and it was not difficult to find literature that supported this concept (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Parsons, 1990; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). More recently, however, it has been realised that reflection has a greater and more far reaching advantage than initially believed. O’Rourke (1998) emphasised that reflective journals were more than course files, scrap books or personal diaries. She stated that they “can help students move from surface to deep learning ... [and] to critically reflect upon and synthesise knowledge” (p. 404). Hinchey (1998), on the other hand, saw reflective practice as the “challenge of finding ways to move students to question and identify their unconscious assumptions” (p.111).

The consistent and organised use of reflection in teacher education programs, while seldom questioned, was seeing the supporting theory begin to change. Its thesis shifted from a general premise that reflective practice is desirable to the more imposing position of reflection being an absolute necessity within such programs. Educators such as O’Rourke, (1998); Hinchey, (1998); and Sachs & Kong, (1998) believed the emanating deep learning, critical thinking, and the considered reflection were vital in taking students from being just reflective practitioners to being reflective life-long learners. The premise, therefore, of the value of reflection in teacher education programs became pivotal to the development of reflective journals within the Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. With an increasing personal interest in the development of individualised assessment,
investigation into incorporating these journals in a portfolio process became necessary.

**Portfolios**

Portfolios became popular assessment items in many arenas in education in the nineties and according to Black and Wiliam (1998) were closely associated with efforts to change the impact of high-stakes testing. The early literature (Hansen, 1994; Farr & Tone, 1994; Marzano, 1994), however, focussed on specific curriculum areas with particular attention to primary education. Others (Belenoff & Dickson, 1991; Woodward, 1993) saw the advantages of portfolios across a range of areas giving impetus to the possibility of cross discipline portfolios being implemented in different environments. In later literature it was posited that one significant outcome of using portfolios at pre-service level, for example, was the growing tendency of these students to engage the children in their future classes, in the same reflective activities, using portfolios (Lyons 1998). This was indeed a laudable outcome that supported the premises developed in Negotiated Evaluation (Woodward 1993).

The literature also acknowledged that there were a variety of possibilities when developing portfolios and there was recognition that the actual purposes of portfolios could be varied (Stecher 1998). This recognition of the differences between the various portfolios was just as necessary as was the realisation of their similarities. Koretz (1998) clearly ratified this by stating that while portfolio assessment had attributes that were particularly appealing to those who wished to use assessment to encourage rich instruction, educators must be warned that “[o]ne size may not fit all” (p. 332).
With much of the literature on pre-service teacher education portfolios only emerging in the latter half of this decade, detailed investigation into the possibilities of portfolio development at pre-service level became imperative. An investigation subsequently took place using information gleaned from the literature on other portfolio environments, such as those from within the primary school system, and a plan to implement portfolios within the new Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur was developed in 1991. During this planning two critical questions were raised. Was the notion of paralleling pre-service teacher education portfolios with primary school portfolios sustainable? Was it based on sound judgements and firm beliefs about teaching and learning? As a result of a) this ongoing investigative process, b) my experience in the field of both teaching and teacher education and c) my strong belief system that insisted on supporting learners as individuals, a portfolio process in pre-service education was formulated (Woodward 1994). In 1992 a significantly viable portfolio process was implemented in teacher education programs at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and the phenomenon of portfolio assessment in teacher education was established. This form of assessment has continued to flourish for seven years.

Conference papers, publications and presentations, both in Australia and overseas, witness the success of the Macarthur Portfolios. (Gaffey & Woodward, 1994a; 1994b; Woodward, 1994b; 1997b; 1998a). In addition a study in portfolios by a post graduate student working in the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) sector when combined with the research in pre-service portfolios, resulted in a paper presented in Canada at the International Seminar of Teacher Education (Woodward, 1997b). The
emerging principles that were documented in this paper began to set the scene for future portfolio processes and phenomenon in other educational environments. This development signified that additional investigation into both reflective journals and portfolios was needed to give future direction to the processes that had been developed.

**Overview of the Research**

The nature of the paradigm and the ‘newness’ of concepts developed in portfolios and reflective journals in conjunction with the expanding literature base provided opportunity for research. A longitudinal study with the teacher education students at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur was implemented. This study investigated the value and quality of the students’ reflective journals. The findings were progressively reported over several years with the methodology and the results of this research being presented and published internationally (Sinclair-Gaffey & Woodward, 1996; Sinclair & Woodward, 1997a; Woodward & Sinclair, 1998; Sinclair & Woodward 1999). The development of this research can be seen in table 1.

Much of the substance of the student reflective journal discourse related the students’ experiences in schools and many of the topics where these journals were nested used school environments to support students’ experiences. It was therefore important that the teachers’ perceptions about the nature of the collaboration between the University and the schools be investigated if a healthy partnership was to be ensured (Table 2). The resulting research (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997b) supported the value of the
collaboration and reinforced the importance of continued involvement of the schools in the teacher education programs at the University.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Focus/Questions</strong></td>
<td>1. How does reflective journaling promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners. 2. How does keeping a reflective journal encourage the articulation of the theory-practice relationship based on sound educational theory.</td>
<td>The emphasis being on the issues discussed in the journals noting the difference in issues between the first and third years.</td>
<td>The emphasis being on the levels of reflection and the evidence of growth from both the journals and the documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>35 students (randomly selected across first year and third year)</td>
<td>17 first year students. 15 third year students</td>
<td>32 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>B.Teach course, Faculty of Education and Languages University of Western Sydney, Macarthur</td>
<td>B.Teach course, Faculty of Education and Languages University of Western Sydney, Macarthur</td>
<td>B.Teach course, Faculty of Education and Languages University of Western Sydney, Macarthur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of data collection</strong></td>
<td>Questionnaire.</td>
<td>Students Reflective Journals t</td>
<td>Students Reflective journals, lesson feedback sheets, practicum reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of data analysis</strong></td>
<td>NUDIST</td>
<td>NUDIST</td>
<td>NUDIST</td>
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**Table 1** Reflective Journal Research

The building of this collaborative community with the schools led to the development of the Visiting Teaching Lecturer program where Department of Education teachers were seconded to teach at the University for a designated period of time. In 1998 this program was fully evaluated (Table 2) with the findings influencing renewal of the program and distribution of the resulting documentation (Woodward, 1998b) to two other interested universities; the Northern Territory University and the University of Newcastle. It is envisaged that a publication summarising both the program and the findings of this study, will be completed in 2000. There also is further research to be done in the domain of portfolios with ex-students now using portfolios in the
classroom (Lyons, 1998) and with a variety of purposes and methodologies being implemented (Stecher, 1998) across the various environments. The research strongly supports the fact that portfolios are going to play a substantial role in assessment for years to come. This predication provides opportunity for future research.

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Table 2 School and University Research

Research Paradigm

A paradigm according to Guba (1990, p.17) is a basic set of beliefs that guide action while Crabtree and Miller (1992, p.8) see a paradigm as a patterned set of assumptions concerning reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology) and the particular ways for knowing that reality (methodology). There are three commonly recognised paradigms; positivism, the interpretive paradigm and critical inquiry. The
interpretive paradigm is sometimes known as constructivist or natualistic inquiry. The paradigm selected sets the framework for the entire study and is governed by the focus of the study as a whole. The paradigm in which these research studies were situated was also dependent upon multiple considerations. Some of these considerations were the field of the discipline of the study, the physical location of the research, the theory base of the researcher/s, the diverse beliefs and attitudes of the participants and the nature of the problem to be studied.

While it was clear that the paradigms and the many methodologies within each paradigm have particular merit it became obvious that decisions had to be made as to which path to take when the research studies were designed. The notion of accommodating more than one paradigm was put forward by Firestone (1990) but some researchers (Lincoln, 1990; Austin, 1990) did not agree that this was possible. The notion of accommodating more than one methodology, however, had appeal, as the methodology used must be guided by the study (<biblio>). There must be a 'fit' between the study and the methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1991). One does not decide on the methodology and then find a study to 'fit' although the nature of the study will be greatly influenced by the beliefs of the researcher. In many cases the relationship between an existing methodology and the study will not be a perfect fit. Geertz (1983, p.155) referred to it as 'blurred genres' when discussing "the fluid borrowing that has occurred across disciplines [and methodologies] bringing new perspectives and new debates [to] educational research" (Anderson 1989, p.250). It was with the concepts of 'blurred genres' and accommodation in mind that created the possibility of drawing from across methodologies therefore allowing this study to find a methodological 'home'.

There is strong agreement between researchers that a non-positivistic paradigm is the most appropriate one to use when conducting research that involves the meaning which humans construct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen & Manion, 1989).

Interpretive became the paradigm choice for this research as its focus was on a direct concern with experience as it was 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone' (Sherman & Webb, 1990). "It is concerned with how people make sense of their world," according to (Cohen & Manion, 1989 p.33). Under the interpretive banner the methodologies included allowed for accommodation. The methodologies drawn from in this study were ethnography and narrative inquiry. While there are many similarities within these methodologies the differences call for divergent ways of knowing and convergent ways of understanding. A common umbrella for both these methodologies is qualitative research

**Qualitative research**

Qualitative research seeks to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect (Glesne and Peskin, 1992, p.1). It calls for face to face interactions, researcher involvement, an acceptance of extreme time demands and a set of axioms and assumptions that focus on multiple realities and perspectives and recognition that all research is subjective and value laden. All those involved in qualitative research become participants in the research and the research itself is carried out in a natural situation that is neither constructed nor contrived specifically for the purposes of the study. It is in situ. As opposed to positivism, which seeks to explain or predict, qualitative research seeks to describe or interpret the events, knowledge and
understandings of those involved in regard to the problem being investigated. Glaser and Straus (1967) claim that one of the advantages of qualitative research is that it is an inductive, naturalistic inquiry strategy of approaching a setting without predetermined hypotheses. They further claim that the theory emerges from the experiences and is grounded in the data. According to Glesne and Peskin (1992):

*Qualitative inquiry is an odyssey into our discipline, our practice and perhaps our souls. We cannot be sure of what we will find out but we invariably get caught up in the search.*

(p.179)

The research carried out in this study is qualitative in that it is an interpretive analysis of the data collected within an in situ framework.

**Validity**

Qualitative research in all its forms has struggled with the term validity over the years as the research methodology developed in concept and as its profile changed with the understanding of its value in education. Validity was tied stringently to positivism and as such gave the impression that internal and external validity was required. In subsequent years while the process of validating data was always a substantial part of qualitative research the terminology remained an issue. In the seventies the term triangulation was coined to better describe the verifying of data through different phases and through different data by comparing the information in relation to the same phenomenon (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). In the early eighties Guba and Lincoln (1981) worked with the term trustworthiness in an attempt to simplify the process. While both these terms still exist in the framework of the methodologies a new term has evolved, fidelity. According to Grumet (1988) it is fidelity rather than
truth that is the measure of the quality of the research stories. To be true to the intention of the data rather than the 'truth' being interpreted by 'others' is the key here. This term is particularly used in relation to narrative and is seen as a set of emerging criteria for evaluating the quality of a piece of narrative inquiry (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). It is already in use in narrative inquiry and has proven to be a useful term when investigating the quality and the 'validity' of qualitative research.

**Interpretive research**

Interpretive research is qualitative in nature and focuses on making sense out of social interaction. While the data collected from interpretive research comes from a variety of sources, it is ultimately expected that it will be theory building. Denzin (1988, p.39) defines interpretivism as theory building that proceeds by 'thick description' that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action. Interpretive researchers endeavour to capture the core meanings as well as the contradictions of every human situation. They focus on understanding direct lived experiences rather than abstract generalisations. The research in this study investigates the underlying premises of reflective journals, collaborative ventures and portfolio narratives through 'thick description' generated from the data. It focuses on the understanding and interpretation of lived experiences and the circumstance of these experiences. Therefore the two interpretive methodologies used in the studies in this portfolio are ethnography and narrative inquiry.
Ethnography

Ethnography originates from anthropological research and has come to education through archeology and the social sciences. While Tierney (1999) argues that knowledge is not discovered by an academic sleuth who pretends to be an archeologist uncovering preexisting facts. He acknowledges the place of the ethnographer in creating data but further states that it is the individuals and groups based on social cultural and ideological positions actually are the creators of knowledge.

Ethnography, according to Skeggs (1999, p.37), is informed by theory of knowledge about what can be known and elucidates how to value the experience and interpretation of that experience. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p.1) have a more global view of ethnography in that they see it as collecting pertinent data in an endeavour to throw light on issues that are the focus of the research.

In an ethnographic study data are usually collected through participant observation and accompanying field notes, interviews and document or artifact analysis. In line with ethnography's anthropological heritage being a participant observer in situ is one of the prime data collection modes. The focus of the study and the situation of that focus come into play when considering the option of participant observer.

Interviews are integral to this methodology. Interviews can be classified into three main categories. Again the focus of the study dictates which category of interview is employed. The three categories of interview are:

- Structured, where the questions are specific and are the same for each interviewee.
• Open, where the interviewer has notional questions and is prepared to follow unexpected leads;

• Depth probing, where the interviewer pursues all points of interest with various expressions that indicate 'tell me more' or 'explain'.

Document or artifact analysis is used to corroborate the data collected from the field notes and the interviews thus creating a triangulation or trustworthiness across and within the data. These artifacts can take many forms from letters to journals to programs and can include photographs, videos and audiotapes.

Surveys or questionnaires are sometimes used in place of or additional to the interviews depending on the focus of the research, the number of participants and their geographical location. When questionnaires are used the structured interview approach is adopted.

For the purposes of the research carried out and reported in this portfolio questionnaires, interviews and artifact analysis were the key data collection methodologies. The collection of the data in this way was contingent on the researchers' knowledge of the milieu of the research and a pre-established rapport with the participants. The second methodology used in this document was narrative inquiry.

Narrative

Narrative has been integral to the telling of human experience since history began. It is a window on people’s life experiences. Narratives are contextual in that they are told in a variety of contexts and for a variety of reasons. They are told in the home, they
are told on the street and they are told in the classroom. Narratives are told to entertain, to explain, to understand, to teach and to learn and can be based on fact or fiction or a combination of both. Barther (cited in Polkinghorne 1988, p. 14) observed that “narrative is present at all times, and in all places, in all societies, the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and there never has existed a people without narratives.”

Throughout the literature there are many definitions of narrative and many terms used to describe its location in research (for example, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Cortazzi, 1993; Beattie, 1995; Josselson, 1995). Gudmundsdottir, Beattie and Josselson all described narrative as a way of knowing and Connelly and Clandinin (p. 2) noted that to study narrative is to study ways humans experience the world. Even though such terms as methodology, inquiry, investigation, analysis, models and studies are used consistently across the literature, the common thesis is that narratives have proven useful tools for exploring teacher’s perspectives on their culture, beliefs and actions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Cortazzi, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 1995; Josselson & Leiblich, 1995; Marble, 1997; Goodson, 1999). The advantage of narrative inquiry according to McEwan (1995) is that “it presses us to go beyond the present state of our practices to a consideration of how teaching might be conceived” (p. 181).

Narrative is both a process and a phenomenon (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Beattie, 1997). The process or method is known as narrative inquiry and the phenomenon is the genre of narrative and as such narrative has a central role in personal and professional development. It provides a process and a structure for teachers to make
sense of their own experiences, and for others to better understand and support such opportunities for teachers (Cole & Knowles, 1995, p.205).

**Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative is a collaborative, qualitative methodology that has been developed with the express purpose of understanding teachers core business and centralising possible future directions. According to Polkinghorne (1988) narrative studies are “a means by which human beings represent and restructure the world” (p.11). It is a strategy to disclose educational experience. Beattie (1995) explained:

... the knowledge, insights and understandings gained from narrative studies where teachers' knowledge which is experiential, embodied and based on a narrative of experience is used to inquire, to plan, and to develop curriculum for the present and future, can provide new ways for thinking about pre-service and inservice education for teachers and for school improvement and educational reform. (p. 65).

Within the parameters of qualitative methodology narrative finds its place in interpretative or hermeneutic inquiry and is therefore ideally suited to investigate learning in educational environments. Narrative inquiry data are collected through conversations, chronologies, unstructured interviews, participant journals, field notes and artifacts. Narratives from the ‘field’ are gathered into field narratives and then written up as collaborative research narratives in terms of dialogic moments, meaning and significance. The analysis is derived in terms of emerging patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes, resulting in a text that has examined the participants experiences and looks at an imagined way forward. Only by retelling these tensions
and flows can we construct a narrative of whole people and their life experiences, not by reducing people to their parts but by recognising in the interplay of parts the essence of wholeness. Only then are we positioned to imagine the real (Josselson 1995). Narrative inquiry maintains as its central tenet the interpretation of the narratives of peoples lives and therefore of their experiences. In doing so it maintains the premise that while the past and the present can be told the future can only be imagined. Recognised exponents of this methodology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Cortazzi, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1995; Gudmundsdottir, 1997), though as diverse in nature, as any other methodology, agree that current concepts in narrative inquiry centre around temporality, collaboration, voice, performance and reflection.

Time is a basic category of human experience; therefore narratives of human experience must be temporal. The chronology of lives gives a temporal position to the context whenever those lives are being narrated. According to Josselson (1995, p35) “narratives describe the road to the present and points the way to the future” and are therefore temporally placed. Temporal issues, in fact, permeate the entire methodology and as such narrative cannot exist outside a temporal framework.

Narrative Inquiry is a methodology that is born out of the strong relationship between the researcher and the participants. It is a collaborative inquiry involving mutual storytelling and restorying as the research proceeds. Such relationships demand continual interaction both in and out of the ‘field’ and mutual respect not only for the knowledge and skills of each participant but also for the varied capacities and frailties of the co-narrators.
Voice, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1990) is meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate. Maintenance of the participants’ voices throughout the inquiry is vital. It is important that the researcher listens first to the participant’s story so that it can gain authority and validity. The difficulty lies, however, in the maintaining of the individual voices as the integration through multiple voices can, at times, mean loss of fidelity.

All narrative requires an audience, be they present or temporally removed. Cortazzi (1993) claimed that narrative, in being a medium of culture, creates cultural contexts through both the process and the performance. Such contexts create in themselves ‘venues’ for performance. Shaping and structuring the context and message for performance gives the narrator control of their narrative by publicly positioning themselves on the landscape of professional knowledge (Marble, 1997).

Integral to narrative is reflection. The interpretive nature of reflection and the fact that narratives are constructed through reflection (Gudmundsdottir, 1991) places reflection in a key position in narrative inquiry. Cortazzi (1993, p. 8) stated that reflection through narrative effectively doubles the value of the original experience. The essentialness of temporality in narrative gives place to reflection as a method of summoning the past. In education, however, reflection is also recognised as a vehicle for developing thinking that clarifies and deepens understanding and therefore not only helps to better conceive what has occurred but also drives those involved towards a more purposeful future.

In this document narrative as both an inquiry method and a phenomenon were used in the final articles to articulate with the framework developed for portfolios. They were
used to synthesize the data in order to establish and be faithful to both the developed framework and the lived experiences of the multiple environments and related in the study.

Premises for the study.

As a result of the research and practical application of the understandings explored in this study, the fundamental premises are that:

- expertise of the learner is valued;
- social and educational justice must be evident in all assessment processes;
- collaboration with others increases learning opportunities;
- the intersection of learning and assessment is integral to development;
- personal voice and ownership are vital for clear understanding of growth and development;
- considered reflection is valuable and necessary in the learning and assessment process.

These premises emerge from the initial assumptions and conclusions drawn from my M.Ed. (Hons) study. They flow through the Negotiated Evaluation program to the development of emerging principles of portfolio development. As a result of the evolution of these principles and subsequent investigation into narrative inquiry a framework was created to assist in developing quality portfolios. This Doctoral portfolio uses the created narrative framework to give structure to both the process and the phenomenon. The key elements of the framework are the orientation, the complication which includes episodes and evaluations of those episodes in the form of articles and reflections\(^2\) on those articles, the results and a coda. This process led to

\(^2\) The reflections on each article included are set up within the reflection framework in the research (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997a, 1999; Woodward and Sinclair, 1998.). This framework consists of a description of the context, a reflection on the learning that occurred during the development of the article (past tense) and planned future action (future tense). As the articles in the portfolio were written
the creation, implementation and development of portfolio assessment processes and
phenomenon across multiple environments demonstrating that portfolios are
narratives for learning. The following articles confirm the research and the practice
that support the original claim that portfolio development is synchronous with
learning and as such the process of constructing a portfolio should not only
demonstrate learning but be a learning experience.

2 The reflections on each article included are set up within the reflection framework in the research
(Sinclair & Woodward, 1997a, 1999; Woodward and Sinclair, 1998.). This framework consists of a
description of the context, a reflection on the learning that occurred during the development of the
article (past tense) and planned future action (future tense). As the articles in the portfolio were written
over a period of time much of the action has already taken place. To allow the reader to understand this
process an epilogue has been added where necessary.

**Description**

Traditional practicum experiences have been criticised for, among other things, failing to actualise student teacher learning, as student teachers merely imitate the attitudes and teaching practices of their supervising teachers during school experiences. Such unquestioning imitation results in conformity and a maintenance of the status quo in school practices, including the same type of teaching, both good and bad. Reflection, and in particular reflective journal writing, has the potential to overcome this situation as well as to enable integration of the theoretical and practical aspects of initial teacher education. To encourage reflection, integrate theory with practice and overcome the unquestioning imitation of existing school practices, all students enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur in Sydney Australia kept a journal of their experiences throughout the three years of their degree.

This paper presents the initial findings of an extensive research project which studied the degree and type of impact of reflective journal writing on the thinking and teaching of 60 first, second and third year primary students teachers. Initial data from open ended questionnaires was used to ascertain whether or not reflective journal writing was worthwhile to students, contributing to their professional development, or was it merely an imposition, another ‘assignment’ to be completed for the lecturer.

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3 Research and publications written with Gaffey, Sinclair-Gaffey and Sinclair do not have a first author. Authorship is presented in alphabetical order with the exception of Woodward and Sinclair (1998).
Reflections

Since the implementation the Bachelor of Teaching in 1992 reflective journals have been part of the course. We realised that difficulty arose with lecturers having students keep journals in just about every subject. Perusal of these journals showed that most of them were just records of activity with little reflection. We worked on the idea that the students needed to be shown how to reflect. This idea was combined with the notion that they only needed one journal in the hope that it would be used across subjects thereby helping the students to integrate their learning. We developed a framework to guide the students’ reflective processes and insisted on them ‘pushing’ their thinking forward by adding an action section to the format. After several years of implementation Cathy and I decided we should investigate what was happening in regard to the journals and the issue of reflection. In 1995 we began to collect data from first, second and third year students through questionnaires, student journals, written feedback to students on their lessons from supervising teachers and practicum reports. We finished up with an enormous amount of data; too much and too valuable to be recorded in one paper. We initially analysed only the questionnaires. This paper is the result of this analysis. It was first presented at the International Teacher Education Seminar in Brazil. It was subsequently refined and presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education and then successfully submitted for publication.

As a result of this research and the writing of this paper I began to realise what a mammoth task we had ahead of us. Reading into the area and trying to make decisions about the quality of the program as well as the quality of the reflection was
challenging. Research was beginning to emerge about analysing the quality of reflection but we still had much to learn.

**Action.** To read more into the area of identifiers of quality of reflection. Van Mannen has some interesting ideas.

To continue to monitor the program modifying it to maintain the initial premises while at the same time ensuring acknowledgment of the expertise of the lecturers involved.

**Epilogue.** Since this initial paper was published the analysis has continued modifying the processes involving reflection in the new Bachelor of Education program.
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THE IMPACT OF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING
ON STUDENT TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Catherine Sinclair
Helen Woodward

Traditional practicum experiences have been criticised for, among other things, failing to actualise student teacher learning (Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986; McIntyre, 1980; Zeichner, 1989). This results in conformity and a maintenance of the status quo in school practices, including both good and bad teaching practice (Baker, Burman & Jones, 1988; Battersby & Ramsay, 1989; Kane, 1992; Regan, 1989; Tinning, 1984; Wedman, 1985; Zeichner, 1986). Reflection, and in particular reflective journal writing, has the potential to overcome this situation and enable integration of the theoretical and practical aspects of initial teacher education. Theory-practice relationships then may be articulated and teaching become based upon sound educational theory, the lack of which also had been criticised in the research literature (Koop, 1991; Price, 1987; Tumey, Cairns, Eltis, Hatton, Thew Towler & Wright, 1982, Zeichner, 1989).

To encourage reflection, promote professional growth and integrate theory with practice, all students enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur in Sydney, Australia keep a reflective journal of their experiences throughout the three years of their degree. This paper will present the findings of research which has begun to study how reflective journal writing has impacted on the thinking and teaching of 35 first, second and third year university students studying to become elementary teachers. By such research it is hoped to ascertain whether or not reflective journal writing is worthwhile to students, contributing to their professional development, or merely an imposition, another assignment to be completed for the university professor.

Reflection in teacher education

The literature on reflection and reflective practices is prolific and dates back to Dewey (1933). Reflection can be defined as the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends (Dewey, 1933, p.7). Its value in the development of teachers as reflective practitioners is widely supported in the literature ( Ferguson, 1989; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Morine-Dershimer, 1989; Calderhead, 1989). In addition, reflection and the development of reflective practitioners abound in teacher education programs. As Leinon (1993) contended, "teacher as reflective professional has been a very powerful metaphor in the research of teacher education for more than a decade" (p. 2). The situation is also evident in Australia. As Sellars (1992) asserts it would be difficult to find a teacher education program in Australia which does not claim to be preparing reflective practitioners (p.1). The University of Western Sydney (UWS), Macarthur in the south-western suburbs of Sydney is no exception.
Further, many of these Australian teacher education programs use reflective journals as the method of recording reflections and preparing reflective practitioners. Indeed, they have been adopted by teacher education programs for some time now (see Wilson, Hine, Dobbins, Bransgrove & Elterman, 1995). However, the effect of reflection and reflective journal writing upon the development of student teachers as reflective practitioners is less clear. While Dobbins (1993) discovered that journals were an effective "tool" to facilitate reflection in student teachers about their teaching and learning (p. 313), Allan (1993) noted, "reflective journaling per se doesn't guarantee reflection" (p. 114). Further, as Calderhead (1989) noted:

The research relating to these areas [reflectivity] tends to suggest that student teachers' reflection generally remains at a fairly superficial level even in teacher education courses which purport to be encouraging reflective teaching (p.46).

While the literature indicates that reflection may promote professional development and encourage integration and articulation of theory and practice, more research was required to answer more in depth questions. Thus the questions which needed to be asked were:

- How does 'reflective journaling' promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners?

- How does keeping a reflective journal encourage the articulation of the theory - practice relationship and result in practice based upon sound educational theory?

There seems to be only limited literature on the effectiveness of journals in this regard. Further, there seems to be little literature on the value of written feedback provided to students on their reflections as a method of supporting professional development even though this is probably seen as a worthwhile practice. Having mandated reflective journaling for the elementary student teachers at UWS, Macarthur for the last four years and the popularity of such journals in initial teacher education programs around Australia, it seemed timely to assess their worth.

**Reflective journal writing at UWS, Macarthur**

During the three years of the Bachelor of Teaching (Elementary) course a reflective journal is kept by all students (Woodward 1992). It is introduced in the first semester of first year through a campus-based subject that also gives the students weekly opportunity to observe and explore issues in schools from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. In subsequent semesters, students continue recording weekly reflections in their journals but the focus of the content varies. In the second semester of first year, students are expected to focus upon specific readings and reflect on them in terms of their understandings about children's learning.

In second year students translate the theoretical tenets explored during campus-based lectures into practical experiences in the schools and reflect upon these connections. In the final semester, students undertake a semester-long school-based subject and are expected to reflect on the school as a community, the children as learners, and their own teaching practices as they complete the final stages of their study and prepare for their future careers.
Researching the impact of reflective journal writing

Although journal writing is such an integral part of the preservice elementary teacher education program at UWS, Macarthur, little was known of the impact of such a process upon the students and their professional development. Research was therefore undertaken in the hope of being better able to understand the value of reflection and reflective practices in pre-service teacher education. The first step in the research has been to investigate the students' points of view about the reflective journals, reflective writing, the feedback they received upon such writing and the impact of reflective journaling on professional development. In this way, the current process in operation at UWS, Macarthur can be refined to better facilitate the learning of its teacher education students and, as the Queensland Board of Education (1987) noted, practice can be informed by theory and theory illuminated by practice.

The project was undertaken throughout 1995 and obtained data from various documents and an open-ended questionnaire. A random sample of 60 university students currently studying for the elementary Bachelor of Teaching Degree (20 students in each of the three years) were asked to take part in the project with a total of 35 finally agreeing to participate. These students provided their weekly journal entry completed during one 13 week semester, the lesson feedback sheets provided by their supervising teachers during the practicum and their final practicum reports. Students also completed an open-ended questionnaire regarding the process, impact, benefits and difficulties in reflective journal writing; change in the content of journal writing over the semester and their overall course; and the role and impact of the feedback provided by their university professor on their reflective journal writing. It is the data from the open-ended questionnaire that was analysed and categorised using the NUDIST computer program, that is reported upon in this paper.

Results

Initial results arising out of the questionnaire come from 35 students (15 first year, 11 second year, 8 third year and one student who did not record the year level). The discussion of the results will address primarily the initial questions:

- How does 'reflective journaling' promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners?

and comment on:

- How does keeping a reflective journal encourage the articulation of the theory-practice relationship and result in practice based upon sound educational theory?

Promotion of professional growth of student teachers and their development as reflective practitioners

This area of the research was addressed through the categories of propensity to question and reflect, content of journals, feedback on journal entries and the impact of journal writing.

A propensity to question and reflect

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In order to reflect, it would be expected that students need to question what they see, hear, read and experience in university lectures and tutorials, their own lives and in practicum experiences.

Most the students surveyed (68%) reported questioning what they were told, saw, read or experienced. Students said they asked questions to relate what they were learning to what they already knew or to consider its effectiveness in terms of future experience. Some questioned what they were told, saw or experienced as they "strongly" agreed or disagreed with what they were learning in terms of their own experience or its relevance to current needs. Others wished to reflect upon the issues raised, to promote their own learning or said they always questioned and examined what they were learning. Students who sometimes questioned what they were told, saw, read or experienced did so only when the ideas presented were contrary to their own or if they felt they were allowed to question their university professor's ideas. The student who did not question what was seen, heard or experienced did so because of agreement with what was being said.

The impact of journal writing

Students reported that journal writing affected their own learning most commonly by encouraging reflection upon that learning and their experiences, and developing their ability to think more critically (40.0%). Other students considered it increased their awareness of their own learning or of their own strengths and weaknesses, teaching skills and journal writing techniques (22.9%). One student considered it helped to solve problems. Commonly, students reported that journal writing affected their development as university students by increasing their discipline or ability to write (22.9%) or enabling them to see their own personal or professional development (14.3%). It had also increased their awareness of the work required in teaching and being a university student or developed 'academic' thinking skills (5.7%).

For one student it encouraged her to read more. Seven others considered that journal writing had not affected their development as a university student.

Journal writing was reported as affecting student teaching by making them change or consider change to future thinking and action (45.7%) or increasing their awareness (20.0%). As one student commented:

"I think more in depth about some incidents which often results in me coming up with direct ideas and strategies, which I can use in my teaching." (ID)

Students reported that journal writing affected their development as a teacher in a number of different ways. Some students considered it made them aware of their own growth and development as teachers (11.4%) or increased their knowledge of children or teaching (8.6%). Individual students considered journal writing assisted with the development of their personal philosophy of teaching or made them reflect critically upon their performance and how that performance may be improved.

The content for journal entries came predominantly from interesting, unusual or important incidents, including those about which students felt particularly strongly (77.0%). Some students wrote by following the guidelines presented by the university (8.6%) while others thought through the incident then wrote a reflection on how they felt about the incident. One student even wrote an initial draft before re-
reading and correcting grammatical structure.

The content of the journal entries did not change over the semester for some students (31.0%). When content did change, it changed in depth or focus. Reflections became more informed about teaching and education as students learnt more in lectures, tutorials and the practicum setting. Other students selected more complicated topics upon which to reflect. The focus of the journal also changed for some students, becoming more personal or changing depending on their level of concern (11.4%).

Students in the second and third years of their initial teacher education studies were asked how the content of their journal entries had changed over the time they'd been studying at the university. For these students the focus of journal entries became more objective or, conversely, more personal. Reflections were now based upon less trivial issues or students moved from reflecting upon observation of the practicum setting in general to reflecting upon their own teaching (41.7%).

Providing feedback on journal writing

Students felt overwhelmingly that university professors should provide feedback on their journal writing predominantly through written comments (86.0%) but also through direct discussion (11.0%). Students considered such feedback from their university professor impacted upon subsequent journal entries by keeping them on the right track (28.6%) or showing them the benefits of journal writing (17.1%). Other students considered that such feedback directed the focus or level of journal 44% track (28.6%) or showing them the benefits of journal writing (17.1%). Other students considered that such feedback directed the focus or level of journal entries (14.3%) or provided them with a different perspective on the reflected incident (5.7%). Two students reported that they initially considered pleasing the university professor with what they wrote in their journals. As one of these students commented, "Initially I wrote what I thought they wanted to hear but now they make me think about what I am writing". Another student thought that the university professor's feedback helped her to explain her own feelings.

Feedback from the university professor impacted on students' future actions by changing those actions (42.9%), challenging student thinking and causing them to question their decisions (11.4%), reinforcing present actions (5.7%), or motivating the student (5.7%). Only one student thought that there had been little impact upon their actions. Further, more than half the students reported that university professor feedback had impacted upon their own learning positively (51.4%) by making them more aware, increasing their understanding, motivating them and providing alternative views on situations.

University professor feedback also impacted upon the students' growth as teachers by increasing their awareness of teaching and being a teacher (34.3%) or improving reflection (8.6%).

The vast majority of students considered it was important for university professors to provide feedback on their journals (74.3%). They felt it was important for university professors to give general information about teaching and education (34.3%) or information specific to journal writing (17.1%). They considered it was important for the professor to provide honest feedback and maintain confidentiality (5.7% each).
Further, it was considered that such feedback should be immediate and include oral as well as written feedback (2.9% each).

Students thought the University should help them more in the task of writing a reflective journal by clarifying the task or providing models to which students could refer (8.6% each). Some students would like to have the freedom to choose when to write a reflective journal, to select other formats for journal writing, to have a group discussion instead of keeping a reflective journal or to complete a journal only during practicum experiences (5.7% each). Individual students requested assistance in the form of relating the task to their future role as a teacher, getting more feedback, using tutorial time to complete the journal, providing encouragement, undertaking ongoing review of journal writing with a reduction in the other tasks expected and not having to complete a journal at all. Two students didn’t think that the university could offer any more assistance because it was a personal task. Another student considered that there was no more the university could do as it already helped enough.

Keeping a reflective journal encouraged the articulation of the theory-practice relationship. Students considered it important to reflect upon their experiences in school, lectures, tutorials and from readings in order to think about, become aware of, organise, revise and understand what they were learning (31.4%). As a student commented, "Otherwise you wouldn’t think twice about your experiences". Another added, "Some readings have underlying messages that only come out when you sit down and think about what you read and what it meant." Finally, one student urged that, "Teaching is about people! Ourselves and others. We must strive to understand everyone and everything." Other students believed it was the "way we learn" or enabled them to learn from their experiences and realise areas of professional uncertainty or difficulty (11.4%). Still others considered reflection necessary to relate it to their teaching (8.6%) or to make "the theory/practice relevant to own experiences/beliefs." Another student saw keeping a reflective journal as enabling her to look back and see her progress over time at the university. While considering reflection important, other students preferred to discuss issues in small groups and learn from each other rather than keep a reflective journal (5.7%) even though this may not really be considered reflection but merely as Smyth (1989) commented just a recording of experiences. Only one student felt that it was not important to reflect upon experiences as she considered that not all experiences needed to be reflected upon.

Benefits and difficulties with journal writing

The students considered that reflective journals had both benefits and difficulties. Students cited a number of benefits for journal writing. Almost half considered the process promoted the development of reflection, critical thinking and understanding (48.6%). Others considered journal writing a tool for self-assessment of teaching performance and their own learning to be a teacher (20.05%). Still others considered journal writing showed them their own professional development (20.05%), was a vehicle for self-expression (17.1%) or led to the new action (14.3%).

The difficulties of journal writing were also varied. Almost half the students found it difficult to select the topic or content for reflection, or to state the actions to be undertaken as a result of reflection (45.7%). A couple of students found it difficult to follow the suggested format, to actually reflect, or to examine their own feelings and
confront prejudices (5.7% each). The reasons for these difficulties were quite idiosyncratic but most commonly included being unable to find anything to write about (20.0%) or the pressure of other commitments (22.9%). Two students commented on having too few or, conversely, too many interesting incidents from which to choose. Another two students considered journal writing to be unnecessary, particularly in non-practicum periods. Individual students felt that they were repeating themselves by following the university’s guidelines for writing the different sections of the journal, or did not initially understand how to write the reflective journal.

It was surprising that students generally did not report as a difficulty, the requirement by the University to keep a reflective journal. Instead, most students considered the requirement to keep a reflective journal a worthwhile activity (60.0%). It was thought worthwhile when "there is something to write about" or only during the practicum. Journal writing was also considered worthwhile as a "learning tool" to learn about themselves and/or the children they work with (5.7%). It was considered worthwhile to reflect upon experience or to actualise learning (8.6% each). Individual students considered keeping a journal worthwhile to see the change in themselves, to assist in the future or because of a love of writing. For other students their reaction to journal writing depended upon their moods (5.7%) or other personal and university commitments.

Conclusion

It would appear that reflection and reflective journal writing has impacted on student teacher professional development at UWS, Macarthur. The data indicate the reflective journaling is reported by students as promoting their professional development, actualising their learning from lectures, tutorials, reading and practicum experience. It assists them on their journey to become reflective practitioners by encouraging self-assessment of their own teaching performance and learning to be a teacher. Finally keeping a reflective journal is reported as helping students to make the link between the various components of their teacher education course (e.g. lectures, tutorials, reading and practicum experience), between the theory and the practice and makes the theory more relevant to their own practice. One of the crucial issues arising from these data is the perceived overwhelming need for feedback on student reflection. The origin and nature of the feedback varies but the need for interaction as a result of reflection is irrefutable.

Further study of the actual quality of the reflection through analysis of student journals and of its impact upon lesson feedback and teaching reports from supervising teachers should enrich our understanding of the process and impact of reflective journal writing on student teacher professional development. To date, however, there is evidence that the students themselves feel that this process has improved their learning and deepened their understanding. Care must now be taken to monitor it continually throughout the program and to consistently inform both the student and the staff of the benefits, value and impact of this procedure.

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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.

**Description**

There are many contacts and interactions between universities and schools. Some might even call them partners. But is it really a partnership or is it a ploy by the hierarchy to impress those who count. What is the reality? What role do the players play in this partnership? What voice do the partners have or is there a power play going on in that it disenfranchises some of the members. How do the various members see the relationship? Are the university participants executing a position of power in order seemingly to produce a partnership that honours the knowledge and understanding of teachers. Who is in control? What is this control and why do we perceive the necessity for a partnership in the first place? How can we do it better?

These were but some of the questions explored in this paper when we began to investigate the nature of the relationship between the university and the teaching profession.

This paper records the results of research into the nature of the partnership between University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and the schools in the surrounding areas. It discusses the balanced living interaction that benefits not only all those immediately concerned but those in the future whom it will serve as the teachers we educate, the research we do and the professional development we explore maximises the potential of all concerned.
Reflections

The many contacts I had with schools and the perceived ‘ivory tower’ (University academics removed from the real life of the teacher) syndrome, necessitated an investigation to ascertain the reality of the nature of the partnership between University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and the schools. A questionnaire was devised and distributed to schools and teachers. This paper reflects the results of this small but valuable piece of research and was presented at the International Teacher Education Seminar, in Cameroon in West Africa. It was later published in the above journal.

One of the interesting facts that arose from this research was the number of contacts we had with the schools. Our conference presentation evoked many questions into the nature, for example, of the visiting teacher program. Some University professors in Cameroon felt that such a program needed a strong relationship between the University and the schools system, and were not confident that their teachers would be able to be part of such a program. This realisation made us aware of the honoured position our University held and the true nature of the partnership that was vital not only for our visiting teacher program but also for the validation of the in-school programs and the interactions and research we did in that context. This research heralded the fact that if I am to continue to work in schools and to make a difference particularly in the domain of portfolios and assessment then I must remain aware of the possibility of a changing situation within this partnership.

Action: To continue to maintain the relationship through constant contact and interaction with and between those involved.
To work towards new programs that are jointly initiated to ensure these partnerships continue to be mutual.

Epilogue: At least two new programs have been put in place that have shown not only involvement but also clear evidence of joint ownership. These programs, the Master of Practitioner Research and the Mentoring Schools program, are jointly devised and administrated by the University and the school system.
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**Abstract**

Like a number of universities in modern times, the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, collaborates with a range of partners in initial and post-initial teacher education. The university partners include teachers, teacher unions, and teacher employers, and the collaborative ventures take various forms such as joint committees, professional development activities, and research projects. This paper describes the various ventures, reports the findings of a survey to determine the partners' perceptions of these ventures, and explores these findings in terms of what they suggest about the nature and outcomes of past and future collaborative efforts at this institution.

The Faculty of Education at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (UWS, Macarthur) in Sydney, Australia, has enjoyed a period of collaboration with the teaching profession in the initial preparation and continuing professional development of teachers. Through a range and variety of contacts and interactions, partnerships have developed with area schools, teacher unions, and teachers' employers (especially the New South Wales Department of School Education or DSE). In all cases, ventures have attempted to build on a model which a) acknowledges the involvement of each partner in the education of prospective and practicing teachers, b) recognizes the particular contribution of each partner, and c) considers each partner to be equally valued and involved in the venture.
As university professors, the two of us have been not only participants in, but often instigators of, many of these collaborative ventures. Yet we realize that their perceived worth has never been explored or assessed beyond anecdotal comments from some of those involved. Further, the value of such efforts in Australia has remained a concern among some; Furlong, Whitty, Barrett, Barton & Miles (1994) assert that: “Adopting a partnership model is in itself no necessary guarantee of quality in initial teacher education” (p. 295). So after years of pursuing and developing partnerships with others outside the university, it was considered timely to inquire into their success “in action,” so that informed decisions might be made as to the need for continuing such partnerships or exploring new avenues to educational reform.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the kinds of collaborative ventures developed at UWS, Macarthur, outline and report on the findings of participants’ perceptions of these ventures, and consider what these findings suggest about school-university collaboration and the direction of future efforts at this institution.

The Call for School-University Collaboration

The need for school-university collaboration in Australia arose both from experience and research. The traditional notion that schools were concerned solely with children’s learning while universities (tertiary institutions) attended solely to the professional development of student (and practicing) teachers (Dobbins, 1993; Low, 1988; Zeichner, 1989) had long hindered the development of mutually beneficial liaisons between schools and universities in this country, and perpetuated and exacerbated the gaps between theory and practice. This situation left universities often feeling little attachment to schools, and schools often feeling they were being used by universities as “child banks,” mere providers of children on whom student teachers could practice their teaching techniques (Fraser, 1995, p. 1). Thus, as the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) reported in 1989: “In general, everyone is losing out” (p. 118). This view in turn led to increased calls for improved communication and information-sharing as well as closer collaboration between schools and universities (DEET, 1989; New South Wales Ministry of Education, Youth and Women’s Affairs, 1990; Wiltshire, 1994). In the words of the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (1994):
Teaching and other practical experiences should be planned and conducted in close collaboration with participating schools and teachers. The notion of partnerships between higher education institutions and schools in the conduct of preservice teacher education should be fostered so that all parties have a genuine sense of "ownership" of the program and an understanding of each other's perspectives on the fundamental relationship between the theoretical and practical components of the program. (p. 15)

The value of collaboration has come to be widely promoted in Australia. It has been noted that collaboration can lead to more clearly defined roles for partners (Dobbins, 1993; Gaffey, 1994), improved perceptions by partners of each other, and more equitable power relationships (Dobbins, 1993). As well, it has been reported that collaboration enhances teacher self-esteem and morale (Dobbins, 1993), supports a more professional relationship between the schools and the university (Dobbins, 1993; Fraser, 1995; Gaffey, 1994), and results in increased communication and cooperation within schools, all of which leads to the development of professional discourse and a support network amongst supervising teachers (Dobbins, 1993; Mayer & Phillips, 1995). Collaborative ventures are also held to lead to increased enthusiasm in schools towards in-school experiences (Mayer & Phillips, 1995), increased commitment to and involvement in the university's teacher education program and/or its in-school experiences (Trail & Kemp, 1980), and more knowledge of the campus-based experiences of student teachers (Mayer & Phillips, 1995). The professional development of university and school personnel as well as student teachers also continues to be promoted as a consequence of improved collaboration (Dobbins, 1993; Grundy, 1996; Millwater & Yarrow, 1995; Sinclair-Gaffey & Dobbins, 1996). In general, what is promoted by many is what Gore (1995) asserted in her review of the literature on partnership in teacher education: "school-university partnerships are fundamental to proposed reforms and considerable faith must be placed in the capacity of partnerships to both precipitate and sustain the necessary change in both contexts" (p. 18).

It is also recognized, however, that collaboration and partnership are easier concepts to articulate than to implement, and that schools and universities have challenges to overcome. First, time is needed to develop and maintain partnerships (Dobbins, 1993; Furlong et al., 1994; Gore, 1995; Koop, 1995; Mayer & Phillips, 1995). Second, schools must overcome a reluctance to make "hard decisions" about such actions as failing student teachers during in-school experience (Mayer & Phillips, 1995) or providing adequate supervision and in-depth, critical feedback.
to student teachers (Koop, 1995). Third, factors such as the physical distance between partnering schools and universities (Furlong et al., 1994) or the number of partner schools for which a university professor is responsible (Mayer & Phillips, 1995) must be recognized as problematic to the success of an effective partnership. Fourth, it is recognized that a partnership among university professors, supervising teachers, and school coordinators can be seen by student teachers as a threat to their own relationships with supervising teachers (Mayer & Phillips, 1995). Fifth, it is recognized that high levels of interpersonal skills are required of those involved and that both university and school personnel require training (Dobbins, 1993; Sinclair-Gaffey & Dobbins, 1996). And finally, funding and resources are factors to be addressed (Dobbins, 1993; Furlong et al., 1994; Gore, 1995) as is the need to maximize support for partnerships rather than rely on the key personnel involved (Gore, 1995).

Other problems of collaboration have also been noted as relating specifically to research partnerships. As Grundy (1996) explained, "researching for the profession" or "researching with the profession" (pp. 3-4) can involve conflicts of interest between mounting a "critique without fear or favour" and biting "the hand that feeds" (p. 4). Grundy asserts that difficulties arise related to: who controls the research and how; what ethical considerations arise and how such issues as confidentiality are dealt with; and the lack of rewards both for teachers involved in research and university professors involved in collaborative research, especially research with those outside the university arena.

**Collaboration in Action at UWS, Macarthur**

Collaboration at UWS, Macarthur, has taken the form of joint committees, teacher professional development activities, research, secondment, and jointly derived and implemented in-school programs. Each of these is described briefly here to establish the context in which school-university interaction occurs.

First, joint committees operate at many levels from top executive personnel within faculty and the DSE to teachers and professors. The overarching committee, *The Committee of Cooperation*, formed in the mid 1980s by the Dean of the Faculty of Education and the Head of the Metropolitan South West Region of the DSE, deals with both the joint implementation of courses at the university and Departmental sites, and also with research. Other joint committees assist the university in undergraduate and postgraduate subject and
course development. For example, the In-School Committee, consisting of teachers, DSE personnel, the teachers' union, and university professors, oversees the development, implementation, and evaluation of the in-school components of the undergraduate teacher education courses. DSE personnel also play a prominent role in all undergraduate and postgraduate course advisory committees, thus helping to ensure that course content is both appropriate and applicable to the classroom, school, or early childhood centre. University professors, too, act on DSE committees such as the Research and Evaluation Committee which deals with approving all research and evaluation projects to be carried out in schools.

A second avenue of collaboration involves the professional development of practicing teachers. Ventures in this direction have taken a variety of forms. In addition to the more usual full- and part-time study for postgraduate degrees, the university has joined with the DSE to form the Centre for Professional Development (PRODEC). This Centre implements courses, conducts conferences, and produces materials. Courses and conferences can be credited towards university degrees. Other forms of professional development come from the joint production of a regional journal and the Macarthur Lecture series, both focusing on topics of interest to university, DSE, and school personnel, and written or conducted by members from each branch of the partnership. Professional development also derives from teachers and school administrators participating as part-time professors in undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Third, there are continuing opportunities at UWS, Macarthur, for collaboration via research. Again this takes many forms, the most common being either joint projects initiated by the university or academic research carried out in schools. Teachers completing degrees at the university also carry out research within the school context, again linking both institutions. Finally, the university, teachers, and the teachers' union also collaborate to undertake action research and other types of projects through a nationally funded Innovative Links Project where they form one of 16 “Round Tables” of academics and teaching professionals who co-research as part of school reform and professional development, and share results of the research in local, state, and national arenas.

Fourth, collaboration also occurs through the secondment of practicing teachers to the university as visiting professors. The duration of a secondment is one year and the teachers retain the right to return to their previous workplace position at the end of the secondment. These teachers work alongside university professors, as part of lecturing
teams at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. It is believed that utilizing practicing teachers in the programs adds further legitimacy to the university courses and ensures links with the real world of teaching at both the student and professor level.

The final type of collaborative venture revolves around the in-school programs. For example, the undergraduate elementary teacher education course, the Bachelor of Teaching, is centred upon the in-school experiences of student teachers. These experiences range from spending one day a week in schools in 1st year, to blocks of experience in a variety of settings, to a prolonged whole semester experience in the final year of the degree. These experiences go beyond the usual practicum and aim for student teachers to experience the culture and community of school life as well as become practicing teachers. Pre-practicum meetings are conducted with student teachers and school personnel to encourage a three-way dialogue regarding the philosophy and content of the program, as well as the roles and expectations of participants (all jointly derived). University professors work weekly in schools during in-school experiences with teachers and student teachers. Student teachers, teachers, and professors are all involved in the evaluation of each program. Finally, as part of this In-school Semester program, teachers are invited to be members of interview panels which assess student teacher suitability for the teaching profession.

At UWS, Macarthur, then, there are many opportunities for collaboration between the university and the teaching profession. But given that no assessment has yet occurred in regard to the nature and worth of these ventures, questions abound. Are these really collaborative ventures? What is the reality? Who holds the power? Who makes the decisions? Who reaps the benefits? How is the relationship perceived by the various partners? These are some of the questions we started to ask as we began to investigate the nature of collaboration between this university and our partners in the field.

Participants' Perceptions

To determine the perceptions of those involved in the collaborative ventures at UWS, Macarthur, university and school personnel were surveyed by open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A). Responses were obtained from 18 schools and 20 university professors involved in the collaborative ventures. This section summarizes these participants' perceptions under the following category headings: the extent, level, and nature of the involvement, the outcomes of the collaboration, the value
of the collaboration, the factors assisting and restricting collaboration, and the ways in which the collaboration could be improved.

**Extent, Level, and Nature of the Involvement**

All respondents from both the university and school personnel groups reported being involved in all the partnership activities currently available (i.e., university and DSE committees, professional development, research, secondment and/or in-school programs). University personnel added several other levels of involvement for themselves such as school committees, membership on the New South Wales Board of Studies (the organization that develops curriculum material and syllabi for government schools in New South Wales), professional organizations, and voluntary work. Some respondents listed up to 7 involvements on the one questionnaire.

The university was perceived by the majority of respondents to be the chief initiator of collaborative ventures. But there was very little indication from school personnel (though this view differed somewhat from university personnel) that the university controlled the situation. The university was not perceived overall to dominate or dictate either the procedures or the interaction. The decisions were reported as jointly made, with the involvement maintained by continual contact, negotiation, and consultation. Only four teachers considered the partnership as unbalanced in favour of the university. It should be noted, however, that two of these teachers were studying at the university at the time and saw the relationship as needing to be controlled by the university.

**Outcomes of Collaboration**

The perceived outcomes of collaboration for both school and university respondents fell into various categories: improved communication, liaison and cooperation between partners; availability and support for each other; mutual benefits; and improved educational outcomes for pupils.

School respondents reported outcomes in all of these areas, noting improved knowledge and understanding, “cross-fertilization” of ideas, practical experience and professional development for student teachers, and the generation of better teachers for the future.

The outcomes of collaboration for university respondents varied in accordance with the type of collaborative venture in which they were involved. Professors commented on outcomes such as improved partnerships between parents and teachers, schools and student teachers, or schools and the university. Other outcomes for them included
developing a deeper understanding of teaching situations and programs in the school or university; sharing current educational practice; and the development of school-based policies, procedures, and educational initiatives. Professional development for supervising teachers and student teachers was seen as an outcome of collaboration, and university teaching was considered "enriched" because of the use of real school-based examples in lectures and tutorials. The development of a specific research methodology was perceived to be an outcome of collaborative research projects, as were academic publications which also were considered to lead to professional development, given they were then used in initial teacher education programs. Other outcomes included opportunities for student teachers to observe and gain a practical understanding of theoretical notions espoused at the university, and to witness university professors' own "personal learning" taking shape in these contexts.

**Value of Collaboration**

Collaboration was perceived as valuable by the vast majority of respondents, with benefits reflecting the above-mentioned outcomes of cooperation, communication, a "two-way flow of information," support for each other, and improved educational outcomes for pupils. As one university professor reported, collaboration provided "an opportunity to implement new and innovative strategies." Both school and university respondents reported benefits that included making contacts (networking opportunities) or even friendships (for one university professor), reciprocal learning, professional development, and the sharing of new ideas that advantaged both school and university.

For school personnel, professional development occurred through gaining new information or developing skills; they saw collaboration as leading to better, more motivated teachers and better learning. For university respondents, they saw their own personal learning and professional development as occurring alongside that of the student teachers. As some professors commented: "[Collaboration has]...unlimited benefits and potential;" "I never fail to learn something from interactions & [sic] observations;" "[Collaboration] ...promotes sharing, dialogue...[and] builds relationships between teachers and academics;" and "[We] learn from each other...to the benefit of the university students...[It] broadens each other's outlook...[it's a] two-way process." Respondents from the schools added that collaboration allowed for a recognition of the contribution they made to teacher education and to the quality of teaching and teachers (present and future). As three
respondents noted, the value of collaboration was in: “Watching [university] students grow and achieve—taking away experiences to be used in the future,” and “Observing and being involved in the growth and development of our future teachers;” and “[being able] to change perceptions of those entering teaching and support continued learning for staff.”

Collaboration was also valued by those in schools because of the promotion of professional mutual respect, the professionalism that existed, and the support for each other that was generated. As one school respondent reported: “Daphne's [pseudonym for the university professor] expertise is highly valued & [sic] we are privileged to benefit from it.” One school went so far as to claim that “the UWS, Macarthur, is the best teacher training institution in NSW [New South Wales]” and that they were pleased and proud to be able to be part of any program emanating from the university.

Collaboration was seen by university respondents as most valuable because it provided opportunities to participate in the real world of teaching. This in turn provided teaching models for student teachers to observe, enabled a linking of theory and practice, and provided an “updated ‘real’ approach” to initial teacher education. This allowed professors to keep in touch with reality through “real-life” contacts with schools and teachers, to see how things operate in and out of the classroom, to keep up-to-date with current school practice, and acquire recent and relevant examples to use in their teaching. University professors also saw collaboration as providing “school-based research prospects” which could lead to increasing the knowledge base in education and promoting co-authorship of academic papers. As university respondents commented: “[Collaboration] keeps me in touch with what is happening in schools...[I] enjoy student contact, sharing ideas & [sic] learning from others” and “[You can]...put theory into practice in order to modify theory...challenge commonly held beliefs ...and therefore make a significant contribution to teachers’ understandings.”

Issues that arose from negative statements about collaboration by university personnel were that some of the school teachers were “not necessarily good role models” as they had not kept up-to-date with current theory or put that theory into practice. This situation caused conflict at times as the student teachers were not able to observe in practice what they had learned at the university. Professors also reported difficulties arising from other specific factors: time limitations; “the ‘tyranny of distance’ from school sites; differing expectations,
philosophies, or skill levels between school and university personnel; “people politicking,” and the difficulty of bringing about change.

A few school respondents were critical of university personnel, commenting that “[practicum] supervisors from the university are not always prepared [and] must be seen to offer advice and guidance,” and that there was a lack of university contact and communication. However, even though a few felt there was improvement needed, the majority of school personnel praised the collaborative ventures, finding no negative aspects to the collaboration, and wishing to continue and expand the contact in a fashion similar to what was already established.

Factors Assisting and Restricting Collaboration

For both groups, the factors noted as assisting collaboration related to interpersonal relationships between university and school personnel. For example, school personnel reported the availability and support of the university professors with “ongoing and consistent communication,” and an “open-door policy for both partners.” As they commented, there was an “honesty and willingness to trust.” Certain organizational features were also reported as particularly significant to the successful collaboration: these were the “long-term notification” of impending interaction and “well informed meetings.” The professors also reported the assistance provided by cooperative and supportive school staff, school principals, and the DSE. In addition, they referred to the “generosity” of the schools with the provision of aid, time, and resources. As one professor commented, “the partnership was assisted by a willingness by all parties to work together for the benefit of [university] students and their learning.”

The factors perceived to inhibit collaboration related primarily to time. There was some feeling from school personnel of “overload caused by additional work.” Teachers reported not having enough time to work jointly with either the student teachers or the university professors. Time, too, was an issue for the professors who did not always feel they had enough time to spend in the schools. Time spent on collaboration varied from weekly contact by some professors to more sporadic contact by others depending on the nature of the collaboration and the particular individuals involved. Travelling to the schools was considered time-consuming and sometimes resulted in abbreviated contact.

Improving Collaboration

Suggestions for improvements from school-based respondents were limited in that most felt the partnership was working and needed little change; on the whole, schools were satisfied. Some did request clarification of expectations and more contact in the form of longer
practicum. The few school respondents who had previously stated negative views of collaboration countered these with appropriate suggestions—for example, more contact with the university professor and better coordination. Others asked for further discussions with university staff around in-school experience programs, conditions that would enhance learning, and future directions in education. One school respondent had experienced difficulty with timetabling in-school experience and hence requested changes in this regard. A need for correct protocol when student teachers and the professors were visiting the schools was also requested. Another school respondent felt that professors should visit the real world of teaching and suggested the possibility of exchange of university staff with school staff.

University personnel identified time as the issue central to improving collaboration. Some of the joint meetings (school committees, etc.) were considered not very productive and in need of monitoring. It was also suggested that money be made available for further time release for teachers so they could work more with the student teachers in joint planning. Time also was needed for ongoing teacher professional development at both the school and university level. More school visits were recommended as was the increased use of teachers from the schools in university programs.

Discussion

While the sample size of the survey is relatively small, the perceptions of those involved in collaborative ventures at UWS, Macarthur, confirm some findings from previous literature on collaboration noted earlier in this paper, and also highlight some additional outcomes, benefits, and challenges to the development and maintenance of collaboration. Similar to previous literature, the present study shows that collaboration does result in improved communication and information sharing among those involved. Some respondents in this study even requested further interaction and discussion on directions in education, in-school experiences, and the conditions to enhance learning. Like the existing literature on collaboration, the respondents in this study also reported that collaboration did result in shared planning and implementation of initial teacher education, a greater school commitment to the university and its education programs, and a mutually beneficial liaison leading to professional development for both university and school personnel.

While, in general, there were found to be improved perceptions by the partners of each other, similar to those reported in the literature, some criticisms of both sides were evident as university personnel
criticized some teachers as poor role models and school personnel criticized some university supervisors' lack of preparedness and low level of contact and communication. The criticism of university personnel by some respondents contradicted to some extent the supportive comments made by all others on the continual contact between the university and the schools. This brings to light several issues: the high level of interpersonal skill required of university supervisors; the varying competencies of individual university supervisors, especially part-time staff; and the problem of competing demands of working with the profession and carrying out research and scholarship. These findings also support Grundy's (1996) notion of the importance of understanding each other's work and her recommendation of advocacy and support by each partner in each other's workplace (p. 13). The present study showed that despite collaboration in a variety of forums and at differing levels, there still could be an incongruence between what was taught at the university and what happened in schools, and that this incongruence was a primary cause of conflict in collaborative ventures. This confirms the need for more clearly defined roles and expectations for those involved in collaboration, as well as a greater understanding of each other's worlds.

Extending the literature, the present study found additional benefits to collaboration. These included increased cooperation between the university and the teaching profession, ongoing university availability and support, and increased positive attitudes on the part of school and university personnel to initial teacher education and to keeping university personnel in touch with schools and classrooms. Further, the study highlighted the importance of the personal contacts and networking opportunities that accompany collaboration. Respondents stressed the need to recognize the contribution that schools make to initial teacher education and to the legitimization of university courses in the eyes of the teaching profession. In addition, while the university was seen to initiate many of the collaborative ventures, school personnel did not see the university as controlling or dominating the ventures. What became evident was that school personnel saw collaboration as an equal partnership defined through ongoing contact, negotiation, consultation, and joint decision-making.

In terms of the challenges to developing and maintaining collaboration, the major inhibitor of collaboration for those involved in this study, like that reported in earlier literature, was time. From the study, it would seem that collaboration requires many hours of contact and at UWS, Macarthur, more time is needed if the university is to realize the full potential of partnership and if the school personnel are themselves to grow and develop professionally as well as support the
growth and development of student teachers.

Finally, reflecting the literature, respondents reported perceptions that collaboration has the potential to lead to school and university reform. It was felt, for example, that some ventures allow university personnel to put their theory into practice, to implement new and innovative strategies in schools and to contribute to education policy development. In addition, they could use their research and experience to generate publications or work with teachers through joint projects like The Innovative Links Project to bring about direct change in classrooms and schools. University reform was also seen as a possibility if recommendations of the respondents were implemented into the university programs and practices.

The present study was specifically undertaken to identify and evaluate the existing collaborative ventures so that informed decisions might be made as to their need and possible continuation versus the generation of new, improved ventures. From the results of this study, we are committed to continuing our collaboration at a variety of levels and through a number of ventures, despite recent national funding cutbacks and a restructuring of the DSE. For example, the centralization of the DSE has caused the demise of regional organizations with which the university collaborated such as the Research and Evaluation Committee and the regional journal. Other ventures, such as PRODEC and the Macarthur Lecturer Series, have become university-led rather than joint organizations. However, the Committee of Cooperation, the In-school Committee and the various course advisory committees continue as does university personnel involvement on the Board of Studies, school committees, inservice professional development activities, professional organizations, and other now centralized DSE committees. In each of these we intend to maintain an openness to ideas and a willingness to participate and promote democracy in collaborative decision-making which recognizes and values the differing expertise brought by the various partners.

Through ongoing committee membership and attaching university personnel to the same schools each week and each semester for in-school experiences, we will continue to build trust, communication, and understanding of each partner's perspectives and interests. The issue of requisite high levels of interpersonal skills for university personnel who work with schools will be addressed at university faculty meetings. In order to increase university personnel school visits, as respondents requested, our new elementary initial teacher education degree (due for implementation in 1999) will continue the practice of integrating in-school experiences within university-based subjects and
enlarge these subjects to double the size of nonpracticum subjects. These in-school programs and their initial briefing and ongoing weekly joint school-university personnel meetings will enable us to respond directly to the recommendations of the school personnel for longer practicum, more contact with university supervisors, clarification of expectations, and better coordination. School difficulties with timetabling student experiences in schools can somewhat be alleviated through earlier notification of the days, dates, nature, and the requirements of in-school experiences for the following year. Finally, each semester we will continue to evaluate these programs by seeking the perceptions of students, university professors and school personnel, and then undertake recommended changes.

Participants' recommendations for an increasing use of teachers in the university programs has already been implemented despite financial cutbacks which caused the demise of the year-long visiting professor. Now, instead of releasing a teacher from a school to work in our programs for one year, the university employs teachers for only the length of one teaching semester. To employ a teacher for 15 weeks rather than 52 weeks has proved to be more economical, even when more teachers are employed each year. The DSE continues to pay the visiting professor's salary. This arrangement has enabled a doubling of the number of visiting professors each semester in the elementary and early childhood teacher education programs.

The recommendation of placing university personnel in schools for staff exchange was implemented on a pilot basis this past year. Interestingly the professor who undertook the exchange is eager to return and share with his university colleagues and students what he has learned from his experience in the school, but the classroom teacher is not so keen to return to her school next year. She has applied for leave from the DSE to continue part-time teaching at the university and complete her own Master's degree. We are left questioning whether such staff exchange ventures are as beneficial to the schools as they are to the university.

What we have learned overall from this study is that collaboration and partnership between UWS, Macarthur, and the teaching profession not only exists on paper, but is a balanced, living interaction that benefits all those immediately involved as well as those in the future as a consequence of the professional development it generates for all participants. We have been able to identify and highlight the challenges that have emerged, and we have begun already to implement, where possible, recommendations for changes that could
improve teacher education and lead to educational reform. The findings of our study have allowed us to recognize the many positives in our partnerships and to move forward in both our thinking and our commitment to continued collaborative ventures.

References


Appendix A:
University - School Partnership Questionnaire

1. (For University Personnel): Are you directly involved in any way with schools and/or educational settings (primary, secondary, early childhood, Department of School Education, Board of Studies, Catholic Education Office, Regional Office, Independent system or other)?
   Yes ___ No ___ (if no, please return questionnaire)

(For School Personnel): Is your school or any of your teachers/staff involved with the University either through, for example, research, study, teaching, student involvement, committees, interview panels?
   Yes ___ No ___ (if no, please return questionnaire)

2. What is the nature of this involvement (research, study, teaching, student involvement, committees, interview panels, other)?

3. How often does this involvement take place?

4. Is it ongoing or time framed?

5. For how long?

6. Who initiated the contact?

7. Who governs (controls) the process?

8. Who is involved?

9. What are the expected outcomes of this contact?

10. Why do you value this contact?

11. Of what value is this contact to:
    a) education, b) teaching, c) you, d) the partnership?

12. Do you see it as a partnership or is one party more dominant?
    If so, who is the dominant party?

13. For you, what has been the most positive and most negative aspect of developing the partnership?

14. For you, what have been the significant factors either assisting or restricting the partnership?

15. How could the partnership be improved?

16. Further comments?

**Description**

Portfolios have been a common assessment item in many educational contexts across the globe for some time now. Most commonly they have been used at the school level being primarily for assessments of literacy skills. More recently they have been used at university level as assessment of individual achievement within a particular discipline and across disciplines as has been developed at University of Western Sydney Macarthur over the past five years. However the basic principles underlying portfolio assessment have been picked up in other educational contexts and much debate is taking place as to their value in teacher credentialing, recognition of prior learning and personal records of learning in TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Colleges.

This paper briefly outlines the current portfolio assessment being carried out at University of Western Sydney Macarthur and discusses the expanded use put portfolios during the teaching of literacy at a TAFE College. The paper uses several examples as a basis for the current debate on teacher credentialing and recognition of prior learning. While no finite decisions are made in regard to these issues this paper shows the possibilities available and the benefits accrued, should such an assessment system be implemented in the near future.
Reflections
In 1996 a Master of Education student researched the implications and impact of portfolios on both the teachers and students she was supervising at TAFE (Technical and Further Education) College. Working with Nona on her study and being invited to present the portfolios of our pre-service teachers to academics researching teachers' professional portfolios, fuelled the realisation of the possibilities of portfolios in varying contexts. This paper was presented at the International Teacher Education Seminar in Canada in 1997.

While this paper was never submitted for publication it became the catalyst for much of my later study. I had already worked in schools with many assessment procedures and we had had portfolios as a three-year, cross discipline assessment in the Bachelor of Teaching program for some years. Was there yet another dimension to portfolios? This paper also gave rise to a set of principles that rang true to both the pre-service and the TAFE portfolios. Was there a connection between these principles and the multiple environments where portfolio assessment was practiced?

Action: To refine these principles and investigate other environments where they might be relevant.

Epilogue: The TAFE situation has evaporated but the teaching professional portfolios and children’s portfolio have taken on a life of their own. Work with the principles in setting up frameworks across environments is continuing.

Pseudonyms used throughout
Contextual Variants for Portfolios

paper presented at
17th Annual International Seminar for Teacher Education Brock University,
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada
May 3 to 10, 1997
by Helen Woodward
Faculty of Education University of Western Sydney Macarthur, Australia

Examiner
The routine of trickery of the examination
Baffles these hot and discouraged youths.
Driven by them, they know not what external pressure
They pour their hated self-analysis
Through the nib of confessions, onto the accusatory page

I, who have plotted their immediate downfall,
I am entrusted with the divine categories,
ABCD and the hell of E,
The parade of prize and the back door pass

In tight silence
Standing by the green grass window
Watching the fertile earth graduate its sons
With more compassion - not commanding the shape
Of stem and stamen, bringing the trees to pass
By shift of sunlight and increase of rain,
For each seed the whole soil, for the inner life
The environment receptive and contributory -
I shudder at the narrow frames of our text-book schools
In which we plant our so various seedling.
Each brick-walled barracks
Cut onto numbered rooms, black-boarded,
Ties the venturing shoot to the master stick;
The screw-desk rows of lads and girls
Subdued in the shade of an adult -
Their acid subsoil -
Shape the new to the old in the ashen garden.
Shall we open the whole skylight of thought
To these tip-top minds, bring them our frontier worlds
And the boundless uplands of art for their field of growth?

Or shall we pass them the chosen poems with the footnotes,
Ring the bell on their thoughts, period their play,
Make laws for average and plans for means.
Print one history book for a whole province, and
Let ninety thousand reach page 10 by Tuesday?

I gather the inadequate paper evidence, I hear
Across the neat campus lawn
The professional mowers drone, clipping the inch-high green.

F.R. Scott (1899-1985)
The above poem expresses the thoughts and ideas of but one examiner. The question is forever there, what do we assess and how do we capture the passing parade of knowledge that plagues our university hallways and passes our office doorways with ever increasing speed.

**Purpose of assessment**

Within the hallways of academia a wide variety of procedures pass as assessment with equally as many purposes of these assessments justifying their existence. Traditionally these assessment procedures range from examinations; to in-class tests, to essays, to presentations. All of them striving for methods of capturing the students’ knowledge, skills and understandings that have been divulged, absorbed or memorised during the delivery of the content.

Many educators however have sought more extensive purposes to assess. They have created assessment opportunities that allow the students’ to demonstrate application of their knowledge and skills using situations that reflect actual life experiences. This mode of assessment is known as authentic or performance assessment. Much work has been done in elementary education in this domain but within the university arena the argument for more rigorous assessment prevails. There is little recognition of the importance of applying knowledge as against memorising facts. Creating opportunities for authentic assessment to materialize is difficult and time consuming but if learning is to be accurately assessed and if students’ are to be able to apply the knowledge and skill they have acquired, authentic assessment procedures need to be considered. One such procedure is portfolio assessment. This procedure has been used in elementary schools for some time but there are many questions to be answered.
when developing such procedures within the University context. Some underlying
issues that have emerged from work already done with portfolios are:

- the necessity of setting criteria, goals or standards to form a framework on which to
  base the information gathered;
- the importance of recognising that not only does such assessment allow the owner
to demonstrate learning but also that learning occurs because of the process both at
the teaching and owner level;
- that student know what they know and can demonstrate this given the correct
  situation;
- that selection from and justification of criteria should be in the hands of the owner
  and
- that assessment of previously hidden learning now has the opportunity to emerge.

(Woodward 1994, Hilder 1996)

In further considering these issues it can be seen that they form the core or basis for
possible consideration when creating portfolios as an assessment and as such become
principles for the development of portfolio procedures. The last issue is particularly
important when considering this mode of assessment for credentialing teachers or for
teachers transferring to another system, state or country and is therefore significant in
the context of this paper. This dilemma arises because much of what teachers do and
do well cannot be identified with a pencil and paper. Much of it is done in isolation
and as Shulman (1994) stated it allows us to look at what teachers actually know and
do. Herman and Winters (1994) believe that portfolios are more likely to elicit the true
capability of most students. As such it seems that portfolio assessment should be
considered as a real possibility when focusing on alternatives to traditional forms of
assessment and in particularly when teacher credentialing and transfer are being sought.

Two situations where portfolios are used will be described to show how some of the above issues can be dealt with. Examples will be drawn from University of Western Sydney Macarthur and the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) College in Moss Vale.

**Portfolios at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur**

One of the concepts developed as a result of reaccreditation of the Bachelor of Teaching at University of Western Sydney Macarthur in 1992 was portfolio assessment. Portfolios were not new to the educational scene but the way they were implemented in this program was, at that time, a deviation from the norm.

The main reasons for introducing portfolios was because we believed that students knew more about their own abilities and progress than did 'outsiders'. Tapping into this knowledge and facilitating students in becoming aware of their competencies was able to be achieved. Demonstration of these competencies was needed as was the recognition of the breadth and depth of the students learning.

**Implementation**

During the Bachelor of Teaching program a portfolio was created, by the students, to 'map the terrain' they have covered and their own understanding and learning, as they became teachers. As they moved through the program the student's added to their portfolio with examples from their reflective journals and other justified items that
showed their growth and development as teachers. Criteria based on the Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers, developed by the Department of School Education in New South Wales Australia, were used as a basis for the portfolio. A personal aspect was also included with the students exploring why and how they made the decision to become a teacher. The portfolio took any form and included any items, but it was suggested that photos might be a better way of collecting three dimensional items. Videos, photos, pages from their journals and any items were used that showed the growth and understanding of them as developing teacher. The idea of digital portfolios has been suggested but as yet has not eventuated. Each item in the portfolio needed to be accompanied with a page justification as to why it had been included and how it demonstrated each selected criteria. These portfolios also needed to be continually refined and reviewed during the course of the program. In the final semester in the third year of the program, students defended their portfolio before a panel. This committee consisted of the student's mentoring lecturer, a member of faculty staff, a representative of the Department of School Education or Catholic or Independent school systems and a second year student. Opportunity was given for all students to be part of the portfolio defense process at least once prior to this final semester. This opportunity assisted the second year students in understanding not only the process, but also the purpose of the portfolio.

Thus the portfolios became a record of each graduating student’s progress through the course, the understandings and skills acquired on the way and of their competencies as potential teachers. This process assured that each student was individually catered for and individually assessed. These portfolios were also used when the students were
interviewed by the state Department of School Education and for subsequent interviews for positions across the board.

Many of the students have commented on how the developing of their portfolio was one of the most valuable things they had done during the entire program. It helped them discover personal qualities they were up until now unaware of and gave them a new perception of both themselves personally and the learning processes they had embodied during the program. It helped them discover who they were, what they knew, what they could do and what they were like as individuals and as prospective teachers. It gave the personnel on the panel a sound assessment of this potential teacher’s capabilities.

**Portfolios at Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFE)**

In 1996 a student doing her Masters degree at our university began looking at ways to develop her staff’s understanding of assessment of literacy at the TAFE college where she worked. It was at a small country college that relies on part-time or sessional teachers for the bulk of its teaching load. Courses were run to assist the unemployed in the development of their literacy skills.

Most of the students in these courses saw their lack of literacy as their own fault and floated in and out of the course as it suited them. Results of these courses were often disappointing with many students failing to achieve their stated literacy outcomes. Implementation of a portfolio approach to assessment was primarily aimed at improving the teaching and learning interaction at the college. Each of the staff
members constructed their own idea as to how to implement portfolio assessment and what as portfolio would look like.

Implementation

The emphasis in this situation was that the student and teacher worked together on an individual basis to set goals and establish criteria so that both the student and the teacher would know the extent to which the goals had been achieved. This process was done on a lesson by lesson basis which meant that realistic goals were continually being set. Examples of work were kept in the portfolios and both teacher and student comments were added as progress was made. The teachers were continually surprised at the interest portfolios created with their students and as one teacher stated “this practice streamlined the teaching learning process because the focus of learning was clearer.” Because the students were so involved not only in their assessment but in setting their individual goals student began to realise their hitherto unknown purposes of their learning development. It gave them confidence in their ability and in all cases recorded, not only did teaching processes and student learning develop but there was a marked change in student attitude and teaching quality.

There were some unresolved issues, on initial implementation of portfolios in this situation, such as convincing more teachers of the value of such an assessment and the length of time it took to understand and develop the process. This project succeeded in stirring the core of what it is to be a teacher of adult literacy. It motivated teachers to question what they did and why they did it. It forced them to focus on students and their specific goals. Just as exciting, the student learned, not only that their literacy improved, but that they learned about learning. The passivity which characterised
them to date was replaced with a recognition that learning is an active process where honest assessment in not as much a criticism but a way of focusing on goals and setting the direction for further learning. (Hilder 1996:17)

Teacher Credentialing and Transfer

From the above experiences principles that could be considered for teacher credentialing and transferability, portability, comparability of teachers' credentials across countries emerged. These were:

- knowledge, skills and understandings can be expressed in a variety of ways;
- learning occurs during implementation of portfolio assessment;
- recording of this learning growth, so that both the assessed and the assessor have tangible evidence of the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, is essential and individual;
- there is an emergence of hitherto unrecognised learning;
- setting relevant criteria is vital;
- justifying each record enhances learning and allows access to deeper understandings and
- competencies and experiences are demonstrable.

This non-traditional forum of assessment was taken into consideration when Australian Universities started to consider giving credit to students wishing to enter graduate courses using recognition of prior learning (RPL) as criteria for entry. The question was how do we formalise RPL and how do we standardise it when entrants have such a variety of experiences. As various groups of University professors began to address these issues the experiences we had had at University of Western Sydney
Macarthur were explored. While no actual decisions have been made at this stage the basic concepts and principles embodied in our work were considered with the idea of establishing criteria similar to those set by the state education system but at a more advanced level. In order to gain credit entry into graduate courses a portfolio that demonstrated selected criteria would show prior learning and how appropriate it was to the situation. Obviously there would be many issues to address such as setting the criteria, administering the assessment and recognition what constitutes evidence.

Before such a system could be put into place considering the development of portfolios in the many differing context in which such assessment now exists would be necessary. It would not be difficult to see the place of portfolios in credentialing teachers as well as giving the tangible evidence required when transferring from one teaching system to another.

References:


Description
Some see assessment and learning as two separate entities, however others believe that when assessment and learning become united there is an added strength that shows that the combination is more than the individual parts. With individualised teaching and learning also being a prime concern of many educators it follows that individualised assessment also will need to be addressed. It is with this premises in mind that portfolio assessment has been developed in the Bachelor of Teaching course at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (Australia). An assessment procedure has been developed through the use of portfolios that allows the final semester students to track their growth and development throughout the program as well as their personal understandings of what it is to be a teacher. Students who have completed this assessment have commented that they have learned more through this assessment than from any other such activity. I believe that this is because in order to complete their portfolio they have to demonstrate their learning through substantiation of criteria and then they have to defend their position to a panel.

This paper explores these processes by, examining the current procedures, discussing the current thinking and pulling together the ideal and the practical. Once the parameters have been established, the steps that have been taken towards assessment that is both a learning process and is focused on the individual in pre-service education (B.Teach) in the University of Western Sydney is described.
Reflections

Having created and implemented portfolio assessment in the Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and having researched, written and presented papers on the topic of portfolios at several conferences, new understandings were surfacing. Based on this background I successfully submitted a paper to the Northumbria Assessment Conference, Encouraging Partnerships in Assessing Learning, in England in 1997. The key issue that emerged in this paper was the notion that there was indeed a union between assessment and learning. This conference paper resulted in an invitation by the publishers of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education Journal to submit the paper for publication.

While I was confident that there was a link between learning and assessment I was sure that it was more than a casual link. Much of the literature mentioned learning and assessment together but I was beginning to realise that the connection was much more vibrant and essential that first thought. Much reading, many arguments, and varying conversations strengthened my belief about the interdependence of assessment and learning.

Action: To continue to pursue the interdependence of assessment and learning particularly within the framework of portfolios.

Epilogue: I continue to be convinced that assessment not only supports learning but IS learning. Student evaluations reiterate that working on their portfolios has been a learning experience.
Reflective Journals and Portfolios: learning through assessment

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ABSTRACT Some see assessment and learning as two separate entities. However, others believe that when assessment and learning become united there is an added strength that shows that the combination is more than the individual parts. With individualised teaching and learning also being the prime concern of many educators it follows that individualised assessment also will need to be addressed. It is with this premises in mind that reflective journalism portfolio assessment have been developed in the Bachelor of Teaching course at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (Australia). We have developed an assessment procedure through the use of reflective journals and portfolios that allows our final semester students to track their growth and development throughout the course as well as their personal understandings of what it is to be a teacher. Students who have completed this assessment have commented that they have learned more through this assessment than from any other such activity. I believe that this is because in order to complete their portfolio they have to demonstrate their learning through substantiation of criteria and then they have to orally defend their position to a committee. This paper explores these processes by examining the current procedures, discussing the current thinking and pulling together the ideal and the practical. Once the parameters have been established, the steps that have been taken towards assessment that is both a learning process and is focused on the individual in pre-service education (B.Teach) in the University of Western Sydney will be discussed.

Introduction

There are many ways in which we attempt to ascertain the amount of learning that has occurred within our classes. Sometimes it is through assignments and sometimes it is through examination. Whatever method is used the question is forever there, what do we assess and how do we capture the passing parade of knowledge that invades our university hallways and passes our office doorways with ever increasing speed.
What Counts

The dilemma of assessment plagues many of us in the field of education be it at school level or at university. Much has been written about it with a shift in recent years to the notion of authentic or performance assessment. This model of assessment can be defined as assessment that allows the students to demonstrate application of knowledge, skills and attitudes using situations that reflect or simulate actual life experiences. Recording and presenting these experiences presents an extra dimension to the assessment arena. While this sounds very vocational and for some, less rigorous than the trusty exam, pen and paper test or essay, there are many instances when demonstration of such knowledge is best done in an ‘authentic’ context with situations created to allow for demonstration of learning. Two of the authentic assessment procedures to be considered are reflective journals and portfolios. These procedures can be and have been used at all levels from elementary school through to post-compulsory and university education.

One of the immediate difficulties that arises with authentic or performance assessment and therefore with journals and portfolios, according to Broadfoot (1995), is the problem of precise definition and boundaries. Other issues that need to be addressed are what counts as evidence and how and when does the assessment actually take place. Shulman (1994) sees difficulties with resources, setting up, supporting, consolidating, evaluating, changing and redeveloping such assessments as problematic. There are many questions to be answered when investigating this mode of assessment but there are also some underlying issues that have emerged from work already done, particularly with portfolios. The most obvious of these are:

- the necessity of setting criteria, goals or standards to form a framework on which to base the information gathered;
- the importance of recognising that not only does such assessment allow the owner to demonstrate learning but also that learning occurs because of the process both at the teaching and owner level;
- that students know what they know and can demonstrate this given the correct situation;
- that selection from and justification of criteria should be in the hands of the owner; and
- that assessment of previously hidden learning now has the opportunity to emerge. (Woodward, 1994; Hilder, 1996)

These issues were core to the decisions made in regard to both designing and implementing reflective journals and portfolio assessment in the Bachelor and Teaching at University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

Reflective Journals

Educational institutions the world over have been implementing ‘reflective’ journals for more than a decade. Some claim to have implemented a reflective journal while others call this or a similar process, log-book entries, diary writing or simply personal journals. The University of Western Sydney Macarthur was one such institution. Nearly every subject, and there were many, had the students commenting in a ‘journal’. The students were not sure exactly what the difference was between these various journals but they were directed to keep journals, the lecturers believing that reflection was an automatic part of this process. On close examination it became apparent that the records kept were
far from reflective and indeed were merely diary entries describing an event or activity. In regard to such reflective activity, Schon (1983, p. 19) commented that the scene was one of confusion in the professions because of a lack of deliberate ways of "... describing or accounting for the artful competence which [some] practitioners sometimes reveal in what they do". Reflection tends to remain private and actual reflection on action seldom becomes explicit unless specific processes are put in place to encourage this to occur. It is by making these thoughts explicit that a greater depth of understanding takes place (Sinclair & Woodward, 1998). Hence the implicit 'description only' entries in journals, as the students struggled to find the purpose of such items. They were content to fulfill the basic requirements of the assignment as no guidelines or purposeful instructions were given to assist in the process. While they did not wish to become either prescriptive or restrictive, the faculty staff decided that a framework was necessary if these students were to develop reflective processes and eventually become truly reflective practitioners (Woodward & Sinclair 1998).

Developing a Framework

The framework we developed came from an amalgam of ideas from Smyth (1986) and Berthoff (1978). The personal reflective journal for the Bachelor of Teaching was a double entry journal (Berthoff, 1978) where description of experiences/notes/quotations etc. were entered on the left hand side of the journal and reflections on these were entered on the right hand side. Every entry had to conclude with a section indicating the action planned as a result of the reflections, as reflection without action is not true reflection (Smyth, 1986). The students had one journal for all subjects in order to encourage integration across the programme, to assist in the students making connections across the subjects and to prevent a myriad of journals erupting from individual subjects. Employing this format, the journal helped capture how new understandings metamorphose. This in turn showed evidence of how the students' strengths and weaknesses evolved, how they made judgements and how they solved problems. Specific entries in their journals were, at times, mile posts indicating change and therefore could be included in their portfolios.

Implementation

Each semester the personal reflective journal was included in a different subject. The standard format, however, varied as the programme proceeded. It become obvious that we needed to give the students access to a variety of formats and situations to enable them to become truly individual in their reflections. This variation was also necessary to accommodate the variety of teaching styles and learning strategies employed by the various lecturers in whose subject the responsibility lay to monitor this journal. Hence the solitary journal took on several forms. The emphasis was still to be on reflection on learning through reflection on action. The main issue involving reflective journals was that there be some description/observation/notes that were reflected on and then proposed action recorded. It was very important that the Action was stated as this gave added purpose to the reflection although care had to be taken that this did not drive the entries in the journal. Students must keep all reflective journals until they have completed the programme. At the end of each semester in the last tutorial a reflection summary sheet (Appendix 1) was completed by all students. These sheets were included in their
personal file in preparation for the final subject of the programme. In-School Semester and the culmination of their portfolios.

**Portfolios**

Portfolios take many different forms and have many different purposes, but it seems evident that they are seen as an alternative to examinations as they show a clearer picture of the development of the owner, over time. They are the *student's record*, not only of his or her progress but of what they consider to be important, therefore giving the teacher another perspective on the student’s progress.

There are many accounts of portfolios being used at primary, secondary and university level for the purposes of both development and assessment, but the majority seem to concentrate on single subjects. The notion of taking a portfolio across all subjects in a programme and over a number of years seems to be a relatively new concept. It is this concept that the staff creating the Bachelor of Teaching, at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur, explored and subsequently implemented.

**Developing a Framework**

The main reasons for introducing portfolios was because we believed that students knew more about their own abilities and progress than did ‘outsiders’. Tapping into this knowledge and facilitating students in becoming aware of their competencies was able to be achieved as was in evidence through the assessment itself. Demonstration of these competencies was needed as was the recognition of the breadth and depth of the students learning.

During the Bachelor of Teaching programme a portfolio was created, by the students, to ‘map the terrain’ they have covered and their own understanding and learning, as they became teachers. As they moved through the programme the students added to their portfolios with examples from their reflective journals and other justified items that showed their growth and understanding as developing teachers. Criteria (Appendix 2) based on the Attributes of Beginning Teachers, developed by the Department of School Education in New South Wales Australia, were used as a basis for the portfolio giving both definition and boundaries as enunciated by Broadfoot (1995). A personal aspect was also included with the students exploring why and how they made the decision to become a teacher. The portfolio took any form and included any items, but it was suggested that photos might be a better way of collecting three-dimensional items. Videos, photos, pages from their journals and any items that showed the growth and understanding of them as developing teacher were to be used. The idea of digital portfolios has been mooted but as yet has not happened. Each item in the portfolio needed to be accompanied with a page justification as to why it had been included and how it demonstrated each selected criteria. These portfolios also needed to be continually refined and reviewed during the course of the programme.

**Implementation**

The processes for each year were as follows:
First Year

Students began their portfolios as they began the Bachelor of Teaching programme. Initially they were asked to collect items that demonstrated why and how they decided to become a teacher. Each item had to be accompanied by a half page of writing justifying its inclusion. During the first semester, in the subject Orientation to Learning and Teaching, they began their portfolio and shared it with others. Their reflective journals were also initiated at this time and the connection between their reflection on action and mapping the terrain they were travelling, was emphasised.

Second Year

In their second year these portfolios and reflective journals were developed further with additional items being added and justified as the individual students developed. Journals were monitored within the subject Foundation Studies 2. Here students were further encouraged to make the connections between their learning and practicalities of teaching through theory into practice journals, the emphasis of this subject. All students were given the opportunity to take an active part on a panel during the third year portfolio assessment. This assisted the second year students in understanding not only the process, but also the purpose of the portfolio and their reflective journals.

Third Year

In the third year of the programme both the portfolios and the journals were considered more intensely. During the first half of the year (semester five) in the subject Integrated Studies, journal writing through response logs became a premium because by the end of this semester it was expected that the students would know, through their portfolio development and their reflective journals, their strengths as a prospective teacher as well as the competencies they still needed to develop. During semester six these competencies were dealt with on an individual basis, through a research project at their participating school (this entire semester is school-based with the students having only one subject, In-School Semester). The individual strengths of each student were enhanced as they developed programmes within the school that allowed them to utilise these capacities.

In this final semester of the programme, students discussed their portfolio before a panel and answered a set of questions. This panel consisted of the student’s mentoring lecturer, a member of faculty staff, an employee representative from the Department of School Education or Catholic or Independent school systems and a second year student. Opportunity was given for all students to be part of the portfolio assessment process at least once prior to this final semester.

Thus the portfolios became a record of each graduating student’s progress through the programme, the understandings and skills acquired on the way and of their competencies as potential teachers. This process assured that each student was individually catered for and individually assessed. These portfolios were also used when the students were interviewed by the state Department of School Education and for subsequent interviews for positions across the board. It also gave the personnel on the panel a better picture of these potential teacher’s capabilities.
Difficulties and Resolutions

While the above description indicates a seemingly smooth passage through the process both from implementation to execution and from initial introduction to final assessment, the pathway was at times in grave danger of completely disappearing. Some of the contentions that had to be dealt with were the decision whether or not to give a grade for the journals and the portfolios, recognition of ownership of the process, continuity throughout the process, conflict between beliefs and reality and organisation of actual assessments. Initially it was decided, by those teaching in the first year programme, that the journals would not be given a grade but would be pass/fail only. As we worked through into the other years of the programme it became obvious that the members of the staff teaching in semesters two to six had different ideas. They also needed to understand the value particularly of the journal within their discipline. To accommodate these dispositions we looked at the individual subjects and how they were currently being delivered. We discovered that there was at least one subject in each semester where journals were able to be incorporated and the ethos of the programme adopted. To allow for ownership of the process, however, we had to concede both the format and the grading policy. We had little difficulty with modifying the format as we had come to realise that while an initial format was necessary (Woodward & Sinclair, 1998) variety was also useful. We had more difficulty, however, with the notion of grading the journals. The realisation that this could change both the content and the purpose of the reflection, led to many discussions with the final result being that the journals were ungraded in first and sixth semester but graded in all other semesters. The portfolios, after consultation with staff and students, remained ungraded throughout but the actual panel assessment in sixth semester was graded. In an attempt to maintain continuity reflection summary sheets were introduced.

Organising the final assessment and the necessary evidence and resources (Broadfoot, 1995; Shulman, 1994) proved challenging. We had set ourselves an enormous task in fulfilling the expectations both of ourselves and the students in regard to the composition and maintenance of the assessment panels. There is no one way to overcome the time consuming task of acquiring then preparing and supporting the panel members. Fortunately we have faculty staff who are committed to the programme and see the value of such a venture, hence the exercise continues.

Conclusion

To date, research (Lowe, 1994; Sinclair & Woodward, 1997, 1998; Woodward & Sinclair, 1998) supports the value and potential of both the reflective journals and the portfolios. It reinforces the issues of introducing a format, continuing the process over the full three years and the ongoing refinement of both the process and the product.

The use of reflective journals and portfolios as learning and assessment experiences has been in place at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur for six years. The current three-year Bachelor of Teaching course is at present being upgraded to a four-year Bachelor of Education. In initiating the changes involved, student reflection and portfolios came to the fore with the insistence by the faculty staff that they remain in the new course. Improvement in continuity will be investigated and the reflective thread will be pre-ordained and integral to the philosophy of the course. With the reduction in time, variety of assessment is being researched but little change will be occurring in regard to the portfolio assessment as evaluations show that many students
commented on how the developing of their portfolio and the use of reflection was the most valuable process they had encountered during the entire programme. It helped them discover personal qualities they were hitherto unaware of and gave them a new perception of both themselves personally and the learning processes they had embodied during the programme. It helped them discover who they were, what they knew, what they could do and what they were like as individuals and as prospective teachers. A true union of assessment and learning.

Note on Contributor

HELEN WOODWARD is a senior lecturer at University of Western Sydney Macarthur in the Faculty of Education. She is Head of Primary Education and is deeply involved in the development and implementation of several primary education programmes. Assessment has been of both research and practical interest for some years. She has written one book on assessment, and has another pending, has written articles and presented at conferences for national and international audiences and has worked with educators across the world in establishing assessment programmes and strategies for students from primary school through to higher education. Correspondence: Helen Woodward, University of Western Sydney Macarthur, P.O. Box 555, Campbelltown 2560, Australia. Tel: 61 2 97729297. Fax: 61 2 977290639. E-mail: h.woodward@uws.edu.au

REFERENCES


Appendix 1.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL SUMMARY

Name

Please fill out this self evaluation and keep it in a safe place with your portfolio in readiness for In-School Semester.

Think back through your Reflective Journals for this semester in the Subject Orientation To Learning and Teaching and comment on the following in terms of your own learning.
H. Woodward

1. Make three statements about noteworthy events you have experienced this semester that relate to teaching and learning.
2. What do you perceive as your strengths as you work towards being a teacher?
3. What concerns do you still have?
4. What steps do you want to take next as you work towards being a teacher?

Appendix 2

ATTRIBUTES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Criteria

Content of Teaching
Items that show you:

a. Have an understanding of the KLA’s, (Key Learning Areas) with specific emphasis on English and Maths.
b. Have an understanding of how students develop and how they learn.
c. Recognise and are able to meet the individual learning needs of all students in regard to at least four of the following:
   - Gender;
   - Gifted and talented students;
   - Aboriginal students;
   - Students with disabilities or behaviour disorders;
   - Students from low socio-economic backgrounds;
   - Students living in isolated areas;
   - Students with different learning potential.
d. Are well informed about the purposes, nature and uses of a wide variety of assessment strategies;
e. Are aware of and have developed the capacity to use new information technologies for teaching and learning in educational contexts;

Practice of Teaching
Items that show you are able to:

a. Plan and programme effectively.
b. Use the English language to communicate clearly and effectively, both in oral and written forms, in a range of roles and contexts relating to teaching and learning.
c. Establish a classroom learning environment which is:
   - orderly and purposeful;
   - interesting and challenging;
   - conducive to learning;
d. Develop a wide range of teaching strategies by:
   - effective structuring of learning tasks;
   - motivating and engaging students;
   - evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of a teaching programme and its delivery;
e. Reflect critically on their teaching practices.
Professionalism
Items that show you:

a. Appreciate the collegial nature of teachers’ work and be able to work as a member of a team.
b. Have knowledge of the framework of laws and regulations that affect teachers’ work.
c. Have knowledge of current educational issues that affect teachers’ work.
d. Can be creative and flexible.
e. Exhibit self-criticism and self-discipline.
f. Recognise and develop an understanding of the students’ home environment as an essential contribution to the students’ learning.

Ethics
Items that show you:

a. Believe that all students have a capacity to learn and should be treated justly and equitably.
b. Understand that teachers have a responsibility for their students’ well-being.

**Description**

What counts when it comes to assessing children? What is it that assessment procedures are attempting to find out and what is the purpose and implications of the current assessment practices within the education system? These are but a few of the questions being asked by educators about assessment. If we are to make any progress in this field there is a great deal of work to be completed. Work not just on the procedures themselves but also on the underlying principles and purposes of the many types of assessment and the effect of the arising issues on the curriculum. If this task is not accomplished we will traverse the same paths taken by many before us and finish up being a follower not a leader in the field of educational assessment.

This paper examines the many purposes of assessment, the way assessment influences curriculum and the value of assessment carried out by the teachers and children (insiders) as against assessment carried out by external agencies, for example the Department of Education and Training (outsiders). It discusses the relationship between curriculum and assessment when changes occur in either or both of these practices and the influences that impinge on teaching quality and learning outcomes.

Overseas research combined with national and local knowledge will put into perspective many of the assessment issues currently being debated across the world. Proposals for possible ways forwards are considered as the issues of reliability,
accountability, standards and learning are carefully examined so that we can be at the forefront of assessment and make an impact on education in the future.

**Reflections**

I have always favoured qualitative assessment and have written much on the topic as well as having devised programs that implemented qualitative procedures. Most of my work to date had been on authentic (qualitative) assessment with little attention being paid to quantitative procedures, so I decided to investigate the literature and critiques of these modes of assessment. This paper is the result of this investigation where I attempted to look at both qualitative and quantitative assessment methodologies. This piece of writing finished up with a negative bias showing the down side of a variety of assessment procedures including the much studied portfolios. I presented this paper at the Australian Council of Education Conference in 1998 with some positive reactions to my conclusions.

I was not particularly satisfied with the stance this paper took but considered it as a learning opportunity and tried to keep an open mind on the variety of assessment strategies it discussed. It appears that not many people are taken seriously when they discuss the social and cultural bias of the Basic Skills test. The education system believe these tests are just, well prepared and important. I noticed in the local newspaper recently that a school was given an award for the most improved Basic Skills Test scores. What does this say about the beliefs of our education system? At the conference where I presented this paper I challenged one of the members of the state education system as to the validity of the tests in regard to our multi cultural
community. It was clear she was not receptive to these ideas and had difficulty in understanding the concepts involved.

**Action:** To rethink my inclination towards qualitative assessment and try to redirect my thinking back into areas where I might make a difference.

**Epilogue:** Portfolios and reflective self assessment again became the prime focus of my work.
Australian College of Education

1998 National Conference

Education: Who really counts?

27 - 30 September, 1998

CANBERRA

Insider versus Outsider Assessment in Schools.

Are we going to follow or are we going to lead?

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Abstract

What counts when it come to assessing children? What is it that assessment procedures are attempting to find out and what is the purpose and implications of the current assessment practices within the education system? These are but a few of the questions being asked by educators about assessment. If we are to make any progress in this field there is a great deal of work to done not just on the procedures themselves but also on the underlying principles and purposes of the many types of assessment and the effect of the arising issues on the curriculum, otherwise we will traverse the same paths taken by many before us and finish up being a follower not a leading in the field of educational assessment.

This paper will examine the many purposes of assessment, the way assessment influences curriculum and the value of assessment carried out by the teachers and children (insiders) as against assessment carried out by external agencies, for example the Department (outsiders). It will also discuss the relationship
between curriculum and assessment when changes occur in either or both of these practices and the influences that impinge on teaching quality and learning outcomes.

Overseas research combined with national and local knowledge will put into perspective many of the assessment issues currently being debated across the world. Proposals for possible ways forward will be considered as the issues of reliability, accountability, standards and learning will be carefully examined so that we can be at the forefront of assessment and make an impact on education in the future.

Assessment is a very complex issue. For over hundreds, indeed thousands of years (Athanasou, 1997) many and various notions as to how to assess and what to assess have been debated and now in the latter stages of the twentieth century the debate continues. How this debate is played out and the influences it will have on assessment, needs to be considered when examining the position of the various players and the particular view each hold in relation to the purposes of assessment.

This paper will examine the many purposes and forms of assessment, the way assessment influences curriculum and the value of assessment carried out by the teachers and children (insiders) as against that carried out by external agencies, for example the government (outsiders). Possible ways forward will be considered as the issues of reliability, accountability, standards and learning are examined. We, as educators, must be at the forefront of assessment and make an impact on education in the future otherwise we will traverse the same paths taken by many before us and finish up being a follower not a leader in the field of educational assessment.

Purposes and forms of assessment

The purposes of educational assessment in schools seem to be clear and well explored in that the many definitions available point to assessment being the collection of data for the purpose of promoting learning. On closer examination all is not as it seems. A reading of the plethora of literature available exposes a variety of hidden purposes (e.g. Broadfoot, 1995; Gipps, 1995; Masters, 1997). Some of these are:

- to assess teacher’s ability to teach;
- to rate the school’s progress from time to time;
- to compare one school with another;
- to compare one child with another;
- to give data for funding purposes and
to chart typical patterns of learning.

Some of these are laudable but some are spurious. Primarily most educators, however, understand the need to develop adequate assessment procedures so that ‘best performance’ (Gipps 1994b) of the children in our schooling systems may be assessed to better accommodate their learning.

While acknowledging the various purposes of assessment two basic forms have predominated over the past century: formative assessment and summative assessment. The Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) in England in 1988 extended the notion of two forms to four by adding diagnostic assessment and evaluative assessment. As reported in Broadfoot (1995) diagnostic assessment identified individual student’s strengths and weaknesses; formative assessment gave feedback and encouragement; summative assessment reported on a given student’s attainment at a given stage of schooling; and evaluative assessment provided aggregated information about the overall level of student achievement in any particular school, as a basis for comparing one school with another. In comparing these forms with the assessment procedures implemented in our school systems it seems that there is confusion as to who is doing what. In New South Wales, for example, the government claims that the Basic Skills test is diagnostic, summative and evaluative leaving formative assessment to the classroom teacher. Many would argue that teachers do much more than formative assessment. Does this mean there is an overlap between the two assessing parties and if so are the results congruent or diverse? Are both sets of results accurate and useful or is there a distinct line between the outsider and the insider assessments, each serving their own purposes? On the above definitions of the forms of assessment it would seem that any outside system could, at best, focus on the evaluative side of assessment and let the teachers assess diagnostically, formatively and summatively. This is particularly evident when the assessments delivered by the outsiders are usually one off periodic tests that cannot reflect the progress, the ongoing needs and strengths of each child as does the continual ongoing classroom assessments carried out by the teachers. This dichotomy will be explored later in this paper.

Radnor and Shaw (1995), however, divide assessment in yet another way. Basing their ideas on formative and summative assessment they developed integrated formative assessment, structured deliberate formative assessment, snap-short summative assessment and formal structured summative assessment. Integrated formative assessment is assessment where no specific assessment instruments were used to disrupt the teaching and learning flow with teachers forming judgements about the students’ ability through observation and response to tasks set. Structured deliberate formative assessment concentrates on helping students during the process of learning. It is supportive, identifying weaknesses in learning capabilities through consciously engaging teachers and students together in assessment activities with the purpose of helping students achieve set learning tasks. Snap-short summative assessment, on the other hand, sums up where the student is ‘at’ in a particular area or aspect of learning while formal structured summative assessment goes beyond the confines of the teacher-student relationship in the classroom to the use of a common assessment instrument that can be used by a number of teachers to assess their students in different classrooms or in fact in different schools. Again this final domain is one that arguably could be used by the ‘outsider’ agencies leaving the former three to the classroom teacher and the students. Notice is made however of the narrowness of the parameters of this assessment in that while it includes students, the focus is on completion of tasks not on learning processes.
assessment. This leaves space for outside agencies to dominate and in fact dictate how and what we should assess. Hence little credence is given to the value of insider (teacher and student) knowledge of the processes involved in assisting students learning through worthwhile assessment.

Educators (eg. Broadfoot, 1995; Drewsbru, 1998; Campbell-Hill, 1998; Gipps, 1994; Woodward 1993) are continually making the connections between assessment and learning in that one is inoperative without the other. Valuable assessment assists deep learning and well structured learning promotes sound assessment. Under this premise learning is active therefore assessment must be active. What is assessed should be greatly influenced by what is ‘taught’.

Influences of Assessment on the Curriculum

It is a common assertion that the ‘assessment tail tends to wag the curriculum dog’ (Wilson 1975) and that traditional forms of assessment ie. pen-and-paper tests, have a restricting effect on the curriculum. As Torrance (1995, p145) comments this can lead teachers to coach their students in a narrow range of skills rather than encouraging them to teach broader range of higher-order competencies and understandings. Assessment also is seen, at times, as a way to change curriculum and in fact the National Curriculum assessments in the UK, were introduced to try to impact directly on what was taught in schools and how it was taught. This, however, can have a negative as well as a positive affect as there is an argument by educationalists [for example Popham, (1987)] that measurement should drive instruction. But the relationship between measurement and learning in questionable as a student’s growth is not relative to the number of times, or the way in which he or she is measured. Teaching to the test is another way assessment can have a negative and narrowing affect on curriculum but as Torrance (1995, p155) points out most educational arguments involve a call for the use of more demanding ‘authentic’ assessments rather than even more multiple choice testing. Torrance states that changes in assessment and especially public examinations impact most positively on curriculum and teaching methods when the intention that they should do so is made explicit and when teachers have an active role in the test development process. He goes on to say, however, that there is no straight forward mechanic relationship between assessment and curriculum. Just because poor assessment can narrow the curriculum and depress standards it does not follow that better assessment will automatically enhance the curriculum and raise standards. Unfortunately the same must be said about teaching. More or better curriculum will not guarantee better teaching and while the influence of assessment on the curriculum and teaching is evident, change in any one of these features will not ensure change in the others unless specific pathways are developed to scaffold those involved in the inherent changes.

Assessment practices.

There are many and varied assessment practices in the field of education. Broadly speaking they come under two banners, qualitative and quantitative. They could equally be categorised as formal and
informal or formative and summative or a combination or extension of any of these as discussed earlier. The most important feature, however, with any of these practices, is that the data collected must be accurate and useful. The next question to ask then, is useful to whom? This opens up yet another issue - that of audience. Who is the assessment for and how does this impinge on the assessment practice itself?

There are a variety of audiences who need to use the data from assessment. These include teachers, students, parents and carers, the school, the education system, the community and the work force. All have different purposes. All have different expectations. There has been much written about disparate assessment practices and how they 'fit' perceived purposes but with each audience having a different view on what is they think is useful, diverse assessment practices need to be investigated to ascertain both their accuracy and usefulness. It should be noted that many educationalists (eg. Burke 1992, Drummond 1994, Gipps 1995, Woodward 1993) believe that no matter which assessment practices are used assessment should never be debilitating. It should never set students up to fail or learn that they have failed. It should always give the stakeholders (including the student) the understanding of what the student knows and can do and where she or he is going. Vygotsky (1978) states that sound assessment shows, for example, that what a student can do with assistance today she or he will be able to do by him or herself tomorrow. Assessment must record this development. It must show best performance. Development is not negative, it is positive and so sound assessment should show what each student knows, can do and is like. The teacher's expertise will show where that particular student needs to go next.

With the many changes that are being instituted in the education systems there is a deal of confusion as to which practices demonstrate best performance or fit which purposes. In an endeavour to unravel some of this confusion several modes of assessment practice will be discussed. These will basically fall into three groups: authentic, conventional and developmental assessment. These groupings are useful for the purposes of this discussion but not exclusive in that the lines of delineation are somewhat blurred as will be demonstrated throughout the paper.

**Authentic Assessment**

Many educators have resisted the use of the term authentic assessment and have used performance assessment, course work assessment or school-based assessment. In spite of this resistance authentic and performance assessment have become the most well used terms in discussion of this type of assessment. Some texts use them interchangeably while others use them to delineate difference.

There are many definitions of authentic assessment (eg. Burke, 1992; Torrance, 1995; Wiggins; 1993). Terwilliger (1997) states that "school reform advocates argue that 'authentic' assessments are complex performances of exhibitions that are designed to be truly representative of performance in the field" (p 24). For the purposes of this paper the term authentic assessment will be defined as being real-life assessment experiences that reflect knowledge, competencies, attitudes and values which are necessary for life long learning. Whatever terminology is used the basic tenet of this mode of assessment is that the students are able to demonstrate what they know, can do and are like in situations that resemble life experiences or simulations thereof. Such demonstrations lead to understanding of the strengths and needs.
of the students and in this way is diagnostic, allowing the teacher to plan and develop programs that best fit the needs of the students. It is more than monitoring happenings in the classroom, it is productively planning and contextually assessing the experiences to ensure analysis of accurate and useful information. While there is still much to learn about the processes involved the resulting data is powerful and beneficial to all audiences.

So that these assessments may be harnessed and recorded such strategies as portfolio, observation and anecdotal records, projects, performances, interviews, journals, student self-assessment and work samples are used. The emanating data gives an extensive view of the students progress. It shows where the individual student is "at", at any one time and will give the stakeholders involved a clear picture of the learning that still needs to be achieved. As this data draws from a number of sources, over a period of time and is contextually based it is seen as reliable. Other researchers, such as Baker & O'Neill, 1994; Terwilliger 1997, dispute this. This approach seems relatively simple but indeed it is not. Many examples of authentic assessment show that there still is much to learn about this mode of assessment. There is little use collecting assessment data if it does not assess what it has been designated to assess. An example of this is often seen in portfolios where, to have a recordable piece of work, worksheets are used. Many times the completion of these sheets does not demonstrate the perceived outcome, for example, in mathematics when a worksheet is used to demonstrate such concepts as heat, mass, and capacity. In other words the validity can be questionable. At other times the outcomes set are not worthwhile but become demonstration of trivial mastery instead of application of concepts. While portfolio is an excellent strategy there is still much to be learnt about how best to collect the data, what is to be recorded and what are the contents of the portfolio is telling us about the individuals progress.

Observation and the subsequent anecdotal records is one of the most common assessment practices used in classrooms. Teachers are very observant and diligent in this practice resulting in a comprehensive understanding of each student's development. Again there is a need for further development of this strategy to increase its validity. As Harste (1991, p.20) notes when someone said to Piaget "I know what I see". Piaget’s answered: "No, you see what you know." In order for observation to be useful, increasingly teachers have to extend their knowledge and understanding of learning, the curriculum and the social and cultural contexts of the students in the classroom. Equity issues also need to be addressed as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds influence what is being observed and what there is to observe. Difficulties also arise when debating what type of learning is observable. Wolf (1989) and Goncz. Hager & Athanasou (1993) believe, for example, that competence cannot be observed directly. It can only be inferred from performance. Hence the need for multiple observations by different people in a variety of contexts and a range of strategies that allow for multiple data collection methodologies to increase reliability and ensure validity.

While there are many different strategies that come under the banner of authentic assessment the one that gets very little recognition, in terms of either research or literature, is student self-assessment. In recent research (Woodward 1989), teachers were asked about including students in assessment. Most teachers felt that the students would not know “what to look for”. The idea that students, given the responsibility and the circumstance, would actually know things about their learning that no one else could know is slowly beginning to gain recognition as a vital part of assessment. This issue of interaction with the students in regard to their learning is not only valid but essential if we are to obtain a complete picture of each child’s growth.

One of the basic tenets of authentic assessment has to be the teaching and learning processes that are
carried out in the classroom. These are fundamental to its success as trivial or ritualistic classroom events that are not supported by worthwhile outcomes will not allow valid and reliable assessment performances to occur. This process points towards a strong connection between assessment, curriculum and learning but the same issues of validity and reliability, as were discussed earlier, still emerge. A change in assessment will not necessarily ensure a change in curriculum but the two do go hand in hand and must be addressed in tandem.

Conventional Assessment

Again much has been written about what some call conventional or traditional assessment (e.g. Athanasou, 1997; Broadfoot, 1995; Gipps, 1994a; Shepard 1989). Issues such as standardized tests, norm referencing, measurement, multiple-choice, true/false, pen-and-paper tests, mental ages, intelligence quotient and reading ages are all part of this tradition. They stem from an understanding that all things can be measured or reduced to a numerical form. Averages, means, z-scores and t-tests are commonly used words in this mode of assessment. The main purposes of this assessment seems to be to compare one student with another, reduce what has been learned to the lowest common denominator, compare schools across a wide area and to make judgements about students’ current levels. Wright (1998) contends that as there is one standard measure to measure capacity, length and height so there should be one measure to measure learning, for example, reading. The notion that learning can be reduced to a single numerical entity is an arguable point. As with any published test issues such as the age of the test, the relationship of the correlated group to the group being tested and the validity of the content of the test in relation to current curriculum must be considered.

While teachers give end of unit tests, quizzes and the like it is recognised that these are content based demonstrating knowledge of or about a particular entity. These tests are seen as useful but again care must be taken that the test actually gives the student opportunity to demonstrate best performance. An example of this is the assumption that because a student can get the answer correct in a mathematical algorithm that he or she knows and understands the concepts behind that process and can transfer them across to a variety of circumstances. Similarly if the student gets the answer incorrect the assumption is that they do not know or understand the concept. Because this type of assessment has a long history and the 'new' assessment practices are becoming more predominant, there is a fear that perceived "perfectly useful and appropriate assessment methods will be discarded in the rush to adopt a variety of other techniques of unknown psychometric and educational quality" (Terwilliger 1997, p24).

There has been much open debate about the value of psychometrics in the field of assessment. Psychometric testing, traditionally, is considered the ultimate, the norm, the correct way by some but Wolf, Bixby, Glenn & Gardner (1991) argue that:

the impact of psychometrics goes beyond the specifics of item design and test construction to a broader range of implications: the emphasis on relative ranking, rather than actual accomplishment; the privileging of easily quantifiable displays of skills and knowledge; the assumption that individual performances, rather than collaborative forms of cognition are powerful indicators of educational progress and the notion that evaluating education progress is a matter of scientific measurement. (1991, p.14)
Broadfoot (1992, p69) argues for abandoning "carefully designed, objective assessment techniques in favour of approaches that will 'promote the right kinds of educational processes, however suspect psychometrically such approaches may be'".

While the issue of inequities in regard to gender, ethnicity and socio economic status are argued as problems with authentic assessment (Baker & O'Neill 1994) they are of even more obvious concern within the psychometric framework. Tasks within an authentic assessment framework are, according to Baker and O'Neill, "likely to appeal to the majority culture and will also, more probably be represented in assessment with comparative and accountability purposes. In such an event the impact on the disadvantaged student is likely to be negative" (p. 16). They state that with psychometric tests "everyone gets the 'same' test. Scoring is standardised and not subject to particular prejudices. The scorer's ethnicity, for instance, is a matter of great indifference for traditional tests" (p. 24). It would seem that while the gender or ethnicity of the scorer is not a problem, the very nature of the tests dictates that the students taking the test are all the same, that their social and cultural background are irrelevant. It indicates that equity means the same for everyone when indeed fairness can mean difference. This notion of equity leads to the belief that education has to be the same for everyone, that it has to be comparable, that context does not matter and that to equate learning, every child must be ranked and compared.

Somehow this is supposed to give educators useful information about the individual student’s learning.

While there are some instances where psychometric tests may be seen as pragmatic, for example ranking seven, 10 and 13 year olds across the state in some aspects of literacy and maths, the validity of this process and the value of it to the individual student is doubtful. Gipps (1994b) states "assessment [formative] is a powerful tool for developing and for boosting pupil's confidence and motivation" (p.289). While:

> assessment for summative, comparative purposes which ranks students and is high stakes can, and should, be restricted to the final year of compulsory schooling since the purpose of this assessment is usually to sort students for competitive entry to higher and further education; there is no educational justification for carrying out ranking and comparative grading at any stage below this (p 290).

**Developmental Assessment**

As the name denotes this mode of assessment is designed to show development of the students. According to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) developmental assessment is the monitoring of student achievement against an explicit framework of developing knowledge, skills and understandings. In development assessment, an attempt is made to construct a framework for describing and monitoring progress which is larger and more important than any particular test or method of collecting evidence of student achievement. It attempts to move away from the practice of comparing students with other students, to the practice of mapping the development of individual students.
The frameworks used are developmental continua, progressions of development in competence, progress maps, benchmarks, profile strands and stages. These frameworks attempt to capture, in words and examples, what it means to make progress or to 'improve' in an area of learning. They provide teachers with a shared understanding of the nature and development across the years of schooling, and are a basis for monitoring individual progress from year to year. They also provide a frame of reference for setting standards of performance ie. desired or expected levels of achievement.

This mode of assessment promises to be of great advantage as it is developed across all grades and in all curriculum areas. Already some states in Australia have put such frameworks into action but implementation is relatively new. While it is ideal to have such a set of instruments and while the theory behind their development is interesting there is a complication in the understanding of both their purpose and their value to many students and teachers in the schools systems. These frameworks attempt to tread the middle ground between the two extremes of authentic and conventional assessment. They boast validity through various procedures and well documented research. But the question remains what do they tell us and for what purpose are they designed. While these frameworks reportedly demonstrate the progress of students over a period of time they also map paths of typical progress (Masters & Foster, 1997), and are a description of learning typically achieved by students (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). The issue of 'typical' is of concern. All those who teach know that there is very little that is 'typical' in the Australian schools. These frameworks in fact promote the idea of sameness not of uniqueness. While they are focusing on progress this is only for the students who fit the 'mould' and as Baker and O'Neill (1994) have stated previously this is probably the majority culture leaving the minorities outside the established framework. There is no allowance for those who deviate from the 'norm'. Those who by way of culture, learning patterns or individual differences may not fit the framework will be disadvantaged and set up for failure. While emphasis is placed on individual progress, Master and Foster (1997 p.7) state that in some classrooms teachers make displays of progress maps and place them on the classroom walls for students to see and discuss. And they claim that this assessment mode is non-competitive? What happens to the students who make little recorded progress? Some of the other issues that arise in this mode of assessment are that of estimating where the student is up to ie. 'on-balance' estimates of student's location. The notion of averaging out progress to get a finite place is fraught with difficulty. Progress can be camouflaged as a student progresses in one area but moves slowly or retreats in another. The bands on the continua are so broad, and, as in the NSW English K-6 were one stage covers approximately eighteen 'typical' months, progress could show up as being minimal when in fact it has been quite the opposite in a particular area for that particular student.

The strategies for collecting the data for the frameworks is similar to that for authentic assessment i.e. observation, portfolios, projects, performances with the addition of pen-and-paper tests. All these strategies have the same difficulties no matter which assessment mode they represent but the of gravest concern is that nowhere was there mention of student self-assessment or the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. One final difficulty that must be mentioned is the high probability of the frameworks being reduced to a checklist with an assessment grade therefore giving the teachers little feedback as to the needs of the individual students and reducing learning to a numeric value.

**Insider and Outsider assessment.**

So which out of these three assessment modes belong to either the insider or the outsider mode of assessment? Clearly, authentic assessment lies in the domain of the insider. It is carried out in the classroom by those involved in the classroom procedures, the teachers and the children. Conventional
assessment lies to the other extreme and while it is sometimes used by the teacher it is the common domain of the outsiders, the government and other external agencies. As stated earlier, developmental assessment has tried to straddle the gulf between both the authentic and the conventional. It has been developed by outsiders, drawing on research from within the school systems. It is for both the teachers and the 'government' but is driven by outsider agendas.

In terms of the purposes of assessment (TGAT, 1988) authentic assessment is diagnostic, formative and summative. Conventional assessment is evaluative and when used by teachers as end of unit test and the like it can be summative. Developmental assessment is formative and summative with possibilities of evaluative, given the political agenda and the probability of it being rationalised in a numeric manner. It would seem that all bases are covered. It would seem, if all this assessment is carried out, that the job will be well done. But that is not the case. There are so many consequences of these assessments and many of them are detrimental to the students, time consuming for the teachers and costly for the government. Many students still slip through their schooling, unnoticed and with low motivation and self esteem due to some of the current assessment procedures.

Radnor and Shaw (1994) state that the insider teacher view is founded in a 'holistic view of each of their students, their concern is for a fair and equitable assessment of student achievement' (p.136). The outsider orientation, however, is towards placing a value on the attainment and achievement of students based on a single piece of evidence leading towards ranking. They further state that the insider is involved in a student-based process-to-product continuum with the individual student central to his or her concerns. The outsider is involved with product to product continuum with comparability of students central to his or her concerns.

A Way Forward.

Initially I was of the opinion that the government should get on with running the country and let teachers and students get on with doing assessment in the schools. I since have realised that there is a need for the monitoring of assessment procedures. This process is not so that teachers can be checked on or that schools can be placed on 'league tables'. It is to assist teachers, parents and students in understanding the learning development of the individual student. There is an obligation for the insider and the outsider to pool their resources and assist in developing assessment. Its purpose is not to inspect teachers or schools but to promote learning within the schools. Before this can happen there has to be the development of a trust amongst those involved. The outsiders have to realise that the teachers are not purposely biased or 'slack' in their teaching and assessing. Teachers need support and continual input (not in the form of more curriculum documents) about learning and teaching development and assessment strategies that will promote sound learning in their classrooms. The insiders must understand that the students in their classroom can benefit if they better understand what is happening in the broader world.

Already there have been some steps toward this end. Raynor and Shaw (1995) discuss moderation of assessment tasks through interaction between the outsiders and the insiders by recognising fundamental tensions and bringing together the expertise and knowledge of both groups. While the insiders have local knowledge and experience, the outsiders have knowledge from broader contexts and can act as a reference group should issues, for example funding for special needs, arise. Care must be taken that the procedure does not fall into a deficit model of distrust, fear or uncertainty.
Any one person could be both an outsider and an insider. An insider in their own context and an outsider assisting someone else. This notion is very powerful in that it values those involved for their expertise and is not unlike the co-researcher model described in Woodward (in press). Masters and Forster (1997) looked at involving teacher’s in their research when they were working with the developmental assessment continuums but they found them unreliable markers. This phenomena was due to the split purpose of the activity. Masters and Forster felt teacher’s expertise would be valuable but it was obvious that the teachers up-graded the scores because they did not want to feel they were failing in their teaching. In another instance the Department of Education and Training in NSW has trained and used teachers to mark the writing component of the year seven English Language and Literacy Assessment. The teachers have found this to be a worthwhile venture and while they bring an amount of knowledge to the process they also learn from it. The motive behind the entire assessment procedures, however, still needs to be considered before adequate trust and reliability can be developed. At the local school level parents are often part of the assessment procedure with the advent of student led conferences and at university level the interaction between the schools and the university in portfolio assessment is but yet another example.

We must be aware of the danger of becoming complacent about these issues as there seems to be many pertinent practices in place. There is still, however, an air of distrust between some of the stakeholders, the teachers and the government, and there are still uncertainties about the purposes of assessment. Until these issues are sorted out and the government seriously reconsiders the purposes of its assessment agenda, little will change. Student assessment is to promote student learning not to assess teaching. League tabling of schools is not a valuable process as already has been recognised in research from USA and Canada (Gipps 1995). More needs to be done for the common good of all students not just the mainstream majority with the name of equity being nominalised as sameness. Teachers need to be valued for what they know and what the do but they need assistance and support. Yes, it will cost but the amount of money spent on assessment at the national and state level without visible change in real terms could be better spent on setting up moderating teams and reducing class sizes so that useful assessment can become a reality and not just a figment of our imagination. Recognising these possibilities give us the opportunity to be the leaders in this field; a shift that must substitute ‘responsibility’ for ‘accountability’; a step that will ensure useful assessment is at the forefront of education.

References


**Description**

Reflective journal writing has been on the agenda for many Teacher Education programs for some time but is reflection ‘caught’ or ‘taught’? Reflection within preservice programs, particularly when connected with practicum, has attracted an amount of comment as teacher educators grapple with the difficulties of how to implement reflective journal writing.

This paper focuses on aspects of the nature of reflection, the use, application and limitations of reflective journals and the implementation of reflective journals at University of Western Sydney Macarthur. It discusses the place of reflection in teacher education and the issues involved in instituting such an intangible as reflection. It also details the process we have developed at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, reinforcing the premise that reflection has to be purposeful and productive and as such has to be taught.

**Reflections**

As work continued with the reflective journals there appeared to be a continual question arising. Do students need to be taught how to be reflective? ‘Surely this destroys the whole ethos of reflection’ was the oft heard retort. While we agreed in principle, it had become obvious over the years of our experience with reflective journals that indeed the art of reflection had to be taught, just as self assessment has to be taught.
Several times since we wrote this paper I have had occasion to reinforce this issue of teaching reflection. I have since read that others following different processes have come to the same conclusion. Confirmation of one's knowledge is important as it enables one to move onto the next issue.

**Action:** To continue to look at different processes of reflection so as to broaden the possibility of a comfortable fit between the processes offered and the students learning to reflect.

**Epilogue:** In 1999 an alternative process was introduced to the third year students. It will be interesting to see their reactions and their reflections.
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REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING: CAN STUDENT TEACHERS BE TAUGHT TO BE REFLECTIVE?

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Introduction

Reflective journal writing has been on the agenda for many teacher education programs for some time, but is reflection "caught" or "taught"? Reflection within preservice programs, particularly when connected with practicum, has attracted an amount of comment as teacher educators grapple with the difficulties of how to implement reflective journal writing.

Traditional practicum experiences, for example, have been criticised for failing to actualise student teacher learning, as student teachers merely imitate the attitudes and teaching practices of their supervising teachers during school experiences (Cruickshank and Armaline, 1986; McIntyre, 1980; Zeichner, 1989). Such unquestioning imitation, it is suggested, results in conformity and a maintenance of the status quo in school practices, including the same type of teaching, whether good or bad (Baker, Burman and Jones, 1988; Battersby and Ramsay, 1989; Kane, 1992; Regan, 1989; Tinning, 1984; Wedman, 1985; Zeichner, 1986). Reflection, and in particular reflective journal writing, has the potential to overcome this situation as well as to enable integration of the theoretical and practical aspects of initial teacher education. Theory-practice relationships then may be articulated and become based upon sound educational theory, the lack of which also had been criticised in the research literature (Koop, 1991; Price, 1987; Turney, Cairns, Ellis, Hatton, Thew, Towler and Wright 1982, Zeichner, 1989).

This article focuses upon aspects of the nature of reflection, the use, application and limitations of reflective journals, and the implementation of reflective journals at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. It will discuss the place of reflection in teacher education and the issues involved in instituting such an intangible concept as reflection.

Aspects of the Nature of Reflection

Literature on reflection and reflective practices is prolific and dates back to Dewey (1933). Some educators (Ferguson, 1989; Liston and Zeichner, 1987; Morine-Dershimer, 1989; Calderhead, 1989) acknowledged that reflection is a difficult goal to achieve, but as Leinon (1993) contends, "teacher as reflective professional has been a very powerful metaphor in the research of teacher education for more than a decade" (p. 2).

Schon (1983, p.19) argued that, in the professions, confusion surrounds reflection because of lack of deliberate ways of "...describing or accounting for the artful competence which [some] practitioners sometimes reveal in what they do". Many educational writers (Schon, 1983; Smyth, 1986; Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1988; Smith and Lovat, 1990) have commented on the relationship between reflection and knowledge. For instance, Smyth (1986) stated that:

We possess knowledge of which we are unaware - our knowing is enmeshed in our doing. It is when we are confronted by the surprising or the puzzling that we begin to think and describe the circumstances of our work and as a consequence realise the depth and richness of our own understanding, inarticulate though it may be. (p.9)

As educators we must be able to articulate our knowledge and our beliefs. We must not only become aware of our own understanding through describing it in some way, we must reflect on it and discover how it fits into our belief system and what action we are going to take because of it. We must also assist our students in these processes if we are to make optimum use of learning experiences.

Smyth (1986) related reflection to teaching in the following way:
When teachers themselves adopt a reflective attitude towards their teaching, actually questioning their own practices, then they engage in a process of rendering problematic or questionable those aspects of teaching generally taken for granted.

(p13)

So as teacher educators we must assist our students in becoming reflective in order to facilitate their teaching and their students’ learning. Making the connection between reflection and action is not always easy, however. Schon (1993) explained:

Reflection tends to focus interactively on the outcomes of action, the action itself, and the intuitive knowing implicit in the action. (p.56)

Schon is arguing that reflection involves more than the random succession of thoughts through the mind. There must be consequences and actions. Reflection tends to remain private, and actual reflection on action seldom becomes explicit unless specific processes are put in place to encourage this to occur. It is by making thoughts explicit that a greater depth of understanding may occur.

Use, Limitations and Application of Reflective Practices

The use of reflection as a developmental process needs to be well planned. Even when such planning occurs there is a need for monitoring of reflective processes to ensure quality learning and development. Several researchers have developed criteria to assist in this process.

Van Manen (1977), for example, developed an analytic framework to assist with ascertaining levels of the quality of reflections. These levels are:

• technical application of educational knowledge;
• educational goals and principles underlying implementation; and,
• concerns for emancipation and political and economic equity that inform their reflection on classroom practices.

Smyth (1986) simplified this framework to ‘technical, practical and critical’.

Grimmett, Erickson, Mackinnon, and Reiken in Leinko (1993) present three perspectives of reflection, drawing from both van Manen (1977) and Habermas (1974). These are:

• reflection as instrumental mediation of action;
• reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching; and,
• reflection as reconstructing experience. (p. 4)

While Grimmett et al’s perspectives are not necessarily seen as hierarchical, van Manen’s tend to be viewed in this way. Martinez (1990) pointed out, however, “that elements of all levels (of van Manen’s framework) may (and indeed should) be present as characteristics of reflection rather than a strict developmental stage hierarchy” (p.34).

Dobbins (1993) found that the students she studied moved through the levels, operating at three different levels at various times (p.320). Using van Manen’s framework, Dobbins also found that quality of reflection depended on:

• individual differences;
• ability to focus on themselves; and,
• improvement over time (p. 304).

The interrelated nature of these analytical frameworks points to ongoing attempts to harness and judge reflective learning. While there are many definitions of reflection and many methods of implementing reflective practices, Sellars (1992) asserted that “it would be difficult to find a teacher education program in Australia which does not claim to be preparing reflective practitioners” (p.1). The challenge of exploring the issues surrounding student teachers as reflective learners has been taken up in force across the academic world. In teacher education programs, the use of reflective journals has been the most frequently used method of recording reflections. Educational institutions the world over have been implementing ‘reflective’ journals for more than a decade. Some claim to have implemented a reflective journal while others mention log book entries, diary writing or simply personal journals. In some cases journal writing was supported by meetings before and after written reflections (Dobbins 1993; Caffey and Woodward 1993). Dobbins (1993) discovered that journals effectively facilitated student teachers’ reflection about their teaching and learning (p. 313). She found that they proved significant in three aspects. These aspects were:

• a specific focus on learning;
• an opportunity to take a ‘reflection time’; and,
• opportunities to talk about journal entries (p. 313).

Use of reflective journals carries with it the problem of their assessment. If journals are to be mandatory then there has to be recognition of completion, however a general pass/fail is often considered preferable to grading. For example, Allan (1993) emphasised the difficulty of marking a
student’s personal journal due both to the complex nature of reflection and the anticipated role it plays in learning. Hatton (1993) does not believe that journals should be used as assessment items, but still believes that the reflective process and resulting personal development need to be valued. These issues are difficult to resolve.

Yet does “reflective journaling” by student teachers develop more reflective practitioners who do not blindly imitate the attitudes and practices of their supervising teachers? Does keeping a reflective journal encourage the articulation of the theory-practice relationship and result in practice based upon sound educational theory? There is only limited literature on these issues. Further, even though this is seen as a worthwhile practice, there seems to be little literature on the value of written feedback on the students’ reflections, as a method of supporting their development.

Dobbins (1993) comments that reflection is not an end in itself but a means to the end of becoming more reflective practitioners. Allan (1993) noted, however, that “reflective journaling” per se doesn’t guarantee reflection (p. 114). Hatton (1993) supported this notion by commenting that outcomes should carry more emphasis than journals themselves.

Dobbins’ (1993) study clearly demonstrated the potency of journals in facilitating reflection (p. 326), however, and as such should be valued by all concerned. If one of the goals for developing reflective student teachers is to encourage them to become reflective teachers then it is important for all students, not just the industrious few. Consideration of the perceived value of reflective journals suggests therefore that they should be mandatory.

For the purposes of the project described below reflection is considered as enabling students to make explicit the connections between the theoretical underpinnings of pedagogy and the practical application of those theories by problematising issues they want to work on in their own practice or to seek further understanding about as they develop as beginning teachers. As a result of this reflection they will determine appropriate action that may be taken in order to change, remake and if necessary reorder the world in which they operate. In deliberating this action it is intended that reflection be extended beyond contemplation to theory building and practical application.

Reflective Journals

Reflective journal writing has become an integral part of the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur. To encourage reflection, to integrate theory with practice and to overcome the unquestioning imitation of existing school practices, all students enrolled in the degree kept a journal of their experiences throughout its three years. This requirement presented various problems along the way.

Prior to 1992, nearly every subject - and there were many - had the students commenting in a 'journal'. The students were not sure exactly what the difference was between these various journals but they were directed to keep journals, and keep journals they did. Lecturers believed that reflection was an automatic part of this process. On closer examination, it became apparent that the records students kept were far from reflective and indeed were merely diary entries to describe events or activities.

Developing a Framework

Various structures and ideas on reflection including Schon’s (1983) notion of reflection in and on action and Smyth’s (1989) four stage sequential model of describe, inform, confront and reconstruct were investigated. A framework, combining ideas from Schon and Smyth, was developed to initiate the students to the process. The students used a double entry journal (Berthoff 1978) where descriptions of experiences, notes or ideas were entered on the left hand side of the journal. On the right hand side students were asked to write down the positives and negatives about this experience, note or idea. This procedure helped them to confront and make explicit the underlying issues or perspectives. They then constructed a statement that began with “It looks as if...”. Next, they recommended appropriate action following from the situation. Once this process was established and used in the first semester, the students were given a choice of using this structure or developing one of their own in subsequent semesters. There was only one restriction on their own model. This restriction was that it must include the aspect of considering and stating possible action arising from reflection as, according to Smyth (1989), reflection without action is not really reflection at all but just a recording of experiences. Action gives added purpose to the reflection in that it allows students to move forward towards a deeper understanding of their experiences and of the learning involved.
Employing this format, the journal helped capture how new understandings develop and how personal strengths and weaknesses emerge on the basis of judgements made. Their portfolios also provide the opportunity for them to use information, reflections and/or actions derived from their journals as evidence of their personal growth, understanding and learning as they prepare themselves for the teaching profession. In this way, some specific entries in their journals are sufficiently significant to be included in their portfolio.

Students keep all reflective journals until they complete the course. At the end of each semester, each student completes a reflection summary sheet. This summary focuses on:

- new ideas experienced each semester that relate to teaching and learning;
- evident strengths as they work towards being a teacher;
- concerns they still have; and,
- next steps to be taken as they work towards being a teacher.

The journals along with their summaries are used in determining students' personal and professional strengths and concerns as they work to complete the course. It is hoped that this process will carry over into their professional post-initial teacher education lives.

Setting up procedures so reflection can occur is but one part of the overall picture. The other important issue is ensuring that reflection is encouraged within the program itself. As can be seen from the above descriptions of the subjects responsible for the reflective journals, various activities and procedures as put in place so that the students will encounter a range of experience on which to reflect. These experiences, which cover observation, data collection, reading, discussion and practice, are consolidated during workshops and small group interactions. The written reflections are responded to by University staff and then summarised at the end of each semester through the summary sheets mentioned above.

Implementation

During the three years of the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) course a reflective journal is kept by all students. There is only one such journal but it takes several forms. Any other required records such as records of lectures, activities and in-school experiences are kept in a 'log' or a 'diary' relevant to the subject, but, to avoid confusion, the term 'journal' is used exclusively for the reflective journal. The journal can be used in any subject throughout the course. In the first semester of first year, it is introduced in the subject Orientation to Learning and Teaching. This is a school-based subject that gives the students weekly opportunity to observe and explore issues from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. Some examples of issues are 'What is a school?' 'What is a classroom?'. In second semester the subject Curriculum Studies 2 (English and Creative Arts) implements the journal in a slightly different way. Students are expected to focus upon specific 'readings' and reflect on them in terms of their understandings about children's learning. Here the reflections have a different emphasis in that the students are asked to do specific readings and relate these to their experiences with children.

In second year another teaching and learning subject, Foundation Studies 2 takes on reflection through the Theory into Practice journals. These journals have established criteria that assist the students to make further connections in the learning process, translate the theoretical tenets explored during lectures into practical experiences in the schools and reflect upon these connections. Again the focus is on the classroom and the emphasis is on teaching strategies and discipline but with the expectation that the reflections will connect across curriculum to issues arising in other subjects.

In third year, the process changes slightly again in that the subject Integrated Studies utilises the journal to help students explore issues of a more sociological nature. One of the main foci of this subject is the nature of the diverse cultures in our communities and in our schools. Reflection upon issues such as Aboriginality, Multiculturalism, Gender and Socio-Economic Disadvantage assists students to develop the deeper understanding of the diversity of the classrooms they will be experiencing as student teachers and later as qualified teachers. This is of particular importance as the students grapple with many issues that are contrary to their own culture. Dealing with these issues, making them explicit and then reconstructing their own ideas has proved invaluable in promoting understanding of diversity.

In the final semester, the reflective journals are used in In-School Semester. This is the only subject in this semester and, as its name indicates, is embedded in the school context. Students are then able to reflect on the school as a community, the children as learners and their teaching practices.
as they complete the final stages of their study and prepare for their future career. Being in the schools for a prolonged period of time enables the students to put into practice some of the issues they have reconstructed through the action section of their journal.

Assessment of Journals

Assessment of the journals and their mandatory nature of completion caused ethical concerns among the teaching staff. Not all of the staff were convinced of the value of the reflective journal. They saw monitoring and responding in writing to the students' reflections as an additional, unwelcome workload. Tapping into 'journals' that were already in place in some subjects was seen as a way of ameliorating this concern, but then an assessment problem was encountered. Some of these 'journals' were graded - a situation considered above to be inappropriate (e.g. Hatton, 1993). Due to the varying nature of the journals in each subject and the requirements of subject convenors, it was impossible to mandate that all journals should have a pass/fail grade only. Therefore in some semesters (1, 2 and 6) the journal is pass/fail and in the others (3, 4 and 5) it is graded. The actual grading depended on particulars of the subject and the purpose of the journal within that subject. Most frequently the journals are graded on content, not the depth of the reflections.

Other ethical issues that needed to be considered were "Who is the journal for?" and "Who will read it?". It is possible that the perceived audience of reflection will influence the content and restrict honest reflection. Assessment in the form of grades could have a similar effect in that students would be working to a set assessment criteria rather than developing their own learning. These issues have been discussed at length and to date no real consensus has been reached. Hence the first step in our research has been to investigate the students' points of view about the reflective journals so the current process can be refined to better facilitate their learning.

There is still along way to go in our understanding of the value of reflection and its maintenance, with more questions than answers. While the importance of reflection for development of student teachers and the need for them to make sense of their own learning experiences are recognised in the literature, there is a need for further inquiry into how reflective journal writing is best implemented. Does it have to be structured?

Does it have to be taught? What do the students gain from reflection? We at University of Western Sydney Macarthur now believe, after extensive work in the area, that students left to their own devices without direction will not necessarily become reflective. They need to be guided but at the same time they need to be allowed to move freely within their own learning parameters. A difficult balance, but one that must be taken into consideration if reflective journal writing is to be of value to the teaching profession.

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**Description**

As a result of the research begun in 1996 and subsequently published in the *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education* 1 (1) 1997, p50-58 analysis began on student responses to a questionnaire which outlined a sample of the first, second and third year students' views on their propensity to question and reflect. It also examined the processes they undertook and the broad content of their reflective journals, support for and feedback on journal writing by their lecturers. This paper also investigated four critical aspects, 1) the students' consideration of the use of journals in elementary classrooms, 2) the benefits and difficulties they experienced with journal writing, 3) the importance placed on reflection and 4) the perceived impact of journal writing on their professional development.

The major research questions for the study were: How does 'reflective journalling' promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners? How does keeping a reflective journal encourage the articulation of the theory-practice relationship and result in practice based upon sound educational theory?

We are now continuing the research with this current paper pursuing the above research questions to a greater depth. This investigation will be accomplished by analysing a random sample of first year students' reflective journals, lesson feedback sheets from their supervising teachers and practicum final reports in order to consider
the structure, content and level of reflection, and change in reflection content and level over time. It ascertains any connection between their reflective journailling and their professional development as measured by their lesson feedback sheets and practicum reports, and assesses the degree of correlation between the survey data (i.e. what students said they did) with their journals and practicum reports (i.e. what students actually wrote/ did). This research leads to the third section of data (still to be analysed). Here the level of reflection - descriptive, superficial reflection or more deep analytical reflection, will be analysed giving a complete picture of the nature and value of reflective journals within the context of teacher education programs.

Reflections
The research in this paper is stage two of our journal research. The research here has confirmed the value of reflective journals but it seems that some students still need convincing that a reflective 'teacher' is a good teacher. This paper was presented initially at the International Teacher Education Seminar in South Africa and subsequently published in their journal.

It was becoming increasingly apparent that analysing this data was a more substantial project that we had originally envisaged. We had hoped to complete the analysis in this paper but the nature of the level of reflection was still eluding us. Much thought has to be given to the nomination of levels of reflection and the value of this knowledge once it evolves. I actually believe it will help connect the notion of the interdependence of assessment and learning.
Action: To continue to examine the levels of reflection and to establish a framework that will make such an investigation more accessible in future.
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Catherine Sinclair
Helen Woodward

At the International Seminar for Teacher Education in 1996 (ISTE) 1996 and subsequently in the Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education (JISTE) (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997) we began to research how 'reflective journalling' might promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners and how keeping a reflective journal might encourage the articulation of the theory-practice relationship and result in practice based upon sound educational theory. We are now continuing this research to a greater depth by analysing a random sample of first and third year students' reflective journals to consider the content of the reflective journals, change in that content over time and any correlation between the journals (ie what students actually wrote about) and the survey data (ie what students said they wrote about). Journal content was analysed using a NUDIST-type coding system to determine themes arising with possible themes drawn from the research literature.

Results indicated differences between first and third year students on the focus of their journal writing, both in specific topics and the variety of topics selected commensurate with their maturation as they progressed throughout their university studies. Further study is still required before we can confidently link the survey data and journal entries with their impact upon student teacher professional development.

Introduction

The quality of initial teacher education (ITE) has been identified as being of enormous significance in attempts to improve the quality of education in schools (Australian Council of Deans, 1998; Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1993; The New South Wales Ministry of Education, Youth and Women's Affairs, 1990). Within ITE, the practicum, that experiential aspect where first-hand, 'site-based' learning takes place, is regarded as central to effective teacher preparation (The Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools 1989; National Board of Employment, Education and Training, 1989; Schools Council, 1990). Just experiencing schools and classrooms, however, through the practicum, or indeed lectures and tutorials at university is considered insufficient for effective teacher preparation to occur (Cavanaugh, 1993; Gore, 1995; Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, 1994; Zeichner, 1989). Reflection on those experiences, the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends (Dewey, 1933) is thought necessary for the effective development of teachers as reflective practitioners (Calderhead, 1989; Ferguson, 1989; Morine-Dershimer, 1989; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Further, while professional practice (ie teaching) was once assumed to be a matter of applying previously learnt theory, it is now considered more appropriate to start with the new situation itself, systematically inquiring into and learning from it.
Therefore, Bachelor of Teaching (Elementary) student teachers (herein referred to as students) at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (UWS, Macarthur) are involved in inquiry and reflection upon their theoretical and practical learnings and experiences on campus and in schools throughout the three years of their degree. They are encouraged to question taken-for-granted thoughts, feelings and actions, to look beyond what they are observing or are doing in the classroom and consider why it is happening and for whom. Reflection is not considered an end in itself but a means toward developing deeper understandings, ethical judgements and strategic actions; to consider alternative practices and make decisions based on a commitment to all people involved: students, parents and other teachers (Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998).

Researching Reflection

While much of the literature, however, supports the value of reflection and reflective practitioners, and many ITE programs implement reflection in at least some parts of their programs (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997; Smith & Hatton, 1995; Wilson, Hine, Dobbins, Bransgrove & Elferman, 1995), the actual impact upon students is less clear. For example, Allan (1993) noted that, "reflective journalling per se doesn't guarantee reflection" (p. 114) and as Calderhead and Gates (1993) commented:

Reflection has come to be widely recognized as a crucial element in the professional growth of teachers ... It is frequently presumed that reflection is an intrinsically good and desirable aspect of teaching and teacher education, and that teachers, in becoming more reflective, will in some sense be better teachers, though such claims have rarely been subjected to detailed scrutiny. (p. 1)

Earlier research on how 'reflective journalling' might promote the professional growth of students and develop more reflective practitioners reported the results of a survey of first, second and third year students (See Sinclair & Woodward, 1997). We are now continuing the research to a greater depth by analysing the content of a random sample of first and third year students' reflective journals. Students at these year levels are totally free to choose what to reflect upon in their journals with encouragement (but not compulsion) to focus on their practicum experience. Thus their learning is individualised as they focus their reflection upon what is important to them, and take responsibility for their own learning. First year students are instructed in reflection and reflective journalling techniques, being given a particular structure to guide their weekly journal entries. This structure included a description of the idea or event students considered worth reflecting upon, the positive and negative feelings it evoked, an inform and confront section where they wrote what they thought the event may be indicative of and from where their own attitudes about that event arose, and an action section where they proposed action to change the situation or their own practice. Third year students also wrote weekly journal entries but were free to modify the above structure as long as each journal entry included description, reflection and action sections. While the procedures for assessing
journals varies over the three years of the ITE program, all journals scrutinised for this research were graded on a pass/fail basis. One journal entry was written each week (12 in a semester) and this formed approximately 20% of the assessment requirement for the particular subjects studied. Other assignments in these subjects were numerically graded, though successful completion of the practicum was graded pass/fail (for first year students) and pass/fail/pass with merit (for third year students). Students had total ownership of what they wrote but were required to share their reported experiences and reflections with their university professor/mentor who worked with them in campus-based tutorials and practicum experiences.

The sample consisted of 17 first year students, four male and 13 female and 15 third years students, two male and 13 female and is representative of the gender balance across ITE student cohorts at UWS, Macarthur. For the purposes of this research the description section of each journal was analysed to ascertain what students thought was important to write about, whether there was any change in the focus of reflection over time, and if there was any correlation between their reflective journalling (ie what they wrote about) and the survey data (ie what students said they wrote about). For example, what kind of conceptions of schools and schooling, teaching and learning did the students possess and did these change over the semester? Did individual students tend to focus on the same sort of issues in their journals or did they vary and if so how might they vary? Were there differences in the focus for reflection between students in the first semester of the ITE program to those in their final semester?

From the research literature on teacher education student reflection (for example, Calderhead, 1989; Field, 1994; Surbeck, Han & Moyer, 1991; Grow-Maienza & Howard, 1995), a number of possible themes were generated and the focus of each journal entry for each student was coded in accordance with these themes. Any additional themes arising were also added to the coding system. The themes included:

- student's self as a person, student teacher or teacher;
- lesson planning, lesson content, teaching or resources;
- pupils' their backgrounds, relationships with others (including teachers), engagement with the learning tasks or response to teaching/lessons;
- student self-evaluation;
- relationships with others in the school and local community (excluding pupils)- supervising teachers, the practicum school, university professor, their own parents or significant others;
- practicum in general or the university course; and,
- link to theory and educational literature or society in general.

The themes arising from first and third year students' journals are outlined in the next section as are comparisons between these themes and student responses to the survey.
Results

Some comparisons between the first and third year journal content are shown in Tables 1 and 2, and individual students’ journals are then discussed. The results of the descriptive data, the actual text in the journals, and the understandings that emanate from it, is included to add to the depth of the data and to validate the conclusions.

Table 1: Most Frequently Reported Themes from Student Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Students (n=17)</th>
<th>Third Year Student (n=15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching (89)(^a) [with high emphasis on]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teaching (113)(^a) [with high emphasis on]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>Activities (22) Assessment (14) Group Work (11) Classroom Organisation (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour (9)</td>
<td>Classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities (26)</td>
<td>Behaviour (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils (52) [high emphasis on]</td>
<td>Pupils (69) [high emphasis on]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships among pupils (16) with pupils (15)</td>
<td>Beliefs about individual pupils (24) Pupil background (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships With pupils (6) Among pupils (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response to Teacher (7) Lesson (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School (37) [high emphasis on]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools in general (9) Excursions (8) Inservice/staff meetings (7) Events (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University (33) [high emphasis on]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic subjects (12) Assignments (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Self as a Teacher (20)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(^a\) Derived from multiple entries for each student

Table 2: Least Frequently Reported Themes from Student Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Students (n=17)</th>
<th>Third Year Student (n=15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self as a teacher (7)(^a) [some reference to]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self as a student teacher (7)(^a) as they see themselves more as teachers at this stage [some reference to]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing skills (7) Self as a student teacher (6) [some reference to]</td>
<td>Stress (5) Concerns (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy (4) Concerns (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School (6) [some reference to]</td>
<td><strong>Self evaluation (6)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground (4) Advice from school personnel (2)</td>
<td>Planning (5) [Only nominally mentioned—some talk about lessons in various stages eg current lesson, next lesson]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**First Year Students (n=17) Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3 (some reference to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Evaluation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>1 (some reference to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Content</td>
<td>1 (some reference to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Derived from multiple entries for each student

**Most Frequently Reported Themes from Student Journals**

First year students' journals focussed on only one or two topics throughout the entire semester across all entries. Discipline had an extremely high focus for these students in terms of observing others carry it out and apprehension about their own ability to discipline the children. The seven students who most frequently wrote about discipline were Tanya and Marcia (50% of all journal topics each), Jahan (42.9%), Madeline (37.5%), Tracey and Courtney (33.3% each) and Julie (23.8%). Other areas of teaching such as activities, marking and student performance were the main feature of another seven students' journals: Adrian (54%), Raelene and Effie (50% each), Karen (41%) and Tim and Kim (33% each). Six students also concentrated on the pupils and their interactions with others: Troy (87%), Jenny (75%), Marcia (50%), Raelene (40%), Madeline (37%) and Tracey (25%). Only two students wrote about a variety of themes without focussing on any one theme (Marguerite and Maria).

Third year students' journals, however, focussed on many topics not only across the semester but across any one entry. This variety did not mean that the entries were fragmented but rather they were combining themes and ideas in a variety of ways. For example, Craig discussed over 40 areas across the semester, 34 of which were different topics. His predominant themes were self as a student (38%) and as a teacher, in particular the stress accompanying teaching. Renee described 27 areas with 25 different topics, but generally focussed on the students (40%) and teaching (24%). Kylie discussed 26 areas with 16 different topics and her main focus was on teaching (75%). Joanne reported 22 areas with 16 topics related to teaching. Only a few students (3) showed limited description and few topics. As a whole, first year students focussed mainly on teaching and pupils while third year students also wrote about the school and the university. In addition, third year students wrote much more than their first year counterparts and while they dealt with similar topics they addressed them differently. Example journal entries relating to these themes are outlined below.

**Teaching**

It is evident from Table 1 that teaching was the most common theme for both first and third year students. First year students generally described the
teaching of their supervising teachers rather than their own teaching which is understandable as their role in the first semester of their studies was to discover what schools and schooling were all about. Even though they were teaching by the end of the semester they were still viewing teaching from an 'outsiders' point of view. Nevertheless, several students entered the teaching arena with enthusiasm. For example, Maria wrote, "Today I gave a maths lesson with year three and it was fantastic" and Tania commented that, "Teaching that group has given me a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment."

Within the theme Teaching, discipline and behaviour management were by far the most constant focus of these students. Such comments as "Linda [the supervising teacher] has one of the best controlled classes I have ever seen" (Karen) and "After a brief talk with the teacher he [the child] re-entered smiling and after a short time continued on his disruptive journey," highlighted some of the supervising teacher discipline reported. Indeed, one student (Julie) was quite dismayed when the behaviour of one pupil caused the teacher to "blow his stack and yell at him [the pupil]."

Concern over the students own discipline methods was also evident. For example, Madeline worried because she "kept telling them to do their work but they did not listen," and Julie complained that she "tried many times to get them to settle down but they wouldn't listen to me." Maria, however, was more successful reporting that, "it was the first time that I had the children fully controlled." Thus "controlling pupils", and student focus on "Self" and "Task" concerns (Fuller, 1969 cited in Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998, p. 84) are of paramount importance to these students.

Third year students, however, focussed consistently on the areas of activities and assessment with some emphasis on classroom organisation and management (but not necessarily "control"). While some students described an activity being carried out in the classroom, most described activities they carried out themselves. This situation is also understandable as these students increasingly took on the role of the teacher in what would be their final practicum. Kelly, for example, talked about, "One of the highlights of this week's teaching has to be the 'rainforest walk' that I took my class on". However, such comments show that students are still teacher-centred rather than child-centred nor do they view, in this part of their journals, teaching as a collaborative partnership between teacher and children.

In commenting on assessment, third year students were both critical and supportive of the assessment methods being used in the classrooms. As Joanne commented, "I worry about the basic skills tests that are implemented in schools and wonder if the government will ever abolish them". Jason focussed on his own assessment practices and commented "I am trying to improve my assessment and planning of assessment".

Again classroom management and organisation was described by third year students but mostly in terms of their own practices. For example, Kerry
related that "I am going to reflect on the behaviour management strategies that I utilised in my classroom" and Charlotte commented that "The idea of using the theme fantasy through a reward system has been fantastic".

Pupils

Pupils were also a major focus for both groups of students, however, first year students focussed on the relationships among and with pupils while third year students reported mainly their own beliefs about individual pupils. First year students singled out either incidents involving interaction between a couple of pupils or their own interaction with individual pupils. For example, Tracey recounted, "Today while walking through the playground I noticed a 6th grade boy holding a 3rd grade boy upside down" and Courtney "told Jarred to stop teasing Amber". Raelene gave an example of the interaction between herself and the pupils when she wrote, "After learning about Spyros, I wrote a sentence for him and explained to him what the sentence said and what it meant" and Renee commented that "The [pupils] are becoming much more relaxed when they are around me".

Third year students, however, commented predominantly about individual pupils noting, for example, "We cannot forget that the children are all hyperactive - pumped up" (Renee) or puzzlement as to "why Elena is seated by herself if she has learning difficulties" (Diana).

School

The third year students were very aware of the school and its environment, much more so than first year students. Staff meetings and school inservices were very much to the fore with the students decrying the lack of recognition they received for the knowledge they possessed. Renee, for example, complained that "several teachers did not really take notice of us even though we had a lot of experience with profiles." Other comments related to school excursions and other events, which to some students disrupted the normal school program.

University

Third year students were also more focussed on the university, particularly, academic subjects and assignments. While assignments for both groups were closely linked to their work in schools, first year students attended schools for one day a week (plus a four day block practicum at the end of semester) while third year students spent 10 weeks of a 14 week semester in the school, attending three to four days per week plus a five week block practicum. Further, it is in the school that all interactions with their university professor / mentors occur. First year students are, therefore, more 'campus-based' and undertake two additional campus-based subjects during the first semester while third year students are 'school based' undertaking only one 'school-based' subject. When mentioning their university subjects, third year students mostly mentioned the subject in which they were currently enrolled. For example, Jason reported that "This subject has given me a realistic outlook of what the teaching profession is about in terms of preparation, management, planning and
assessment'. Other comments related to University life and what constitutes good work and study situations. Craig, for example commented that "Given the right group I have realised that working with others is of far greater benefit". With regard to assignments, these students commented on their progress as each assignment fell due with some commenting on the value of these assignments. For example, Charlotte described putting her portfolio together commenting that, "it will be a terrific benefit to me not only for [the] teaching interview but for other jobs as well".

**Least Frequently Reported Themes from Student Journals**

It is evident from Table 2 that the themes reported by both first and third year students is seldom particular lesson content, planning or self-evaluation. Self-evaluation of particular lessons taught may be infrequently noted because first year students are doing little teaching during their practicum and third year students complete separate lesson self-evaluations as part of their teaching programs.

Both groups of students also infrequently focus upon themselves, especially as a student teacher. First year students also infrequently focus upon themselves as teachers, supposedly because they undertake limited whole class teaching during the practicum. Third year students, however, are more likely to see themselves as teachers rather than student teachers during what is their final practicum.

Another difference between the first and third year student groups is that while third year students quite frequently write about the schools and the university, few first year students do the same. This result may reflect first year students' "newness" to the practicum setting and although their inquiries each week focused upon a different aspect of school life (eg teachers, students, school, curriculum, learning environments, resources etc) their primary focus is still what happens within the walls of their practicum classroom rather than the bigger 'worlds' of the schools and community.

**Links to earlier survey**

The questionnaires showed that the content of the journal entries for many students did not change much over the semester (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997). These results are also reflected in this study, particularly with the first year students. The third year students while seeming to be diverse in the variety of content actually continually made connections across their journal entries. They were much broader with their content than the first year cohort. This diversity was also supported in the previous study as some students then reported that they changed from writing about how a school runs to writing about things they had learnt during practicum.

Some of the benefits and difficulties experienced in 'journaling' and commented on in the questionnaire were able to be 'seen' in the actual entries analysed in the second study. Students stated that the journals helped them work through solutions and many of the journal entries showed how the
students solved problems that confronted them. For example, Charlotte wrote a whole entry on the way she worked through a class management problem from initiating the strategy to success.

Results from the questionnaire also showed that journal writing was cathartic as upsetting situations were able to be recorded and reflected upon. Joanne, for example, described one of her 'worst weeks ever'. As she worked through her entry, she was able to find some positives and finished the entry on a high note.

Some of the difficulties explored in the first study were also evident in this study, in particular, the difficulty students can experience finding different things to write about. This finding supports those of Canning (1991), but conflicts with Mayer (1996) whose students had little difficulty finding something to write about. In our study, first year students, in particular, had only a narrow view of what they wrote about and even a few of the third year students wrote very little description at all. Like the student questionnaire responses, these students may have found writing detailed journal entries just too overwhelming a task with so much to do during the practicum.

Conclusions

How then does 'reflective journaling' promote the professional growth of student teachers and develop more reflective practitioners? The second part of the research, reported here, does not give us a clear answer to this question at this stage but what it does show is that there are differences in the "journaling" of first and third year students. The difference exists in the variety of topics selected for discussion, the views students take about these topics and in the way each topic is developed.

For example, third year students wrote about a great variety of topics linking them across entries while first year students basically wrote about one topic each entry and usually continued to write about that one topic on many occasions. Such "journaling" was a no risk venture on their part as they made sure they complied with university requirements and ventured only slightly into personal thought and experiences. Third year students, on the other hand, were much bolder and spun across the topics blending them together and imprinting their personal experiences on the happenings they were describing. They were obviously much more knowledgeable about teacher's work, the school environment and the pupils in that environment. They were also more able to connect University work with the work they were doing in the schools and consequently were able to make sense of the context they were in, in terms of future work.

First year student journals indicated that right throughout their first semester, students still saw themselves as 'outsiders' viewing schools and schooling from the outside looking in. Generally they commented upon what they had observed not what they had tried (even though they are encouraged to
work with individual children and small groups of children right from their first school visit). When they commented upon their own teaching, they mentioned only a limited number of strategies or activities, again probably a result of their "newness" to the teaching context. They may have relied upon their own past experiences as pupils, the few strategies they may have seen presented at university or the particular strategies suggested by their supervising teachers. Further, they seemed more comfortable observing and reflecting from a "student" perspective rather than a "teacher" one. Third year students, however, commented upon schools and schooling as "insiders", saw themselves as teachers, and commented upon their own teaching and upon the appropriateness of a variety of teaching or assessment methods.

Views were also expressed differently. For example, while both student groups wrote about teaching and in particular about classroom management, first year student entries were very single minded and focussed clearly on how others managed and their own fears and defeats when it came to discipline (or as they saw it, controlling pupils). Third year students, however, tried a range of discipline methods and commented on others. Very few showed the apprehension that first year students demonstrated. It is obvious from the data that the students were working through as series of stages in the development of their classroom management skills.

Another common theme, that of interaction among and with pupils was again dealt differently by each cohort. Many times the first year students described their role as an assistant and frequently were drawn to the uniqueness of the pupil's interactions. The third year students, however, focussed more on the individual pupil and his or her progress, position and response within the classroom context. The change in these issues seems to have been brought about by the maturity of the students within the ITE program in which they were involved. There is little evidence at this stage of the research of students constructing their own notions of teaching and learning, nor of the collaborative partnership of teachers and children in learning.

Compared with the enormity of the journey to analyse student's reflectivity and its role in their development as beginning teachers, this piece of research has been but a short trip. It has, however, unfolded some of the issues that teacher education students discuss in their reflective journals when they have total freedom of topic choice and has begun to establish development that seemingly occurs across the student years. Our findings do not suggest so much a change in the focus of reflection over a practicum but more so over the entire ITE program. This result in itself has implications for teacher educators, suggesting that individual subjects promoting reflection may be insufficient to develop reflectivity. As La Boskey (1993) states, "novices stand to acquire from their acts of reflection new comprehensions about an educational topic [author's emphasis] and about the process of reflection itself" (p.27) yet our research shows that this learning takes longer than a one semester subject. Perhaps as Wildman and Niles (1987, as cited in Stout, 1989) commented, "reflective teaching skills must be systematically taught and then nurtured over a period of time" (p.524), perhaps the entire three or four years of the ITE program. As we seek to discover the depth and the nature of reflection in student learning may the journey into journaling continue.
References


Description
Assessment has long been thought of as the domain of the teacher. With increased expectations of educators within the school systems, reduced time frames and the demands for greater accountability, schools are beginning to realise that they have a ready source of expertise and information at their finger tips; the children they are assessing.

This paper presents three key strategies that recognise not only the value of involving children in their own assessment but the essentialness of this involvement if accurate, just and complete assessment of children’s educational growth is to be made. It is based on research emanating from the schools and the resulting programs designed to cater for the needs of the children, the teachers and the parents.

The three key strategies are: negotiated assessment, student self assessment and student led conferences. Negotiated assessment is an assessment program that insists on an active partnership between the child, the teacher and the parent. Student self assessment has evolved out of negotiated assessment and not only develops sound reflection strategies for the children but values the children’s knowledge and understanding of themselves and their learning. Student led conferences, again emanating from negotiated assessment, are a method of reporting to parents that put the children in the ‘driving seat’. In this process they are given opportunity to show their parents what they know, what they can do and what they are like as learners. All
three strategies demonstrate that unless we take children seriously when we are assessing them by including them in the process we are forfeiting their right to a just and equitable education.

Reflections
Discussion with a colleague led to the invitation to present at this conference. I have been emphasising the importance of honouring what children know for some time and was excited to be given the opportunity to listen to like minded colleagues and to tell others of the significance of children taking part in their own learning and assessment. This presentation has led to a chapter in a forthcoming book based on the papers given at the conference.

Finding groups of people who not only empathised with my beliefs but who were also strong advocates of these beliefs and understood and supported common ideas was an empowering event. Many people basically believe that children are important but involving them in self assessment and reflection is difficult for some and requires a paradigm shift of great magnitude. It is this extra dimension of the learning that needs to be explored. Writing the chapter for this book has helped develop the ideas that I know are possible.
Action: Too not only write the chapter but further investigate the possibilities of promoting the value of children's self-assessment at all levels.

Epilogue: Even though the chapter is not yet published I have to further investigate student self assessment and reporting in the form of student led conferences and portfolios. The Department of Education Disadvantaged Schools program has commissioned work involving these concepts.
Assessment is a serious business: Children as active partners

UWS Macarthur 12th -13th July 1999.
Accepted for publication as a chapter in Taking children seriously.
Edited by Professor Jan Mason, Childhood and Youth Policy Research Unit.
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur

Introduction

Assessment has long been thought of as the domain of the teacher. With increased expectations of educators within the school systems, reduced time frames and the demands for greater accountability, schools are beginning to realise that they have a ready source of expertise and information at their finger tips; the children they are assessing.

Children as active partners

The belief that children have the right and the ability to take an active part in both their learning and the assessment of that learning, although not new, is not necessarily taken seriously by those who influence the learning of these children. Downes (1999) recognised that rarely, if at all, were children actually accorded the role and status of stakeholders, and therefore valuable participants in their schooling. With specific reference to assessment, inclusion of children in the development of, for example, portfolio assessment was supported by many educationalists (Woodward, 1993; Farr and Tone, 1994; Hansen, 1994; Danielson & Abrutyn, 1997; McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998). The reality, however, was that many children’s portfolios were teacher’s collections of children’s work, with only nominal involvement of the children. This led us to believe that the children’s input was not valued or seen as
necessary (New South Wales Department of School Education, 1997; Cohen, 1999). While Potter (1999) discussed the inclusion of children in self assessment and put forward ideas such as the development of children's self assessment skills, she went on to say that they were too egocentric and lacked the appropriate development to make such activities useful. Growing support for endorsing the role of children in their own education (Pollard, Thiessen & Filler, 1997; Downes, 1998) indicated the need for further research and practice in this domain. Kyratzis and Green (1997) concluded that “[t]he way in which children construct meaning in schools is a relatively unexamined and potentially exciting avenue of inquiry” (p.17). Ignoring or underplaying the significance of taking the child's perspective into consideration was risking undermining of "school life, learning achievement and the development of understanding" according to Pollard, Thiessen & Filler (1997, p. 1). The key issue here is that of acknowledging children as stakeholders in their own learning and taking seriously their right to secure a dynamic role in their own development.

To this end this paper presents three key strategies that recognise not only the value of involving children in their own assessment but the essentialness of this involvement if accurate, just and complete assessment of children's educational growth is going to be made. It is based on research emanating from the schools and the resulting programs designed to cater for the needs of the children, the teachers and the parents. The three key strategies are; negotiated assessment, child self assessment and child-led conferences.
Negotiated Assessment

Negotiated Assessment is a program that insists on an active partnership between the child, the teacher and the parent (Woodward, 1993). It is a program characterised by continuing negotiation between all stakeholders in the assessment process, in order to determine the focus, the procedures, the interpretations and the proposals for action that guide decisions and inform learning. In addition to the teacher, these stakeholders include the children and their parents or care givers.

Prior to the development of Negotiated Assessment in 1991, interaction between parents, teachers and the children in the assessment process was limited, to say the least. As a teacher I used to send reports home to the parents, sometimes in a sealed envelope and seldom with the child having any prior knowledge of its content. I would receive minimal response to these reports, usually in the form of 'courtesy' comments by several parents, who would thank me for a good year with their child or comment that they were pleased with the indicated progress. I always hoped for more input from the parents during parent-teacher interviews, but such information was seldom forthcoming. A probable reason for parents not taking an active role in these interviews was their seeing themselves to be relatively powerless in such a situation: the interviewer (teacher) asks the questions and the interviewee (parent) responds with very little valuable interchange of ideas and information.

In a research project that investigated literacy assessment in primary schools (Woodward, 1989) the teachers indicated that interaction between teachers and children was limited because the teachers were the main assessors and recorders of
that assessment. It is my belief that we cannot hope to accurately assess the children in our care if we do not ask them what they are thinking, what they understand and what they know. Similarly, what we find out about children and their learning, and the goals we have for them, should be shared with the children. There have been many secrets kept from children in the classroom (for example the teacher's expectations, and the results of observations made of the child's developmental progress) with little or no credence being given to the child's ideas. Again assessment and planning for learning had been decidedly one sided. I also, at this time, gave some thought to the idea that the parents were another source of information, yet untapped, that could yield another perspective about the child's progress and development.

The idea of Negotiated Assessment began to evolve to overcome the problem of teachers as the only assessors. A model was formulated that included both the parents and children in the assessment process, and to make better use of both the time spent and the data collected.

The important issues that were essential to model were:

1. The continual interaction between the primary stakeholders. This consisted of:
   - focused observation by the teacher followed by discussions between the child and the teacher,
   - input from the child through discussion and self assessment
   - interaction between the teacher and the parents by way of parent observation or profile sheets.
2. The collection of data from a variety of sources and perspectives. This consisted of data from:

- parents, teacher and child observations over time and in a variety of situations
- products of work selected by both the child and the teacher,

3. The analysis of data through the writing of reports that inform each of the stakeholders. This was achieved through:

- making decisions about the merit and worth of both the processes and products observed
- collating analysis in the form of a descriptive report.

Negotiated Assessment, then, primarily involves the collection, interpretation and reporting of qualitative information about the child's learning. It focuses on the individual quality of each child's learning processes and products, so that all those involved in the child's progress understand the child better and are more able to assist him or her in the learning processes required for future development.

For Negotiated Assessment to take place the role of the stakeholders needs to be explored. The stakeholders are those who share the load of assessment and are the teacher, the parents and the children.

**The Teacher**

The role of the teacher in Negotiated Assessment, though discussed first here, does not necessarily mean that the teacher is the major stakeholder. The teacher is, however, pivotal to the process. In first exploring the teacher's role, in this program, a
better understanding of what Negotiated Assessment is, will be developed. This role includes data collection and analysis, and initiating, encouraging and negotiating the involvement of the other stakeholders. The key procedures to be discussed here are focussed observation, product collection and analysis and reporting progress.

_Focussed Observation_

One of the key procedures in any classroom assessment program is observation (Woodward 1997). In Negotiated Assessment it is even more vital for all the stakeholders to be keen and perceptive observers. My initial research on the recording of observations in anecdotal records, however, made it clear that there had to be a more systematic way to organise the observation of the children in the classroom to ensure that each child's behaviours were adequately and regularly recorded. Every child in the class must be observed not just the attention seekers or the children whose performance is in some way outstanding. After much deliberation and consultation with colleagues and teachers the notion of _focussed observation_ was born.

Focused observation means that instead of trying to observe all the children in the class at the one time, the teacher selects five or six children to be the focus of his or her observations for a particular period of time, say, over one or two weeks. This small group of children is observed closely and anecdotal records are written of the learning that was observed. After the designated period of time, the focus shifts to another group of five or six, and so on until all the children have been systematically observed. In this way, every child is the focus of careful observation for four to six periods a year, in addition to ongoing incidental observation that normally occurs within any classroom.
Most probably the children will be randomly selected for observation, so that they will range in ability and needs, but selection could be on the basis of a previously-established class grouping. Sue, the teacher from the initial pilot study at Nareena Hills Public School, for example, selected her maths groups as the organising feature of her focus. One of the reasons was that these groups were timetabled to operate first thing Monday morning. The focussed observation began right from the start of the week. This period was also a time when Sue had parent helpers in the room and could devote some time to the focus group without feeling that the remainder of the class were being neglected. Over this time Sue was able to observe the children closely in a variety of situations across the whole curriculum. Observation, however, in itself is not sufficient. These observations must be accurately recorded. An important factor here is that the closer to the time of observation the recording is done, the more accurate the data will be.

Product collection and analysis

In Negotiated Assessment, the teacher's role is to observe not only the learning processes and behaviours of the children being focused on but also to look closely at the 'products' of their work. Collecting work samples from the group of children being focussed on gives an extra dimension to both the data and the organisation. Every sample that is collected must be dated with comments written on the bottom or back of the sample, highlighting the progress that has been made and outcomes demonstrated.
In addition to the process/product observations, observations should be made of the child's understandings and beliefs. These observations are only able to be made through consultation with the child. The children should be asked how they feel about various areas of schooling, what they have learnt or would like to learn. Sometimes this interaction takes the form of a discussion, or the child may be asked to complete a self-assessment sheet. Wherever possible, the child should have knowledge of any observations made as a result of the consultation.

*Reporting Progress*

At the end of each data collection period a descriptive summary, of each child being focussed on is written. The reason is twofold. Firstly to draw together all the information accrued and secondly to report the child's progress to the other stakeholders. The reporting procedure is continuous with parents receiving reports throughout the year. The distinctive features of these reports are that they have several parts to them. The first part highlights the child's achievements since the last report. The second part shows the child's needs, couched in positive and productive terms, with the third part indicating how the parents can help the child at home. The back of the report in divided into two sections: one each for the parent's and for the child's response. These reports are accumulated in a folder that travels back and forth from school to home as each report is added.

*The Parents*

Traditionally the important role that parents might play in the assessment of a child's progress has been ignored by the education system. In Negotiated Assessment the role of parents is not only recognised but also greatly valued and seen as vital to the
success of the program. To create the necessary connections between the parents and
the teachers, and to strengthen the links between the parents and their children, a
variety of procedures need to become part of the framework of the classroom
assessment program. These procedures include descriptive reports to which both
parent and child are asked to respond, parent observation profiles, parent reports,
assessment and communication books, portfolios and child-led conferences. Parent
reports will be discussed in this section and child-led conferences will be discussed in
detail later in the paper.

*Parent Reports*

After several focused observation rotations, resulting in several reports, the parents are
sent an open report sheet accompanied by their child's report folder. They are asked to
read back through the reports, theirs and the child's comments, and write about the
progress that they see their child has made. Emphasis is placed on the collaborative
nature of the reporting with the child being part of this process.

The main issues when involving parents in their children's assessment, is to assure
them that what they know is valued and that they will be supported in the
development and understanding of their child’s learning processes. The response
from the parents will serve the needs of both the teachers and the children. When
parents have a better understanding of their children's learning they are more able to
help them. Stronger links between the parents and their children are forged as they
collaborate about the child’s learning. Surely education and society will only benefit
from such a process.
The Children

One of the most important features of Negotiated Assessment is the involvement of the children who are being assessed. It is brought about in several ways: the teachers continually interacting with each child during the focussed observation periods and the children learning how to set goals, be reflective, and how to assess themselves. Self assessment and reflection will be discussed in detail later in the paper.

Goal setting

Goal setting is carried out in many ways and will develop over time. Children cannot be expected to become expert goal setters overnight. Demonstration of the process is essential and should begin with discussions about what the children want to learn as a class. List these on the board and establish two or three class goals. Along side these write (with the help of the children) ways these goals could be achieved and what that achievement could look like. An example is given below in Table 1 in a class where a unit of work on the environment is being developed.

This work is then put up on a chart and checked regularly to see that they are achieving the goals. The ways in which these goals have been achieved is added to the chart during the day/week. Once the children have some idea about the process they need to be given the opportunity to set their own goals. This process will need individual consultation (either with the teacher, their mentor or a parent), particularly at the beginning.

Not all children, however, will begin their personal goal setting at the same time. Time is set aside weekly for this process and the ensuing follow up activities. Initially
it is used for the children to begin writing their goals and for them to consult as they set their goals in place and establish ways in which they might achieve them. Later it is used to for the children to work towards achieving their goals and to reflect on their achievement. Reflection is in the form of journaling or reporting progress to others, orally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We would like to</th>
<th>We will know we have achieved when</th>
<th>What do we need to do</th>
<th>How are we going</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• learn more about the environment</td>
<td>• can talk to others about our environment • write to a friend and explain something important about our environment to them a) b)</td>
<td>e.g. read and talk about the environment learn about letter writing</td>
<td>e.g. We have learnt .......... about the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improve our environment</td>
<td>• submit a plan for improvement of an area in the playground • write an article to the local newspaper explaining how and why we are wanting to make these improvements</td>
<td>e.g. Learn how to draw plans Look at the different types of letters.</td>
<td>e.g. drawing plans of the playground is really complicated. You have to ..........</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1** Class goal setting procedure

**An example of individual goal setting**

One child in one school wrote that he wanted to become better at painting

**Goal:** I want to become better at painting

(This goal may seem a very broad goal but the teacher/mentor must encourage the child to make decisions about how they are going to achieve that goal and must not try to write the goal for the child. It will be one of many over the year.)
What am I going to do: Decide what particular area in painting needs to be improved. Go to the library and research different types of painting e.g. oils, watercolours, landscape, portrait etc. Once the focus has been decided (watercolour, landscape) research ways of improving e.g. ask teacher, read, practice.

How will I know when I have achieved my goal: When I see my painting improving, when my trees look more like trees and I get distance right.

How am I going: (Child writes progress here at various intervals) _

As more of the work is carried out children will become better at being more precise with their goals which in turn will become more refined. If the class or school has exit outcomes then the children’s goals could be tied into these outcomes.

Child self assessment

The idea of children as self assessors is growing in popularity within education. It sometimes appears to be tokenistic by only being records of work done and not records of the learning achieved. Child self assessment, noted here, has evolved out of negotiated assessment. It not only develops sound reflective strategies for the children but also values the children’s knowledge and understanding of themselves and their learning. Given time and support children will develop the capacity to assess themselves as they know many things about themselves which will supplement the parents’ and teachers’ knowledge about the child. There are some things that only the children know about themselves. They know what they believe and what they feel. They know what they understand and what they want to learn.

There are four primary reasons self-assessment is important:
- only the learner knows the full extent of the enjoyment, understanding and the interaction experienced during the activity;
- children have the right to contribute to knowledge gathered about their progress and to have access to the expectations held by other interested parties;
- giving children more control and responsibility for what they do through self-assessment fosters the development of the skills of independent life-long learning. It also makes them aware of their own learning processes and progress.
- teachers are always conscious of the time constraints placed on them in the classroom and should therefore be prepared to transfer, to the children, as many assessment tasks as possible.

There are four dimensions to self assessment that need to be taken into consideration. These dimensions are reflection, expectation, acceptance and valuing.

Reflection
Reflection enables the child to look back on their learning and to think about the next steps that they need to take. This process assists them in analysing and better understanding the processes and the practices that aid their learning while encouraging them to deliberate on possible ways forward. Children cannot be made to be reflective but need to be given opportunity and time to learn the variety of skills needed.

Expectation
Children will ‘deliver’ to the level of diligence and expertise that is expected of them. If the expectations are low then their response will be low. Similarly if the expectations are high the output will be high. On the other hand if it is expected that
they will self assess their work and the necessary skills and time are made available to them, the process of self assessment will improve. Time has to be allocated and the purpose made obvious before worthwhile self assessment procedures are put in place. There is also an expectation on the part of the child. They should expect to be part of their own learning and assessment. To be able to take part in this process they need to know what the teacher expects of them in regard to learning experiences and outcomes. In consultation with others they should begin to understand and recognise what their learning will look like and how to improve their learning opportunities.

Acceptance

For children to be truly part of the learning and assessing cycle their input must be accepted as genuine. Their ideas and knowledge must be seen as worthwhile and included in the planning and reporting process. Children are very quick to pick up on surface acceptance and will withdraw their input on future occasions if this dimension is not genuinely attended to.

Valuing

As distinct from self assessment being valuable, valuing children’s assessment of their learning is very important. It is more than just accepting what they have to offer. Time, space and energy must be expended if true self assessment is to occur and if the children are to become thoughtful reflective lifelong learners.

There are a number of strategies that will encourage children to participate in their own assessment. These strategies include logs, learning journals, portfolios, assessment books, self-assessment sheets and child-conferences. Logs, journals and
portfolios will be discussed in this section with child-led conferences being discussed later

**Record keeping logs.**

Journals or logs are where the children keep records of the work they have carried out. These records are characterised by reading logs, writing logs, reading and writing summaries but also by records of, for example, science activities, group work completed or home work carried out. This form of recording is not new to the children when it comes to self assessment (Woodward 1993) and is extremely valuable particularly when charting progress and understanding what is important to them. These logs take a variety of forms but they are most commonly either printed formats as used in reading logs, or diary entries. To make the best use of these records, summaries of the logs or diaries should be made as evidence of progress of learning. A simple summary format is used from time to time but in doing so there must be an assurance that the accumulated evidence will be valued and used. These summaries consist of questions that precis these records. Initial recording, for example, how many and what type of books were read give an overview of predominating genre, of incomleted readings and the nature of the texts. Further reflections on these books would reveal specific interests, level of reading and the child’s understanding of the reading process. The issue to remember here is to demonstrate how each procedure works and to then allocate time for the records to be attended to. This allowance of time establishes that the teacher values the process otherwise some children will do the required recording but most will not.

**Journal writing**
There are several differing thoughts on journal writing. Some confuse it with diary writing while others use it for log records as explained above but here the focus is on reflective journal writing. Much has been written about the value of reflection and how it promotes learning by encouraging the children to think about their development, assisting them to become deeper learners and to learn about their own learning. The difficulty lies in just how to assist children to become reflective. Being reflective is not an innate ability. It must be taught and it must be valued. To teach reflection to young children means initial time must be given to the process so that worthwhile time is experienced later.

A useful process is for the children to:

- describe to a partner something they have just carried out or been involved in.
- talk or write about what they did well and what they didn’t do so well or didn’t like.
- write down something that they learnt that they didn’t know before (this learning may not necessarily be content knowledge, it may be something about themselves, how they work with others or a new skill)
- write down what else do they feel they need to know
- decide what are they going to do about it.

This process will need to be taken in slow steps and should not be ritualised to the point of being boring for the children. Once they understand what being reflective is then the process can be varied. Primarily being reflective is thinking about learning and looking forward to new learning possibilities. Summaries are made by asking the following (or similar) questions:
• what are three things you have learned about or to do this term, that you didn’t know before?

• what are three new things you would like to learn next term?

• how do these fit in with our class goals/outcomes?

**Portfolios**

The idea of portfolios has been with us for some time and in many different guises. Before deciding how to use portfolios some decisions need to be made: who is the audience and what is the purpose of the portfolio as an assessment item?

I believe there is a dual audience for portfolios. Initially it is for the owner/author, in this case the child, and then it is for the community that the owner/author selects. In the school setting the audiences are primarily the teacher, friends and the parents or care givers. The purpose of portfolio assessment is to record and reflect on the owner’s learning. These beliefs stem from the view that a portfolio is:

> a collection of work that best illustrates the achievements and learning of its owner as selected and reflected on by the owner. (Woodward 1993, p.34)

For many teachers, though, the collection of work is either the responsibility of the teacher themselves or a combination of teacher and child. As discussed earlier, however, the teacher selects the majority of data for school portfolios. The purpose of these portfolios is to inform the teacher of the child’s learning with little thought being
given to the child’s role in the process. Following are some ideas about establishing a portfolio that is constructed by the child (sometimes in consultation with the teacher).

Each child collects items usually on paper or photos and photocopies. They are samples of school work or items of interest from the world outside school. The breadth of the collection will emphasise the connection between school and the ‘outside world’ and therefore values the child’s total world. Not every item the child selects will finish up in their portfolio. McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley (1998) work with two portfolios. One is a ‘learning’ portfolio that holds the initial data demonstrating learning and is for the child and the teacher. The second is a ‘showcase’ portfolio that is a result of much refinement of items from the ‘learning’ portfolio and is the one that ‘others’ see. Generally all portfolios are continually revised. For an item to be included in a portfolio it must be of special significance and the child must be able to communicate that significance. In other words for every item included a short reflection must accompany the item. These reflections must show the importance of the item or what has been learnt from the activity resulting in the item. Reflection helps the child to focus on a deeper level of thinking and encourages them to reason and analyse their work.

Initially the children will need help and guidance and the less able will need a scribe to record the children’s reflections. The data does not have to be the child’s best attempt but it does have to show what they have learned. On the physical side, the portfolios need to be storable and items need to be interchangeable as evidence of learning changes over time. From time to time each child will need to sit with a friend, mentor or teacher to tell it about the items in their portfolio and reflect on why
they are there. After this interaction the portfolios are taken home and discussed with the parent or care giver or become part of a child-led conference. Portfolios give a view of the children’s learning that is unobtainable through the average classroom activities. There are many other self assessment processes but the main issue to remember is to value these processes by not only developing the necessary skills with the children but also to value the children’s voice as they tell about their learning.

**Child-led Conferences**

Child-led conferences, again emanating from negotiated assessment, are a method of reporting to parents that puts the children in the ‘driving seat’. In this process the children are given opportunity to show their parents, through their portfolios, what they know, what they can do and what they are like as learners with the purpose being to celebrate the children’s learning and give direction for improvement.

There are several goals for child-led conferences. The most important of these are:

- to provide children with an authentic context for self assessment with an opportunity to assume some responsibility for informing their parents about their learning;
- to increase the children's involvement, ownership and control of their learning, and
- for the children to be accountable for their own learning.

Child-led conferences are growing in popularity in the education forum and as a result many formats have emerged. Which ever format is used, however, there are several pre-requisites to be considered when designing these conferences. These pre-requisites are to ensure children, parents and teacher are informed and involved. Be
aware of the rationale for handing the leadership role to children and to recognize opportunities for children’s reflection, judgments, decision-making, organization and genuine communication.

Once the decision has been made to use child-led conferences preparation for the conference, the actual conducting of the conference and the post conference procedures need to be considered.

**Preparation for Child-led Conferences**

- Arrange a pre-conference meeting with parents/care givers to inform them about procedures, such as the teacher’s and the children’s role and the fact that several conferences will be taking place around the classroom at the same time.
- Prepare and refine the portfolios for presentation to the parents/care givers.
- Send an information letter home stating the procedure to be followed.
- Rehearse the procedure with the children including sharing of their portfolio with a friend
- Children send a letter to their parents offering possible conference times, previewing highlights of the process and asking for a reply confirming allocated times.
- Children collaboratively work out the conference schedule allowing four to five conferences to take place simultaneously, each of 30 minutes duration.
- Children write a letter to their parents to be placed inside their portfolio noting highlights within the portfolio and asking for the parent’s response.
Conducting Child-led Conferences

- Arrange the classroom into several distinct spaces so that four to five conferences take place at once. A staggered start may facilitate movement.
- Child introduces their parent/s to the teacher.
- Child takes their parent/s to their designated space, shows and discusses their portfolio and their learning with the parent/s.
- Parents can also look at work/projects etc. around the room with the child (not disturbing the other conferences).
- Teacher circulates visiting each group (but not intruding) to ensure smooth flow and offer assistance where needed.
- When finished the child asks parent to respond to the portfolio and learning behaviors.
- Child invites the parent/s to sign and comment in the class guest book.
- Child escorts the parents to refreshments.
Post Child-led Conference

- Discussion with and debriefing of children including conversation with peers and whole class and written responses.
- Children write a thank you letter to parents stating new goals and inviting a response.
- Should parent/s not be able to come, arrange for portfolio to be sent home and for conference to be held at home or in a mutually convenient place.

Many schools use this form of reporting as their sole reporting system while others use it in conjunction with the more formal report cards. Whichever way the child-led conference is used it gives the children the opportunity to understand and demonstrate their learning.

Involving all those with a specific and vested interest in each child's progress in the learning and assessment cycle shows we are beginning to share the load of assessment and to recognise the children's rights as stakeholders. By discussing progress, making explicit our expectations and by tapping into the child's personal learning framework we are beginning to negotiate better assessment procedures. It is imperative, if assessment is to become useful, manageable and valid, and if we are to become responsible educators, that we learn to share the load by negotiating assessment and valuing the role the children have in the process. All three strategies discussed here demonstrate that unless we take children seriously when we are assessing them by including them in the process we are forfeiting their right to a just and equitable education. We need to give them opportunity to celebrate their learning with those close to them giving them voice and ownership in their quest for knowledge and enabling them to take their place in the learning continuum: to be active partners.
References


RESULTS

**Description**

"Narratives are not records of facts, of how things actually were, but of a meaning making system that makes sense out of the chaotic mass of perceptions and experiences of life" (Josselson 1995, p. 33).

Could portfolios also be meaning making systems? Could portfolios make sense out of the chaotic mass of perceptions and experiences that constitute peoples lives and in themselves deepen understanding and indeed be the vehicle for learning opportunities? Or are portfolios just a record of facts? These are some of the questions I have investigated in the struggle to develop best practice and sound assessment strategies in education over the past decade.

This paper discusses the current perceptions of portfolios as an assessment strategy in an educational context. With many formats used in the development of portfolios and many perceptions as to their value and use, inquiry into the need for a consistent supportive framework is overdue. To this end narrative as a method of inquiry and a genre will be investigated. Congruence between the conceptual framework of narrative and both the process and the phenomenon of portfolios will be discussed in an endeavour to construct a meaningful configuration that could serve the development of purposeful portfolios across multiple educational sites.
Reflections
Narrative has long been an interest of mine with several tomes perched on my research methodology bookshelf. My supervisor Dr Janice Hall suggested, at one of our meetings, that narrative might assist me in developing a conceptual framework for my Doctor of Education portfolio. Through reading these books and much of the other literature available on narrative this paper evolved. Not only did it give me a framework for my study it gave me a framework for the research that was creating the study, a meta- narrative. The development of this paper has been a study in itself and as such has become the end piece, the results of my narrative phenomenon and therefore of the phenomenon of my portfolio.

This paper was presented at the annual conference for Doctorate of Education Students and will be refined for the purpose of publication. It is hard to describe the feeling one has when you find that someone or something else (or both) believes what you know to be true. This emancipation was the case as I read the literature on narrative to discover that it stated ‘the storyteller learns through the act of storytelling’ therefore confirming my strongly held belief that narratives, such as portfolios, create learning opportunities for those telling their portfolio story. One action as a result of this study is discussed in the Coda.

Action: To continue to work with the established portfolio framework across these and other environments such as high school and early childhood settings reinforcing the value of ownership, voice, collaboration and reflection.
Portfolios: Narratives for learning

Under review Journal of Inservice Education.

"Narratives are not records of facts, of how things actually were, but of a meaning making system that makes sense out of the chaotic mass of perceptions and experiences of life" (Josselson 1995, p. 33).

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Portfolios

Portfolios have been used in many fields for some time but it is only in the nineties that much has been written about their use and implementation in education. Architects, photographers and artists have used portfolios to record and demonstrate their craft and in education their use in instruction is not new; nor is their use in assessment a new practice (Farr & Tone, 1994). Marzano(1994) argued that portfolios for the purposes of assessment should be augmented by other formal and informal methods of assessment and not be used as the sole assessment approach. According to Danielson and Abrutyn (1997), however, it was no wonder the portfolios became so popular among educators as they believed that ‘portfolio was a single strategy that did it all’ (p. v). It allowed educators to achieve many of their most important, though sometimes elusive, goals such as monitoring growth of student’s knowledge, skills
and attitudes. The debate continues with the recognition that portfolios are becoming a core assessment strategy within the field of education with the impending danger that they could become over utilised and not representative of learning.

The key issues that permeated the educational portfolio argument, however, were not that they were a panacea to all assessment but that portfolios could be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998; Farr & Tone, 1994). It was this diversity that created the plethora of literature that at best gave wide opportunity and at worse confused those who ventured into this method of assessment. The breadth of the challenge ranged from extensive goals to incorporate both non-school and school items (Hansen, 1994; McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998) to those that had a very tight set of criteria (Farr & Tone, 1994) and from portfolios that were not graded (Elbow, 1991) to those that were (Farr & Tone, 1994). More precisely portfolios usually were seen to be discipline specific with stringent criteria. While they varied in organisation and purpose the literature in the early to mid nineties focused almost exclusively on single subject or discipline portfolio concepts (Hansen, 1994; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Danielson & Abrutyn, 1997). Toward the end of the decade it was becoming more obvious, through the literature, that portfolios were being used across disciplines and across educational environments. These environments ranged from young children to pre-service teachers, through to teachers in the classroom developing their own professional portfolios (Gaffey & Woodward, 1994; Retallick & Groundwater-Smith, 1996; McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998; Courtney & Abodeeb, 1999; Kearns, Kleinert & Kennedy, 1999; Lyons, 1999; Meyer & Tusin 1999). With this upsurge of interest in and implementation of portfolio assessment many questions arose. Some of
these were at a basic level of grading, format and organisation whereas others were centered around values, responsibilities and learning.

In dealing with portfolios across multiple educational environments over the past nine years (Woodward 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998) it became increasingly apparent that portfolios meant different things to different people. Portfolios were seen mostly as records of achievement or evidence of attainment of specific outcomes and seldom as reflective learning experiences. The content of portfolios was often dominated by input by ‘others’ in control rather than those who ‘owned’ the portfolio. Classroom teachers, for example, often had the sole input into the children’s portfolios thus depriving the children of voice and ownership (McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998). With the proliferation of literature the question is, will a single conceptual framework solve some the incongruence in the process and phenomenon of portfolios as assessment strategies or are assessment needs best met by the maintenance of the multiple perceptions that already exist.

Throughout my studies on portfolios the emphasis of my work has been on ownership, the value of reflection (Woodward, 1994; Sinclair & Woodward, 1997, 1998, 1999; Woodward & Sinclair; 1998) and learning (Woodward, 1993; Woodward 1998). My research into portfolios began in 1991 whilst I was on study leave in the United States and Canada. Working with Jane Hansen at University of New Hampshire gave me new insights into how portfolios could be used in schools. The research that Jane was carrying out was with children across a wide age range (5 to 16 years) and in differing school contexts. In this study even the youngest children maintained ownership of their portfolios by controlling items of input and the justifications for their selection of
each item. On returning home I was able to combine my new knowledge with my own work in Negotiated Evaluation (Woodward 1993), laying the foundation for future work in schools and in my workplace at the university. The results of this work led to the development of a model for portfolio implementation in primary schools (Woodward, 1993) and the creation of pre-service portfolios within the Bachelor of Teaching program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (UWSM) in the Faculty of Education and Languages (Gaffey & Woodward, 1994, Woodward, 1998). Integral in this program was the introduction of reflective journals. The resulting research (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997, 1998, 1999; Woodward & Sinclair; 1998) endorsed the value of reflection with pre-service students. Subsequent to these investigations and evaluations of the program it also became obvious that learning through portfolios was a multi-layered concept. Not only was there evidence of learning in the portfolio but there was evidence that learning had occurred because of the portfolio process (Woodward, 1997; Woodward 1998). The implementation of the pre-service portfolios into the Bachelor of Teaching at UWSM will be used to establish a base-line for the following discussion on a possible conceptual framework.

Pre-service Teacher’s Portfolios

Portfolio implementation, during pre-service teacher education, and the ensuing research, while it showed diversity in practice, showed remarkable agreement in the value of both the process and the product in the development of teacher education students (Gaffey & Woodward, 1994; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Woodward, 1998; Morgan, 1999; Meyer & Tusin, 1999). Issues involving reflection and presentation as well as a variety of implementation strategies emerged. Again the dominance of single discipline portfolios revealed the individual and at times fragmented nature of
the programs in which these processes were implemented. Establishing wholeness
growth programs was seen as unimportant and difficult. The necessary integration and
collaboration meant developing a process that could accommodate multiple
dimensions but a singular purpose. Such a purpose being to assist students to better
understand and be able to articulate their learning as they developed their personal
professional knowledge across multiple learning disciplines.

In the Faculty of Education and Languages at the University of Western Sydney,
Macarthur, this purpose was encapsulated in the Bachelor of Teaching three year
program. Pre-service teacher education students developed a portfolio to 'map the
terrain' they had covered prior to and during the program as well as of their own
understanding and learning as they became teachers. As they moved through the
program the students added items to their portfolio with examples from their
reflective journals and other justified items that showed their growth and
understanding as developing teachers. Criteria, based on the Desirable Attributes of
Beginning Teachers, developed by the Department of School Education in New
South Wales Australia (1993) (Appendix 1), were used as a basis for the portfolio
giving both definition and boundaries as enunciated by Broadfoot (1995). These
criteria were across all curriculum areas as well as in the domain of ethics and
professionalism. A personal aspect was also included with the students exploring
why and how they made the decision to become a teacher. The portfolio took any
portable, physical form or shape desired and included any items perceived
appropriate by the student in consultation with their mentoring lecturer. It was
suggested, however, that annotated photos might be a better way of representing three
dimensional or large items. Videos, photos, pages from their reflective journals,
assignments were used along with any items that showed their growth and understanding as developing teachers. The idea of digital portfolios was mooted but, as yet, have not eventuated. Each item in the portfolio was accompanied by a page justification as to why it was included and how it demonstrated the selected criteria. The portfolio was continually refined and reviewed during the course of the program.

The predominant focus for the portfolios came towards the end of the program. In the final semester (sixth) students added to and further refined their portfolios with additional mentor consultation. They then presented their completed portfolio to a panel. This panel consisted of the student's mentoring lecturer, a member of faculty staff, a representative from the employing bodies and a second year student.

Opportunity was given for all students to be part of the portfolio assessment process at least once prior to this final semester by being part of a panel during either the fourth or the fifth semester of the program. The portfolio became a record of each graduating student's learning and progress through the program, the understandings and skills acquired on the way and of their competencies as potential teachers.

One of the main reasons for introducing portfolios into the Bachelor of Teaching program was that we believed students knew more about their own abilities and progress than did 'outsiders'. Tapping into this knowledge and facilitating students in becoming aware of their competencies was a necessary part of the process.

Demonstration and justification of these competencies gave an added dimension to the breadth and depth of the students learning. The reflective journals that were instigated across the entire program culminated in the final semester as part of the portfolio (Sinclair & Woodward 1996, Woodward 1998). These factors coupled with students'
reflection on their own learning ensured the recognition of a variety of possibilities within the lives of pre-service teachers.

As a result of this program and the accompanying research emerging principles for developing portfolios were established. These were:

- thoughtful reflection on learning is valued (Woodward & Sinclair 1998);
- knowledge of what the owner knows, can do and is like is important and can be demonstrated given a supportive situation (Woodward 1994);
- responsibility for selection of items and justification of those items must be in the hands of the portfolio owner (Woodward 1997, 1998);
- recognition that assessment of previously hidden learning had the opportunity to emerge and that different portfolios have different purposes allowing for different learning to emerge (Woodward 1994, 1997);
- recognition of the necessity for setting criteria, goals or standards to give definition and boundaries on which to base the information gathered (Woodward 1998);
- necessity for collaboration with at least one ‘other’ to give feedback and assist in full development of the process (Woodward 1998);
- development of new understandings is further consolidated through presentation and recognition of audience (Woodward 1998)

These principles acted as a conduit for other portfolios, namely with teachers as they produced their own professional portfolios and as an assessment strategy with children in primary schools.
Teacher’s Professional Portfolios

The burgeoning of professional teacher portfolios has developed world wide over the past four to five years (Jasper, 1994; Riggs, Sandlin, Scott, Childress & Mitchell 1996; Constantino & De Lorenzo, 1998). In Australia, Retallick and Groundwater-Smith (1996) researched the possibilities of using teacher professional portfolios as evidence of achievement and for the purposes of recognition of prior learning. This research further developed into a project (Retallick 1999) where teachers trialed the Retallick and Groundwater-Smith guidelines. These guidelines stated that portfolios should demonstrate validity, authenticity, sufficiency, reliability and currency. The resulting portfolios that included a career map, reflection and personal philosophy as well as goals, a project description and evidence of learning were seen as possible models for further development of teacher’s professional portfolios.

A study completed by Clarke (1998) in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training examined core elements that exhibited learning as part of the School Leadership Preparation Program with the view to strengthening teacher’s leadership qualities. Professional portfolios were seen as a vital element in this program. Clarke concluded that ‘portfolios are a compelling means of professional development enabling a person to showcase their growth of skills and knowledge. [They] provide opportunities for practitioners to reflect on their practice with feedback, support and assistance provided by a mentor’ (p. 8). In the development of teacher’s professional portfolio mentors, reviewers or significant others play an important role as they provide opportunity for collaboration and reflection, promote refinement of skills and goals and assist in reshaping of practice and ongoing professional growth (Constantino & De Lorenzo, 1998; Lyons, 1999).
The Faculty of Education and Languages at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (UWSM) in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training have developed a Master of Practitioner Research. Professional portfolios were part of the assessment for this degree. While Retallick and Groundwater-Smith (1996) guidelines were used, criteria such as description of the context, evidence of and reflection on professional learning were emphasised. Future goal setting was also emphasised, as was the development of a personal philosophy. Analysis of the processes explored for the purposes developing teacher's professional portfolios in the Master of Practitioner Research resulted in a congruence of these processes with the emerging principles established above.

The key processes were:

- reflection on learning;
- exploration of professional learning;
- self selected and justified items;
- evidence of development as educators through interaction with others;
- feedback from mentor;
- presentation for the purposes of assessment.

Individual teacher professional portfolio programs put forward specific beliefs about both the process and the phenomenon with the most common tenets being reflection, ownership and strength of evidence. This was not the case, however, when current practices and beliefs about portfolios for primary school children were examined.
Primary school children's portfolios

Portfolios as an assessment strategy in the primary schools has grown in popularity over the past five years, particularly in Australia. The New South Wales Department of School Education developed several documents (1996, 1997) that served to both promote and support the use of portfolios as assessment and reporting mechanisms in primary schools under their jurisdiction. Other school authorities, for example the Catholic Education Office, also upheld the notion of portfolio assessment. The literature again was prolific in this domain with much of the late nineties literature, mostly from overseas, focusing on the issues of reflection (Courtney & Abodeeb 1999; Potter 1999), child/student self selection of items (McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley 1998; Potter, 1999), children as stakeholders in their learning (Woodward 1994, Downes 1999) and the ongoing value of using portfolios in three-way or student led conferences (Seliner & Bushey, 1997; Cleland, 1999). While the issues of reflection, selection of items and audience were seen as valuable there was evidence that portfolios in New South Wales primary schools were little more that an indication of achievement of set outcomes, orchestrated by the teacher (NSW Department of School Education, 1997, p22). The premise of student involvement was not emphasised in the Government documents as there was no mention of reflection or of legitimate student input into their portfolios. Student self assessment and three way conferences leading to student led conferences were detailed but the role of the students was not clarified. The ability of children to take the role of being reflective and self assessing was doubted. Even though Potter (1999) supported the notion of ‘allowing children to examine their work and reflect on its quality as they help select materials for inclusion in their portfolios’ (p. 210) she questioned the ability of young children in this role. Maguire (1997, p52), however, stated that
children’s texts “must be understood not as an experimental add on components ...
but as meaningful and purposeful acts of meaning. They are windows on the
representations of [the children’s] lived experience and cultural stances.”
Involvement of children in the process and valuing their participation is vital to the
development of portfolios. McMackin, DeCola, Galligani and Foley (1998) built a
process that involved the children in self assessment, self selection of items and
reflection, indicating that it is not only possible but also desirable. The majority of
the literature, however, focussed on the development of the teacher’s knowledge, the
necessity for the teacher to be in control and for minimal input from the child.

The model described in Woodward (1993) gives credence to the place and value of
children in the process of developing portfolios and as such is in line with the
emerging principles outlined in pre-service portfolio development. An authentic and
valuable model for primary school children portfolios should consider the following:

- quality self assessment that includes goal setting and reflection;
- self selected items that are supported by reflection on the learning that occurred;
- collaborative setting of goals and discussion of possible outcomes to form a
  framework for the collection of information;
- time set aside for giving feedback and developing the portfolio and its component
  parts;
- sharing the evidence of learning with others, for example peers, teacher, parents;
- presentation of learning achievements through student led conferences and other
  such experiences.
It is vital that children have a valid role in both their learning and the assessment of that learning. Children should be seen as active partners in the classroom as they add many dimensions to their learning that is unique when they are seriously involved in their own assessment (Woodward 1999). In endeavou ring to construct a meaningful conceptual framework that supports my beliefs about portfolio development and gives rise to continuing sound practice, narrative process and phenomenon emerged as a possible solution.

**Narrative**

Narrative has been integral to the telling of human experience since history began. It is a window on people’s life experiences. Narratives are contextual in that they are told in a variety of contexts and for a variety of reasons. They are told in the home, they are told on the street and they are told in the classroom. Narratives are told to entertain, to explain, to understand, to teach and to learn and can be based on fact or fiction or a combination of both. Barther (cited in Polkinghorne 1988, p. 14) observed that “narrative is present at all times, and in all places, in all societies, the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and there never has existed a people without narratives.”

Throughout the literature there are many definitions of narrative and many terms used to describe its location in research (for example, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Cortazzi, 1993; Beattie, 1995; Josselson, 1995). Gudmundsdottir, Beattie and Josselson all described narrative as a way of knowing and Connelly and Clandinin (p. 2) noted that to study narrative is to study ways humans experience the world. Even though such terms as methodology, inquiry,
investigation, analysis, models and studies are used consistently across the literature, the common thesis is that narratives have proven useful tools for exploring teacher’s perspectives on their culture, beliefs and actions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Cortazzi, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 1995; Josselson & Leiblich, 1995; Marble, 1997; Goodson, 1999). The advantage of narrative inquiry according to McEwan (1995) is that “it presses us to go beyond the present state of our practices to a consideration of how teaching might be conceived” (p. 181).

Narrative is both a process and a phenomenon (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Beattie, 1997). The process or method is known as narrative inquiry and the phenomenon is the genre of narrative and as such narrative has a central role in personal and professional development. It provides a process and a structure for teachers to make sense of their own experiences, and for others to better understand and support such opportunities for teachers (Cole & Knowles, 1995, p.205).

**Genre**

The genre of narrative has many different forms and many recognised structures and varied features. For example, autobiography, biography and sociological and sociolinguistic, psychological including schema theory and story grammars, literary including narrative discourse and anthropological models are but a few of the known structures. Story schema is often the choice of educators as teachers, in particular, are embedded in a culture of narrative and so the set of expectations afforded by story schema find meaning in experience. For the purposes of this paper, however, while biography or story schema initially seemed possible structures for portfolios, the sociological and sociolinguistic model emerged as the most suitable with particular
attention being paid to Labov’s (1972) six part structure. These parts are the abstract, orientation, complication, evaluations, result, coda. Each of these terms are explained below in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre Terms</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract (optional)</td>
<td>This section summarises the narrative and is in past tense. It conveys general propositions that often go beyond the immediate events in the narrative and signals the start of the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Again this section is in past tense and gives time, place and situation giving background that is necessary for the audience to understand the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>A turning-point or series or events is pivotal to the complication and is basically the content of the narrative. It can be continuous or episodic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>Detail the progress of the narrative as they indicate why the narrative was told.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>As a consequence of the complication the result implies resolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda (optional)</td>
<td>The coda returns the listener to the present and draws the narrative to a conclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Explanation of Labov’s narrative genre terms

**How are portfolios conceptualised within a narrative context?**

Portfolio structures vary from situation to situation but the commonalities across environments and the emerging of principles for the development of portfolios provoke discussion and thoughtfulness as to the location of portfolios within a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework on which narrative is based has much in common with the processes of portfolio development as well as with the phenomenon of the portfolios themselves.

**The Process**

The relationship between the previously established narrative concepts (temporality, collaboration, voice, performance and reflection) and the processes involved in developing portfolios is demonstrated in Table 2. The examples used are those developed at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur in conjunction with those
refined and modelled by Woodward (1993) in line with the emerging principles for portfolio development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Inquiry (process)</th>
<th>Pre-service Teacher Education Portfolios (UWSM)</th>
<th>Teachers professional portfolios (UWSM)</th>
<th>Primary Children School Portfolios (Woodward model)</th>
<th>Emerging Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporality</td>
<td>Chronologically placed over three years</td>
<td>Over time of selected projects</td>
<td>Over time during school year</td>
<td>Recognition that there were different portfolios for different purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>With mentoring lecturers</td>
<td>With supervisor</td>
<td>With parents, teachers and peers</td>
<td>Necessity for collaboration with at least one ‘other’ to give feedback and assist in full development of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Self selected and justified items</td>
<td>Self selected and justified items</td>
<td>Self selected and justified items</td>
<td>Responsibility for selection of items and justification of those items must be in the hands of the portfolio owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Portfolio panel assessment</td>
<td>Assessment (Interaction recommended)</td>
<td>Three way and student led conferences</td>
<td>Development of new understandings is further consolidated through presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Reflective journals and justifications</td>
<td>Reflection on professional learning</td>
<td>Self assessment and justifications</td>
<td>Thoughtful reflection on learning is valued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Process framework

Discussion

In developing this framework some of the differences between the various portfolios became evident. The collaborative nature of portfolios had the potential to be strongest within the primary school context as the relationship that develops between the teacher and the child when they are legitimately involved in the construction and reconstruction of their portfolios should be mutual and balanced. Collaboration, on the other hand, in the UWSM pre-service program was limited as the lecturer mentoring program only becomes a reality in the final semester. The place of voice in the process also needed consideration. In both the pre-service and teacher's
professional portfolios the voice of the author was decisive as they were 'in charge' of the construction of the portfolio. In the primary classroom, however, even when a collaborative partnership was well developed, the perceived need for the teacher to be in control prevented the voice of the child being heard (McMackin, DeCola, Galligani & Foley, 1998). Reflection and self assessment are learned skills that must be modelled, practised and applied (Woodward & Sinclair 1998). This process must be put in place in all three instances with particular emphasis in the primary classroom, if true self assessment and reflection is to be developed over time.

Performance at the primary school level with children's portfolios was probably the most well developed concept in the framework as the notion of three way conferences are on the agendas for many schools. As the Masters program that includes the teacher's professional portfolios, is just commencing the possibilities of the portfolio author being present at the assessment is still being developed.

While it was understandable that not all emerging principles were able to be located within this framework, the notion that these principles and established parallels with the portfolio process supported the narrative concepts represented. Not only did the above framework demonstrate legitimacy but it also aligned portfolios with the concept that narratives, and therefore portfolios, are ways of organising experience, interpreting events and creating meaning while maintaining a sense of continuity (Bruner 1990).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Phenomenon (Genre)</th>
<th>Portfolio Phenomenon</th>
<th>Emerging Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service Teacher Education</td>
<td>Teachers professional</td>
<td>Primary Children School Portfolios</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 Phenomenon Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolios (UWSM)</th>
<th>Portfolios (UWSM)</th>
<th>(Woodward model)</th>
<th>Development of new understandings is further consolidated through recognition of audience needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong> <em>(optional)</em></td>
<td>This section summarises the narrative and is in past tense. It conveys general propositions that often go beyond the immediate events in the narrative and signals the start of the narrative.</td>
<td><strong>Preamble</strong> <em>(optional)</em></td>
<td><strong>Portfolio Summary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Again this section is in past tense and gives time, place and situation giving background that is necessary for the audience to understand the narrative.</td>
<td><strong>Personal involvement and placing of self in the ‘teaching’ picture</strong></td>
<td><strong>Career Map/ Philosophy/ description of content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complication</strong></td>
<td>A turning point or series of events is pivotal to the complication and is basically the content of the narrative. Can be continuous or episodic.</td>
<td><strong>Self-selected items as evidence of learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self-selected items as evidence of learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluations</strong></td>
<td>Details the progress of the narrative as they indicate why the narrative was told</td>
<td><strong>Justification for inclusion of items</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection on choice of evidence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>As a consequence of the complication the result implies resolution.</td>
<td><strong>Summary of learning/ Philosophy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection on journey</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coda</strong> <em>(optional)</em></td>
<td>Returns the listener to the present and draws the narrative to a conclusion.</td>
<td><strong>Portfolio panel assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment (interaction recommended)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phenomenon.

The relationship between narrative genre and the phenomenon of the portfolio is demonstrated in Table 3. The genre is linked to both the portfolio as a product and the emerging principles. Again the examples used are those developed at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur in conjunction with those refined and modelled by Woodward.

Discussion

In the synthesis of the narrative genre with the phenomenon of portfolio it became apparent that there was indeed a relationship. The value of the orientation was evident
in that it not only paved the way for the rest of the narrative but it also allowed the
authors to investigate their past in order to locate themselves and their audience within
the context of the narrative. There was a fusion of the complication and the
evaluations in this model in that the evidence of the learning was exhibited in the
complication and the justifications then acted as evaluations of the evidence in an episodic way. One of the most important parts to any portfolio was the summarising
of the learning that has been demonstrated. The idea of developing a philosophy as a
result of constructing and reconstructing learning through portfolios drew together
knowledge and gave direction for the future. While each of the portfolios modelled
looked at the result in a different way the outcome of actualising knowledge was one
that has been proven previously through the Negotiated Evaluation program
(Woodward 1993). While the coda was optional, according to Labov (1978), its value
was distinctive in that it particularised and made concrete the authors experiences by
positioning them on the landscape of personal knowledge. In aligning this framework
it is recommended that the coda no longer be optional.

The one emerging principle that did not appear in this framework was:

- recognition of the necessity for setting criteria, goals or standards to give definition
  and boundaries on which to base the information gathered.

While this principle remained ostensibly outside the framework it was of no less
importance. Its relevance lay obliquely within the orientation in that the structure of
the orientation relied on the criteria set. The fact that selection of the criteria for
portfolio content was flexible allowed the author’s construction and reconstruction of
the narrative to display personal knowledge with the central tenet being maintenance
of voice. Such knowledge according to Beattie (1997) represented the voice of the narrator. Hence it can be conceived that process and the phenomenon of portfolio development is congruent with the established narrative conceptual frameworks. While the framework showed the relationship between narrative and portfolios the convincing element in this investigatory dialogue was the realisation that there was a further layer to be explored. In consonance with my belief and the research at this stage, the place of learning in the portfolio process and its parallel in narrative needed to be determined.

**Learning and the future**

While learning was represented in all portfolios, the literature focussed predominantly on the learning the portfolio demonstrated with little thought being given to the idea that constructing a portfolio for the purposes of assessment was in itself a learning opportunity. Much of the literature discussed assessment for learning (e.g. Gipps, 1994; Burke, 1992) and assessment that supported learning (e.g. Brown, 1992; Stefani, 1998; Broadfoot 1998). Broadfoot (1994), however, clearly stated that “we are witnessing the emergence of a new assessment paradigm in which it is learning itself rather that simply the measurement of that learning which is its central purpose” (p. 90). Not only should learning be central to assessment, in fact assessment should be a learning experience. When sound assessment is implemented the students should know and understand more at the end of the assessment that they did at the beginning. While Retallick (1999) posited that learning portfolios and portfolios for assessment are two different events it is the thesis of this study that the two occur simultaneously. The findings of research (Woodward 1998) recognised that sound portfolio assessment not only demonstrated learning but showed that such assessment could be
an active learning opportunity. Gill (1993) noted that “Real knowing takes place when the knower is positively altered by an experience, in relation to the immediate context, and when this experience enables the knower to alter future experiences and contexts” (p 21). Portfolios offer such an experience.

While initially there seemed only limited evidence that learning occurred during the construction and reconstruction, telling and retelling of narrative, a growing bank of information developed to support this premise. Many writers about narrative inquiry (for example Cortazzi, 1993; Beattie, 1995; Doyle, 1997; Hoel, 1997) discussed the issue that narratives told of the recording of learning that occurred. Some writers, however, were beginning to look at the process itself as an emancipation and as such recognised change occurred simply by the creating of a narrative. McEwan (1997) also discussed emancipative narratives and that narratives gave opportunity to create new meanings and in that way became meaning making activities. Connelly and Clandinin (1995) claimed that an important task in narrative was retelling the stories that allowed growth and change. Feuerverger (1997) regarded the transformative function of narrative that resulted in improvement in practice and by doing so opened up the perspectives for change. Beattie (1997, p.5) on the other hand saw narrative as enabling people to better understand their lives, allowing them to come to new understandings of what they knew and therefore reconfigure the past and imagine the future. A common thread of constructing, reconstructing and imagining the future within the framework of narrative confirms its position within the parameters of learning. As Connelly and Clandinin stated “the storyteller learns through the act of storytelling” (1995, p. 155). Portfolios gave pre-service education students, teachers and children, not only records of the past and knowledge of present understandings
but scope to put the imagined future in place by way of the learning that occurred through the construction of their portfolio; through the telling of their story.

**Conclusion**

While Retallick and Groundwater-Smith (1996, p. 13) reported that a portfolio was in effect a ‘narrative of practice’ the evidence here not only confirms that statement but amplifies it into the realm of theorising the underlying principles of portfolio development and locating the process and phenomenon of both portfolios and narrative within a common framework. The discussion, in addition, heralds new horizons as it focuses on learning and the potential of portfolio assessment in creating learning opportunities symbiotically with the narrative thesis that the learning is in the ‘telling’.

The issue of the necessity for a conceptual framework for portfolios has been explored with the acknowledgment that while there were many types of portfolios and many environments of implementation, a framework was able to be developed. The concerning feature across both the literature and the research was the lack of recognition of the place of children in the assessment process. It was almost as if portfolios for children and portfolios for adults were completely different. Added to this was the deficiency of reflection on and for learning along with the need for more considered collaboration, for example, of mentors with both the pre-service students and the teachers developing their professional portfolios.

While the above issues need to be considered the basic concepts remain the same as demonstrated throughout this paper. The key findings of this dialogue are the
symbiotic nature of portfolio development and narrative and hence the conceptualising
of a supportive framework that will not only ensure but insist on purposeful
assessment and multiple learning opportunities during the development and
implementation of portfolios as narratives for learning.

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Brownlow.


Coda

My research into portfolios had led me to construct a conceptual framework that supports all three portfolio environments of my study. The framework used is derived from the narrative paradigm and takes the form of both the process and the phenomenon of narrative. With the construction of this portfolio for my Doctorate of Education, one question remains. Will the multi-layered conceptual framework developed in this study be able to be applied to this Doctor of Education portfolio?

As both the process and the phenomenon are recognised components integral to narrative so are they accepted as components of portfolios. Each of the aligned elements of this portfolio will be discussed in relation to the conceptual framework developed in this study and thereby equating them to the emerging principles for portfolio development.

The process

The process is the methodology used to construct a narrative inquiry and in this case a portfolio. The concepts to be aligned are temporality, collaboration, voice, presentation and reflection.

Temporality

As with all research, this study has occurred over time and is chronologically placed within this document. While this section of the study is confined to a reasonably short period of time, 1997 to 1999, the boundaries of the research originated well before that. In fact the research for this study commenced in 1989 during my study for the Master of Education (Honours). The context of the study started well before 1989,
during my time as a practising teacher when the necessity for better assessment strategies first surfaced. The understanding that those being assessed needed to be included in the assessment of their own learning was initially a wild thought that gathered momentum as my work with teachers and children developed, leading towards the results of this study and beyond. As Josselson (1995, p35) stated “narratives describe the road to the present and point the way to the future”.

**Collaboration**

Within the literature the concept of collaboration is between the immediate participants. Collaboration, therefore, in the Doctor of Education portfolio is represented by the interactions between the student and the supervisor. For me, in this study however, collaboration was much more. I have the added dimension of collegial and work place collaboration in research into reflective journals and partnerships.

Catherine, my colleague, has been integral in much of the research and development demonstrated in this portfolio. The combined voice in those areas is strong and is indicative of the mutual storytelling and restorying that occurs during narrative inquiry. The collaboration has resulted in a depth of learning and collegial interaction that is unique to this study. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) posited “... our storytelling and the stories of our participants merged with our own to create new stories ... collaborative stories (p12).

**Voice**

Studies such as this one demand much more than a peripheral summation. The very nature and extent of the work demands the authors voice be heard. Those reading this document will hear my voice and know me and my thinking more deeply as a result.
It gives an authenticity to the study that can only be reflected in work where the voice of the author has been truly considered. According to Beattie (1997, p. 10) “Current research in education is taking seriously the issue of voice, and of listening to the voices that tell of an intimate and first hand experience with teaching and learning” and this portfolio does exactly that.

**Presentation**

All narratives and therefore all portfolios are constructed with an audience in mind and so it is with this document, an audience of examiners, other students and future researchers. In the Doctor of Education portfolio, however, the presentation could also have an added dimension, that of performance. It would seem that the addition of an actual performance in the form, for example, of a viva would benefit both the narrator and the audience as has been proven in the environments investigated.

Bauman (cited in Cortazzi, p. 109) supported this premise that stated “Performance of a narrative can offer both the teller and audience an enhancement of experience and heightened awareness and interest.”

**Reflection**

While it can be rightly said that much reflection takes place during research the notion of considered reflection, as discussed within this study, should be explored.

Reflection is key to thinking and as such I have included my reflections on each entry in this document. In line with the findings of my research, action as a result of reflection has been included and subsequently because of the temporal nature of this portfolio, an epilogue has been added where appropriate. Schulz, Schroeder and
Brody (1997, p. 482) explained that through reflection we retrospectively construct the meaning of our work and the influence our lives have on our knowing.

It is apparent from the above dialogue that the process conceptual framework developed across the three environments of this study is also applicable to the portfolio developed for the Doctor of Education.

**The phenomenon**
The phenomenon is the actual narrative or in this case the actual portfolio. In line with the phenomenon framework the concepts of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, results and coda will be discussed in relation to this portfolio.

**Abstract**
The abstract is the section that maps the pathway of the study and is evident in most academic writings. It is in past tense and in this portfolio it leads to the telling of the subsequent narrative by summarising the keys issues and results.

**Orientation**
The orientation sets the scene by giving a background to the narrative and placing it temporally within the span of the ‘life’ of the study. It is in past tense and introduces previous research, the participants and fundamental premises. In this study the orientation is the overarching statement that introduces the context and draws together the placement of the content of the portfolio itself.
Complication

The core of this portfolio is the articles and writings presented. They are episodic in nature but connected in the ongoing thesis of the study. They form the content of the study and develop issues relevant to the overall premise of the portfolio leading the reader towards the results.

Evaluations

Accompanying each episode is a reflection. These reflections evaluate not only the item but the learning that occurred during the assembling of the item. The evaluation is then followed by action to be taken as a result of that learning.

Results

The results of any study report on the findings and redirect the audience in several direction. Initially it recalls the fundamental premises of the study put forward in the orientation, resolves the issues developed in the complication and evaluation and points towards possible new directions; imagined futures. In this study the final paper forms the major section of the results with the reflection and action for each entry adding the other dimensions.

Coda

While the coda is optional, in my research I have recommended it be made mandatory in relation to portfolios. The principal reason is that the coda in the conceptual framework is represented primarily by performance. It is the performance, as such, that assists in the further development of understanding and learning and is integral to the purpose of the portfolio process. In the Doctor of Education portfolio actual
performance is, at this stage, only a recommendation. In this particular study, in lieu of performance, the coda is represented by the dialogue that establishes that the conceptual framework developed in this study is congruent not only with portfolios in the three environments in the study but in a fourth environment; the portfolios for the Doctor of Education.

It is apparent from the above dialogue that the phenomenon conceptual framework developed across the three environments of this study is also applicable to the portfolio developed for the Doctor of Education.

Another dimension
The results of my research showed that learning as an outcome of portfolio construction is evident. There is no doubt that learning occurred with the telling of the story; with the constructing of a portfolio. This dimension also was borne out in the development of my own portfolios; my personal portfolio and the portfolio for my Doctorate of Education. My reflections and the subsequent actions and epilogues bear witness to the learning that has occurred but it is deeper even than that. I could have done the research and written the articles and learnt much in the process but it would not have been a portfolio. The constructing of the portfolio has insisted on a depth of understanding beyond the initial learning due to the research. Focussing on the structure, development and content of the portfolio and the writing of the story that makes this narrative a portfolio has been a learning journey in itself.

The congruence between the developed conceptual frameworks and the portfolio in this fourth environment is evident. The reinforcement of the dimension that learning
occurs as a result of the construction of these portfolios is also apparent. It is therefore reasonable to recommend that the University of Western Sydney, Nepean use this framework to assist students in the development of their Doctor of Education portfolios.

Narratives for learning

I have claimed that this document is a portfolio about portfolios and a narrative about narratives. It is a meta-portfolio and a meta-narrative. I have also claimed that portfolio development is synchronous with learning and as such is a narratives for learning.

It is a meta portfolio because the thrust of the research and the publications centre on research into, and the development of portfolios across several environments. The initial environments were primary schools (Woodward 1993) and University undergraduate degrees (Woodward 1994b, 1998a) and University postgraduate degrees (Woodward 1999) As the study progressed a framework emerged that was consistent across these environments (p. 167). The alignment of this framework with both the process and the phenomenon of this Doctorate of Education portfolio added yet another environment. (p. 184). This alignment re-emphasied the claim that this was a portfolio about portfolios

It is a meta narrative because the narrative framework developed in the study and applied to this portfolio tells a story; my story. This portfolio was written as a

5 Pages referenced thus (p.--) in this section of the document refer to those pages within this portfolio
narrative using the narrative phenomenon as a form and narrative inquiry as the process (p. 19). It is a portfolio about narratives in that the results of the study, culminating in the final article, investigates narrative as an inquiry methodology and establishes the narrative framework for this portfolio (p. 154).

It is a narrative for learning because of all the learning of all the participants and the author that took place during its construction. The notion that "the storyteller learns through the act of storytelling" has been discussed, verified and reflected upon throughout this study, particularly in the latter stages (Woodward 1999). The compilation of this Doctor of Education portfolio was a learning opportunity,

"The constructing of the portfolio has insisted on a depth of understanding beyond the initial learning due to the research" (p. 189),

and a learning experience

"Focussing on the structure, development and content of the portfolio and the writing of the story that makes this narrative a portfolio has been a learning journey in itself" (p. 190).

Each aspect of the research and the resultant publications evidenced learning through investigation and reflection. The sum total of this learning has proved greater that its individual components (pp. 25, 38, 59, 71, 82, 98, 109, 124, and 152). The telling of this narrative and the reflections on the learning has established the self-evident truth: portfolios are narratives for learning.
The learning experience

The intricate professional and personal learning experiences, recorded in this portfolio, are evident in the multiple research journeys, the writing of the subsequent articles, the reflections on these articles and the actual development of this portfolio. The essence of these learning experiences is portrayed below.

The key piece of formal research for this study was analysing the impact of reflective journal writing on student teachers professional development (Woodward, & Sinclair, 1998; Sinclair. & Woodward, 1999.) The results proved that: reflection improved and deepened learning; feedback to the students about their reflections was imperative; reflection facilitated students in making links between theory and practice; and, growth in the students' professional and personal understanding was reflected in the their journals (Woodward, & Sinclair, 1998; Sinclair. & Woodward, 1999). As reflective journals became integral to the teacher education programs at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, their value in as tools for learning was indisputable (Woodward, 1998a).

The maintenance of strong collaborative partnerships is essential for good working and research relationships (Sinclair & Woodward, 1997a). The results of this research in Sinclair and Woodward (1997a), demonstrated that the "collaboration and partnerships between UWS Macarthur and the teaching profession not only existed on paper, but were balanced, living interactions that benefited all those involved" (Sinclair and Woodward, 1997a; p.45). In addition it accentuated the necessity for ongoing monitoring of the University/school partnerships and the resulting
relationships if amicable and thoughtful collegiality is to result (Sinclair and Woodward, 1997a; p.46).

Several articles in this portfolio have played an important role in the learning process and demonstrate both learning from the content of the article and the developing of connections vital to subsequent work. Woodward (1997b) clearly delineated the crucial principles for portfolio development. Woodward and Sinclair (1998) reported on the need for a prescribed structure for reflective journals. The argument put forward in this paper supports a structure for implementation of reflective journals. An argument often disputed in academic circles. The evidence from this inquiry shows that a structure is essential if thoughtful reflection is to occur (Woodward and Sinclair, 1998; p. 36)

Woodward (1998a) articulated the process of portfolio development within the B.Teach program at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. Reflection on and during this articulation stimulated critical core ideas about assessment as learning opportunities and learning experiences (p. 72). This issue is significant for the development of portfolios as narratives and formed the basic thesis of this study.

Qualitative assessment, in its various forms, has been central to my research for many years (Woodward, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1997). This methodology needed to be challenged and quantitative assessment needed to be investigated if a balanced view of assessment was to be established. The angst and challenges experienced during this investigation are detailed in Woodward (1998c). Further challenges for research are embedded in the reflection on this article (p. 83).
Woodward (1999a) investigated children's involvement in their own assessment.
Exploring the results of this study about student led conferences demanded a matching of the literature with optimal practice and subsequently established a process for implementation of student led conferences in the classroom.

Investigation into narrative inquiry became the pivotal premise of this portfolio. The literature gave credence to my beliefs in regard to the connection between portfolios and learning experiences, and the concept that portfolios were learning opportunities. The investigation resulted in the final article of the portfolio (Woodward 1999b).

This inquiry (Woodward 1999b) is not representative of traditional research but it is definitely a consequence of research of a different kind. The resulting research emphasised the variety of portfolio formats and the purposes for portfolio development across multiple environments (p.155). In addition the research required the drawing together of information gathered from a variety of sources taking narrative inquiry into account by establishing the place of voice, reflection, time, collaboration, and performance necessary for portfolio development (p. 21). The resulting framework (p. 160) was a renowned confirmation that "the storyteller learns through the act of storytelling", that portfolio development is synchronous with learning and therefore portfolios are indeed narratives for learning (p.153).

The way forward.
Developing the conceptual framework for the construction of portfolios across these four environments has already opened up new horizons. I am currently working with
thirty primary schools on the North Coast of New South Wales, through the
Disadvantaged Schools Program, and with two primary schools in Western Sydney in
portfolio development where the children have both voice and ownership. This
exciting program the accompanying evaluations and comments (Appendix B), prove
the value not only of the framework but supports one of the premises that led to this
framework. The premise being that children have both the expertise and the right to
be involved in their own learning and the assessment of that learning.

A further development is my involvement in the Department of Education and
Training School Leadership Preparation Program. In this program portfolios have
been introduced for the first time and the framework developed in this study and my
knowledge and understanding of the portfolio process has enabled me to assist in this
development. It became apparent that while portfolios are popular, few of their
implementers have experienced portfolio development. They neither have a view of
what the process is nor what actually constitutes a portfolio. Further research will
need to be done in this environment to monitor the process, the phenomenon and the
learning as the program develops and to align it with the development of portfolios
within the Master of Practitioner Research at University of Western Sydney,
Macarthur. Issues of reflection, collaboration and performance are key to this
research.

The environments that have been examined in this study; primary schools, pre-service
teachers and educators for professional development and at doctoral studies level,
omit two environments vital to education, those of early childhood and secondary
schools. I have located at least one preschool setting where children are involved in
assessment of their learning, igniting my interest and the need for investigation into the exceptional possibilities such a location presents. Secondary school environments, however, provide even more extraordinary challenges in the domain of student's roles in their assessment and learning. One such opportunity has arisen as I am now taking part in the development of portfolio construction with students doing their General Education Certificate at a senior college. The challenge now is to test my premises and the conceptual framework in these two environments.

If the findings of the study presented in this portfolio hold true in these last two environments then the resulting evidence will unequivocally be able to support the premise that portfolio assessment processes and phenomenon across multiple environments are indeed narratives for learning.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
Bibliography


**PLEASE NOTE**

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
APPENDIX A

Personal Achievements
Personal Achievements

Recognition in the profession

Invited presentations at conferences

*International Society for Teacher Education.* 1994 Maastricht, The Netherlands (From Dreaming to Reality: From Theory to Practice.)

*NSW State Conference of ARA Lismore* 1994 (Final keynote. The Principles of Evaluation and Assessment in the Primary Classroom.)

*International Education Conference Penang* 1994 (Assessment and Portfolios)

*Australia Council for Educational Administration Leura* 1994 (Outcome Centred Education: Planning with Outcomes)


*Tamworth Department School Education Management Conference.* 1995 (Keynote Speaker Outcome Based Education: Towards Quality)

*Functional Function Sydney* 1995 (Managing Assessment in the Classroom)

*Disadvantaged School Conference, Warwick Farm* 1995 (Individualised Assessment and Evaluation)

*South Coast Catholic Education Conference* 1996 (Parent and Assessment)

*International Society for Teacher Education* 1996 Brazil (The Impact Of Reflective Journal Writing: On Student Teacher Professional Development)

*International Society for Teacher Education* 1997 Canada (Teacher’s Credentials: Transferability, Portability, Comparability of Teachers’ Credentials across Countries)

*International Society for Teacher Education* 1998 South Africa (A Reflective Journey into Journalling)

*Taking Children Seriously National Workshop* 1999 Sydney (Assessment is serious business: Children as active partners)

Other conferences

I have presented papers at ten international, fourteen national and thirty five state and regional conferences on assessment over the past six years. Some of these are:

ALEA Northern Rivers (Outcomes and Literacy Evaluation) 1994

ALEA Sydney (Outcomes and Assessment) 1995

AARE Hobart (Teaching Partnerships) 1995

ALEA Darwin (Observation as Assessment) 1996

Assessment Conference 1997 Northumbia England

ACE Canberra (Insider versus Outsider Assessment) 1998
Appendix A

Doctor of Education Annual Conference (Terrigal) 1998
Doctor of Education Annual Conference (Katoomba) 1999

I have conducted over eighty whole day seminars and workshops on
assessment during the past five years. Some of these are:
Corpus Christie Cranbrook (Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting)
Corpus Christie Cranbrook Parent inservice (The role of Parents in Evaluation)
Stuart University (Portfolios Assessment for undergraduates)
Rooty Hill Public School (Outcomes and Reporting)
Avalon Public School (Innovations in classroom Assessment)
St Nicholas of Myra Penrith (Classroom Evaluation)
Macquarie University Sydney (Assessment Using Outcomes)
PETA (Assessment and Reporting) Collerton Cluster (Assessment)
North Baulkham Hills Public School (Assessment and Reporting)
St Patricks Guildford (Assessment and Outcomes)
PETA Sydney (Classroom Practice)
Tregear Public School (Assessment Principles)
Wollongong CEO (Assessment in classrooms)
North Coast DSP (Portfolios and Student led Conferences)
Narrrangle Vale Primary School (Portfolios and Student led Conferences)
Department of Education and Training (Portfolios)
Wollongong Senior College (Portfolios)

Visiting scholar to Universities

I have been a visiting scholar to the following Universities and have worked with them in the area of
assessment.
University of Victoria British Colombia
University of New Hampshire
University of Northern Territory
  * Addressed review committee: B.Teach at UWS
  * Public Lecture: Assessment and Evaluation
  * Undergraduate Lecture (3rd Years): Program Evaluation
  * Staff-Student Seminar: Portfolios in the Professional Development of Teachers
  * Lunchtime Colloquy: Implementation of B.Teach UWS

University of Minnesota

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Evaluation Consultancies

Alternative Program Macarthur Institute of Higher Education
ATEA National Conference Ballina
Illawarra Asthma Council: Schools Project
Catholic Education Office Southern Region: Teaching and Learning Program
In-School Semester University of Western Sydney Macarthur
Help Reading Program
Visiting Teaching Lecturing Program University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
Leumeah Suburban School Evaluation and Professional Development

Interviews.

ABC Radio Interview with Geraldine Dogue for Life Matters. This interview was about the assessment program I introduced to schools (Negotiated Evaluation). It generated over ten Australia wide contacts wishing further information about the program. At least one post graduate student (that I know of) has used the tape of this interview to assist her in the presentation of her research.

Major research projects

ELI Project

In 1993 I was one of the principal researchers and Project officer in a combined research project known a ELI (Evaluation of Literacy in Illawarra). This research includes personnel from Wollongong University and the Department of School Education with funding ($40,000) coming from University of Western Sydney, University of Wollongong, Department of School Education and Disadvantaged Schools Program. My role in this project is as a direct result of a personal research project that I have been involved over the past two years known as Negotiating Evaluation.

Macarthur Roundtable Project

In 1994/95/96 I was project coordinator of the Macarthur Roundtable Research Program which is part of a National Innovative Links Program (DEET funded) involving sixteen universities and eighty five schools. The Macarthur program involves eight schools and six academics. The individual funding for the Macarthur Roundtable is nearly $50,000 each year for three years. This projects aims at encouraging professional development in schools through collaborative action research.

Video

I have been interviewed on video for the Learning and Literacy program. This was as a result of my book and my expertise. This program goes to every school in Australia on the satellite network and is available to all other schools.
Appendix A

Awards
The Inaugural Teaching Excellence Award from University of Western Sydney Macarthur. (Primarily given for my work with students in the area of reflective journal and portfolio assessment)

Publications and conference papers


Appendix A


APPENDIX B
Example and Evaluations of Consultancy
A two day course looking at the issues of

Portfolios and Three Way Reporting.

Presented by Helen Woodward
Head of Primary Education
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur

16/17 August – Port Macquarie Sails Resort
26/27 August – South Grafton Ex Services Club
30/31 August – Coffs Harbour Ex Services Club

Overview

**Day 1: Portfolios**
Where are we at? Schools share current practices in the development and use of portfolios.
How to collect and interpret data.
Student Self Assessment
Portfolios – How are they made up. – Student or Student Directed
Goal setting for students
Mentoring amongst students

**Day 2: Three Way Reporting**
Where we are at? Schools share current reporting practices and pro formas
Expectations of all stakeholders.
Involving parents
The teacher’s role
The student’s role
Recommended Procedures

Schools wishing to participate in this activity will need to commit to the two days and be prepared to report upon current school practices. As each course is limited to thirty participants, priority will be given to those schools attending both days and sending more than one participant.

The Disadvantaged Schools Program will fund the cost of the presenter, meals and venue hire whilst schools are asked to cover the cost of relief and travel.

Please forward the application slip at the end of the form to Clarence/Coffs Harbour District Office as soon as possible to ensure that your school has a place secured.

Please Fax to Maurice Johnston - DSP Consultant -
Clarence / Coffs Harbour DO 02 66415099 by 30 July, 1999

Disadvantaged Schools Program
Clarence /Coffs Harbour & Port Macquarie Districts
P.O.Box 275, Grafton 2460
Phone 02 66415041 Mobile 0418 299 201 Fax 02 66415099
Disadvantaged Schools Program
Clarence/ Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie
Districts.
P.O. Box 275
Mary Street, Grafton 2460
telephone 02 6641 5041 mobile 0418 299201 facsimile 02 6641 5099
e-mail maurice.johnston@det.nsw.edu.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO:Willawarrin Public School</th>
<th>SUBJECT: Portfolios and Three Way Reporting Course</th>
<th>FROM: MAURICE JOHNSTON DSP Consultant</th>
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<td>Fax</td>
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No. of pages: 3

Dear Principal,

The following teachers from your school have been accepted into the Portfolios and Three Way Reporting Course to be held at Sails Resort, Port Macquarie on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th August, 1999.

Vicki Evans

Please ensure they get a copy of the two-day agenda, drawing their attention to the session held on the first day at 11.30am. The items listed will form the basis of portfolios that will be used on the second day also.

Could you also ensure that one staff member can talk, in a sharing session, about the portfolio practices currently in use at your school. In order to do this successfully it is suggested that approximately six examples be brought from each school. Privacy issues will be respected with regards to any student's identity.

Finally, could copies of your current report format be brought along to the second day of the course. Participants will share these formats and briefly talk about the strengths and current issues with regard to these reporting practices.

To recap the preparation, in order to gain the most from the course the following actions need to take place.

1. Bring along six items for use in a personal portfolio. (each participant)
2. Bring along six portfolio examples from your school
3. One participant to be ready to discuss the portfolios. (about 5 minutes)
4. 10 copies of reporting formats in use at your school
5. One participant prepared to talk to the report format.

Yours sincerely,

Judie Sutter
DSP Community Development Officer

Maurice Johnston
Disadvantaged Schools Consultant
DSP
Portfolios

Agenda: Monday 16 August, 1999
Sails Resort, Port Macquarie

08:45 - 09:00 Registration & Coffee

09:00 - 10:00 Current Portfolio Practices
- Schools will be asked to share their current practices in compiling a portfolio. Bring along copies of a portfolio for the participants to view as well as talking about how the portfolios are constructed, identifying the strengths of the document. Schools will also be asked to share what directions they would like to develop the portfolios.

10:00 - 11:00 Teacher, Student or Combination Portfolios
- A look at the variety of ways to construct a portfolio and identify the variety of purposes for using a portfolio. A look at the question how the purpose benefits the learner and teacher.

11:00 - 11:30 Morning Tea

11:30 - 1:00 Construct Personal Portfolios
Each Participant is asked to bring along six items. Three things of the past they have accomplished in education, two of current accomplishments and one personal item that says something about who they are or what is important. Books, photos, certificates, programs, work samples, letters etc. The items will be used to construct a personal portfolio and make decisions about what else could be included. In this way the participant is involved in the process of portfolio creation. This is vital to understand the purpose and value the process.

1:00 - 1:50 Lunch

1:50 - 3:00 Implications for school and classroom organisation?
- In light of what has been learned about portfolios during the day schools will identify the issues, practices and activities to further develop their current school practices in portfolio organisation

Disadvantaged Schools Program
DSP
Three Way Reporting

Agenda: Tuesday 17 August, 1999
Sails Resort, Port Macquarie

08:45 - 09:00 Registration & Coffee

09:00 - 10:00 Current Reporting Practices
- Schools will be asked to share their current practices in reporting to parents and students. Bring along copies of any reporting pro formas for the participants to view as well as talking about how the reports are communicated, identifying the strengths of the process. Schools will also be asked to share what directions they would like to develop the reporting process.

10:00 - 11:00 Experiences in other schools
- A look at the variety of ways, schools across the state are reporting to parents and students. The experiences and development of the reporting process leading towards the use of three way reporting and portfolios as the tool for communicating.

11:00 - 11:30 Morning Tea

11:30 - 1:00 Workshops
Topics include: Preparation for Three Way Reports; Using Portfolios as the tool; the role of parents; the role of teachers and the role of students.

1:00 - 1:50 Lunch

1:50 - 3:00 Implications for school and classroom organisation?
- In light of what has been learned about reporting during the day. Schools will identify the issues, practices and activities to further develop their current school practices in reporting with students and parents.

Disadvantaged Schools Program
Reflective Evaluations and Comments

Portfolios and Three Way Reporting Course
Held at Port Macquarie during August 16/17, 1999.

Presented by
Helen Woodward
Head Of Primary Education,
University of Western Sydney.

The participating teachers said:

I learned:

how student led conferences can benefit my school. I see it not only as a great way to celebrate and communicate student learning between all parties but also as a way to focus students on quality work.

that portfolios are very personal, owner driven and self esteem building. I also learned ways of making the reporting process less time consuming.

an awful lot about myself and how important it is to reflect on things and what I have done or learnt from that experience. Portfolios are of great value to children, but they must have ownership by the child. They must also be able to reflect on the collected samples – children can be accountable for their learning.

that there is a great deal more to portfolios than I had ever dreamed.

I realise that portfolios are an excellent tool to assist me involve students in understanding what they are learning and how. I learned that portfolios are not only for teacher use, but can be an excellent indication of student’s achievement.

the importance of portfolios and three way reporting and have a clear idea of how to implement/extend both. I am much clearer on what I am doing and why.

assessing can be incorporated into the portfolios beyond the initial evidence and can be a dynamic learning tool for all concerned.

what three way reporting is and how effective student controlled reporting can take place.

that negotiated needs to have a third dimension. There are many ways, other than written reports, that are far more valuable and self-generating, self-motivating tools. I need to be more creative and enjoy my adventures in thinking.

the true meaning of portfolios, reflection and goal setting.

A lot about myself, myself and where I need to grow. I learned how valuable I felt the idea of portfolios etc can be to children. That ownership of learning is important and I must be willing to give the ownership. I learned to change my focus to think about children’s ownership.

I was surprised:

by my reactions to the challenges presented, the initial reluctance through to enthusiasm and the possibilities that can grow from portfolios.
to realise the concerns I had regarding misplacement of reports can be overcome by placing a value on them and modelling the value of them.

that wasn’t the only person who didn’t have a clear understanding.

Portfolios could be so easily used and compiled.

how easy implementing student led conferences could be and feel quite confident about these. I believe they would be a logical next step for us.

to find my small school is going well in establishing Portfolios and better ways of informing parents.

that I had done so much in my profession whilst putting my own portfolio together

by what I heard – it is great to know that children can be empowered with their own learning situations and we must give them opportunities to do so.

by how well portfolios and three way reporting comes together.

that many of our problems and difficulties are somewhat generic. That the changing nature of our school report can be best viewed as a positive – a collaboration of learning and professional development and a willingness of parents to become deeply involved.

I am beginning to wonder:

how to introduce the concept K-6

what is the best way to create opportunities to get these practices underway.

why this wonderful process hasn’t been developed earlier.

how I will be able to introduce the idea of portfolios and three way reporting to the school.

why I didn’t know about this sooner.

if I will ever be able to learn all I’d like to know how children learn and how I can help them learn.

when I can rip up the reports as I can see no value in completing them.

why we haven’t done this years before.

where I am going, where will I start, how will I remember everything, how can I get my class in a position to follow the approaches presented and how I am going to maintain my enthusiasm

where do I start – how can I trial all these new ideas: what do I do with other staff I supervise – need to enthuse and allow sufficient time

I rediscovered:

that students’ will develop greater pride in their work by realising the value of what they are learning and its purpose.

enthusiasm and motivation and that I have the basics to develop.

myself through reflection on my own portfolio.

that I really contributed a lot to my own learning
the benefits of ownership of students’ work, portfolios etc.

that we need to treat each other more kindly and with more encouragement.

time management and purpose in what we are doing is so important – do the important things first.

that there is still so much that we need to do to help children become lifelong learners.

‘warm fuzzy’ feelings that an atmosphere of trust can instigate. I want to return to the classroom and get going.

how effective a child’s input to reporting can be.

I feel:

the process linked to exit outcomes and Viv Whites protocols has great potential to focus and drive the teaching and learning in the school.

I must prioritise the tasks, in collaboration with some supportive colleagues.

More confident to approach the development of individual portfolios with student support.

Inspired.

challenged and enthused.

enthusiastic about it.

much more confident about the value of children reporting to parents and teachers.

that I feel that I have been presented with and am ready for the challenge of setting up portfolios so that they are worthwhile and meaningful for students, teachers and parents.

that the emphasis on students ownership of their own learning is the way to go and we have felt that for a long time.

encouraged to try to introduce another approach to reporting.

I think I will:

support two of the teachers also at this course plus any other ‘risk takers’ in trialing the process then let nature take its course.

go back to my school and be enthusiastic about setting up portfolios with my class, remembering that the ownership of the portfolio is the child’s, but it has some input from the teacher. I would like to trial student led conferences so that the portfolio is seen as a valued object.

have something to say at our next staff meeting regarding these two days.

start to organise the process of presenting the two days as soon as possible.

incorporate these ideas in my school in the best way possible with room for growth and change.

Start tomorrow — with goal setting — talking with my own class and find time this week to speak to three children about where they want to go with their learning, as there are only three days left in the week. I think I will also ask my parent teacher helper who are in tomorrow for their help with student selection/justification for samples for their portfolios.
encourage the staff to develop portfolios and develop goals in collaboration with individual students to assist them to see the value of them as a teaching tool for assessing and learning.

Go back to school full of enthusiasm for establishing three way conferences for our students — not just interviews with parents with students there.

introduce the ideas beginning tomorrow.

trial the structures within my own precinct and call on my colleagues to provide constructive criticism. I will set some goals and involve the Principal and my supervisors.

go back and implement ideas and endeavour to work with others to maintain course. I will also follow up my own knowledge and try to learn more

Other Comments

A worthwhile course which has achieved its outcomes — many thanks.

Thank you very much.

A fantastic two days!

Congratulations — a very worthwhile two-day course. Helen is certainly a breath of fresh air!

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1 In the Woodward 1993 publication the term Evaluation was used. In light of the changing understandings about this terminology the term Assessment is currently replacing the previous concept of Evaluation