TEACHER LEARNING WITHIN A TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS

by

Ann D. Potts

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Teaching and Learning

APPROVED:

Posary V. Lalik, Chairperson

James W. Garrison  Sandra J. Moore

Susan B. Murphy  Jerome A. Niles

Andrew J. Stremmel

June 14, 1996
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Teacher learning, transactional process, ambiguity, collaboration.
TEACHER LEARNING WITHIN A TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS

by

Ann D. Potts

Committee Chairperson: Rosary V. Lalik

Teaching and Learning

(ABSTRACT)

This qualitative case study explored a professional development project designed to support teacher learning. A group of teachers and instructional supervisors met regularly for an academic year to create alternative assessment practices for the elementary classroom. The team of instructional supervisors planned and led meetings that encouraged the development of knowledge through interaction among teachers and reflections on classroom practice.

In the study I explored the following questions: a) What were the actions of the instructional supervisors as they planned and worked with teachers? b) How did teachers interact within the environment designed for the social construction of knowledge? c) What actions created ambiguity for the participants and what actions accommodated the ambiguity? d) How does knowledge I constructed through this research enhance my practice as a teacher educator?

The theoretical frame for this study was grounded in the work of researchers such as Dewey (1904), Vygotsky (1978,
1981), Lave & Wenger (1991), Rogoff (1990), and Short and Burke (1991) who suggested a social constructive perspective on knowledge. These researchers argued that knowledge is constructed through interactions among individuals. The interaction involves a process that is both dynamic and fluid. Through this process knowledge is constructed and reconstructed. Subsequently, the participants take more control over their thinking and their actions within the practice.

Materials that were gathered and interpreted for this study were accumulated over the period of a school year from September 1993 through June 1994. They included fieldnotes from sessions with the teachers, transcriptions of audio recordings of interviews with the teachers, transcriptions of audio recordings of planning meetings with the instructional supervisors, analytical notes on the research process, and a research journal. Analysis of materials was a continuous process that began with the writing of analytical notes during the transcription process. I identified major themes from the collected materials and selected the theme of ambiguity as an important theme for understanding the nature of the environments studied. I wrote descriptions of both the learning environment created for the teachers and the planning sessions conducted by the team of supervisors. I described the role ambiguity played in the project and how
the instructional supervisors and the teachers accommodated ambiguity.

As a result of my research I developed several meaningful insights; through working with the planning team members I developed an appreciation for the complexity of organizing a transactional process in order to accommodate teachers' inquiry. Within the sessions with the teachers I recognized how the providing of opportunities for conversation enhanced interactions. I came to appreciate the complex nature of ambiguity as I understood how ambiguity is a part of the learning process. However, it is important to develop and then implement processes to accommodate ambiguity before that ambiguity reaches a critical point. If one does so then the participants in the learning environment are not overwhelmed. If the ambiguity is accommodated within the environment then the participants are encouraged to seek out multiple perspectives.
Acknowledgements

During our lives we meet people, along the way, who help us to seek out ourselves and to make sense of our situation.

I thank my advisor, mentor and friend Dr. Rosary Lalik who, through continued interactions, conversations and modeling encouraged my professional development. She showed me how "harmony and discordance become a part of the experience"; that revelation helped me to understand the meaning of scholarship. I know that my actions will, in time, fully reflect this understanding.

I thank the members of my committee who provided the inspiration, conversation and resources which furthered my knowledge.

Support is essential during difficult endeavors. I thank all those graduate students I interacted with over the years; for their conversations, tears and laughter. The friendship that formed between Sandy, Judy, Karen, Butch and I during the project provided a learning experience which I will reflect on many many times in the future. I thank the teachers who were a part of the assessment project; they included me in their community.

My family, both far and near, provided the support necessary for me to complete this study. My mother and my late father guided me as a child; they helped me to realize that through tenacity dreams are achieved. Malc, you supported my endeavors with respect and with words of encouragement.
I dedicate this text to you my daughters, Emma and Sarah, and hope that you too will understand that dreams can be realized through tenacity and support.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS................................. v

TABLE OF CONTENTS................................. vii

LIST OF FIGURES................................. xi

PART ONE ............................................. 1

Chapter One. ........................................... 2
Focus of the study................................. 2
Need for the study................................. 3
Personal history of the researcher........... 5
Teaching 5-8 year old children................. 5
Teaching pre-service teachers............... 14
In-service experience............................. 16
Recent experience................................. 20
Theoretical perspective......................... 22
Teacher learning................................. 24
Vygotskian thought............................... 29
Relationships and stories....................... 34
Sustaining transactional environments........ 37
Time................................................. 37
Space............................................... 38
Relationship...................................... 38
Voice................................................ 39
Difficulties within the transactional
environment........................................ 40
End Notes.......................................... 43

Chapter Two. ......................................... 44
Inquiry as a process............................... 44
Becoming a participant......................... 46
Community.......................................... 53
Gathering and constructing materials......... 54
Participant observation.......................... 54
Note taking......................................... 58
Audiotaping and transcription................ 63
Interviews.......................................... 65
Artifacts........................................... 67
Analysis and writing.............................. 69
Generalization and credibility................. 76
Prolonged engagement in the field............. 77
Observation and participation.................. 78
Debriefing process................................ 78
End Notes.......................................... 80
PART TWO 

IMAGES................................................. 81

Chapter Three. Creating an environment for constructed
knowledge and reflection.................. 82
Construction of the proposal.............. 82
Invitations to participate................. 84
Bardon Elementary School............... 84
Riverview Elementary School.............. 89
Mary Brevard Elementary School......... 92
High Ford Elementary School............. 93
The first days together: Creating a
common ground......................... 94
Day One: Monday August 9.............. 96
Day Two: Tuesday August 10.............. 108
Day Three: Wednesday August 11........ 118
Day Four: Thursday August 12.......... 121
Schedule for the year................... 126
Selected sessions with the
teachers................................. 127
Tuesday, September 28.................. 127
Thursday, February 10.................. 147

Chapter Four. Planning meetings......... 157
Contexts................................... 158
Planning Meeting One,
September 2......................... 159
Planning Meeting Two,
September 9......................... 168
Planning Meeting Three,
September 13....................... 169
Planning Meeting Four,
September 20....................... 189
Planning Meeting Five,
September 23....................... 195
Planning Meeting
February 7................... 214

PART THREE 

REFLECTIONS.................................... 222

Chapter Five. Evolving as a leadership team........ 223
Ambiguity................................ 223
Sources of Ambiguity.................. 223
Deliverables............................ 223
Criteria................................. 224
Form.................................. 227
Due dates.............................. 227
Defining terms......................... 228
Development of a transactional
process............................... 230
viii
Accommodating ambiguity.......................... 235
Interaction within a community
exploring possibilities........ 236
Joint construction, reiteration
and questioning............... 236
The undulating process of the
abstract and concrete issues.. 241
Reflection without resolution... 243
Intensive planning............. 245
Support................................. 248
Exploring texts.................. 248
Sharing stories.................. 250
Tangibility............................ 253
Written records.................. 253
Plans................................. 254
Note taking....................... 257
Visual diagrams................ 258
Audio taping...................... 259

Chapter Six. Ambiguity in a transactional environment
designed for teachers' professional
development.............................. 260
Sources of ambiguity.................. 260
Mismatches of expectations and
experience......................... 260
Constructive nature of the process 263
Connecting to an outside frame or
making it your own.............. 266
Uncertainty about the pace of
work................................. 269
The nature of assessment: Concept
complexity.......................... 271
Discrepancy between teaching
practices and linguistic
practices........................... 271
Involving parents.................. 274
Accommodating ambiguity........ 276
Actions............................... 276
Conversations...................... 276
Storytelling....................... 280
Questioning for clarification
and to increase explicitness... 282
Descriptions of practice...... 288
Being candid...................... 290
Reading............................. 292
Writing............................. 298
Visuals............................. 306
Modeling and other means
of support....................... 307

ix
Construction over time.................. 311
Decision making.......................... 312

PART FOUR  ENVISIONMENT..................... 315

Chapter Seven. Looking back and looking forward....... 316
Looking back.................................. 316
Looking forward.............................. 324
Action and the social construction
of knowledge............................... 326
The paradoxical nature of
ambiguity within a
transactional process........... 330

LITERATURE CITED................................. 335

Appendices

A. Proposal, letter of application and acceptance
   response from Dr. Simmons..................... 344

B. Detailed schedule of the meetings and professional
devvelopment contexts I engaged in March.......... 353

C. Schedule of teachers' sessions and the planning
   meetings for the project..................... 358

D. List of questions constructed by the teachers..... 361

E. Response guide used by the teachers............. 364

F. Description of the math task................... 365

G. The Feather Boy Story........................... 367

H. One of the drafts of the developmental profile
   from March...................................... 370

I. Reference list of texts used in the project
   by the teachers and the planning team............ 376

J. Outline of instructional task for the "Popcorn
   Dragon.".......................... 380

VITA........................................... 387
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Watercolor paintings from observations in the garden</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Excerpt from my fieldnotes from the research context</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reflections on the contexts constitute an expanded account</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Excerpt from my journal</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Excerpt from the process of analysis: Notes on ambiguity within the teachers context</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Photograph of the visual &quot;Sprouting Magic Beans&quot; constructed by the teachers</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Photograph of a visual on &quot;developmental characteristics&quot; constructed by the teachers</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Work plan designed by the planning team members for the November 4 session with the teachers</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Agenda sent by Julia to the teachers prior to the January 13 meeting</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Detailed plan constructed by Jean for leading the session on November 4</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Visual diagram constructed on the white board in the executive board room on September 23</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Visual diagram constructed on the white board in the executive board room on October 25</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Pictograph for the assessment of childrens' writing</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART ONE: THE PROCESS OF LOOKING
CHAPTER ONE

Focus of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine an environment for teacher learning; an environment within which to provide opportunities for the construction of knowledge through a transactional process. A team of instructional supervisors constructed an environment in which knowledge was encouraged through interaction with other teachers and through reflections on classroom practice. It is through such dynamic interactions within a social context that there is the possibility for the transformation of practice.

The following questions guided the study: a) What were the actions of the instructional supervisors as they planned and worked with teachers? b) How did teachers interact within the environment designed for the social construction of knowledge? c) What actions created ambiguity for the participants and what actions accommodated the ambiguity? d) How does knowledge I constructed through this research enhance my practice as a teacher educator?

The study is constructed into a dissertation that contains seven chapters arranged in four parts. Part One, "The Process of Looking," includes two chapters. Chapter One contains the need and focus of the study, a personal history, and the theoretical basis for my inquiry. Chapter Two describes the processes I used to become a part of a
community involved in inquiry, how I gathered the materials, and how my interpretations were crafted into the document. Part Two, "The Images," includes two chapters. Chapter Three provides a description of the context created for the teachers, and Chapter Four provides a description of the environment the planning team members created for their practice. Part Three, "Reflections," contains chapters Five and Six and these explore the theme of ambiguity within the respective environments of the planning team and the teachers. These two chapters describe how ambiguity manifested itself and explain the strategies that were developed to accommodate the ambiguity. Part Four, "Envisionment," contains Chapter Seven which explains how this experience expanded my understanding of the teacher learning process.

Need for the Study

Researchers and theorists are beginning to pay attention to those environments that are created intentionally to support learners in their social construction of knowledge. These interactive environments could enhance the reflective practice in teacher learning and the quality of instruction provided in classrooms.

Teaching is an extremely complex process and one in which the teacher should be continuously engaged in through a process of teaching, reflecting and learning (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1989). However, the term
"reflective," and what type of environment nurtures a reflective practice, are not well defined. Calderhead, (1993) and other researchers who explored the nature of reflective practice, found that professional development aimed at reflective teaching focuses on the encouraging of analysis, discussions, and evaluation of practice. Such professional development encourages teachers to be socio-politically aware of their environment; to appreciate the moral and ethical issues in practice; to become more concerned about their professional growth; to develop their own theory on practice. In effect it empowers teachers. Whilst reflection on practice was initially an isolated process it is becoming apparent, through current research, that reflective practice is enhanced when teachers participate within a supportive community. Due to the difficult nature of the reflective process researchers are beginning to explore environments where teachers come together to engage in conversations about practice (Smyth, 1992).

While there is much to learn about reflective practice, there is a particular need to better understand the complexity of the interactive process in an environment created for the social construction of knowledge; knowledge which then can be transformed into the classroom practice of teachers. Interaction in such environments can be an important part of the way people relate, learn and grow.
The importance of providing such an environment has been emphasized by many educators (Fullan & Hargreaves 1992; Little, 1987; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Shor & Freire, 1987). One of these, Freire (1987) emphasized that a "Staff development seminar is a first need of teachers, a place for peers to engage in mutual re-formation" (p. 21). In recognition of the importance of such interactions for learners, Lave and Wenger (1991) called for the exploration of those environments which may be conducive to learning, and stated, "Rather than asking what kinds of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved, they ask what kinds of social engagements provide the proper context for learning to take place" (p. 14). Such exploration needs to describe in detail the interactions between the participants and the successes and the tensions within such a process.

Personal History of the Researcher

During my practice as a teacher in the public schools I attempted to implement a transactional process for learning with elementary-aged children. Later, I tried to implement this learning process in a university course on assessment with pre-service teachers in education. The following illustrations reveal the environment created in both these contexts.

Teaching 5-8 year old children

My experience in teaching 5-8 year old children in "The Developmental Pilot Program"--an alternative program within a
public school system in the capital city of a southern state—provided me with many opportunities to explore the learning process. The environment I created helped to engage children in authentic experiences. These experiences evolved from interdisciplinary activities. The environment created opportunities for conversation and allowed continuous reading, writing, and the development of reasoning processes. The children had many opportunities to socially construct knowledge.

The children in this classroom aided each other continually in the learning process. For example, emergent readers read to older more capable children. The more capable children read information (from available texts on topics they were studying) to other children working with them. Sharing with each other, and sharing with older children (8-11 year olds) in the adjoining room, was a continual part of classroom life.

The children had opportunities to share their new found knowledge in frequent open-houses for parents and other children. Parents and other visitors came to the classroom frequently and when they did I encouraged them by asking them to participate in the children's activities.

I felt that sustained, meaningful interactions, with both the children and the parents, developed over time through transactional processes. I encouraged the transactional process through the creating of many
opportunities for interaction in many different ways. For example, in one context a group of seven children of the twenty-six in the classroom initiated a gardening project. The school had a garden plot and the children wished to plant both fruit and vegetables. The children were of mixed ages and abilities and included both a child who was an emergent reader and a child who was capable of reading most of the materials in the classroom.

The children collected resources for the project. For example, in the school library they found a variety of texts on gardening and plants. They wrote to several seed companies to obtain catalogs, and several of the seed companies sent some free seeds with the catalogs. The children hunted for resources at home. They created lists of equipment they needed for gardening and also created a list to send home to the parents of other classmates to see if any other items could be obtained on loan. I received five-hundred dollars in the form of a grant from the Florida Kindergarten Council to purchase science equipment for my classroom. Part of this grant was used to obtain some of the items we needed.

The children engaged in many interdisciplinary activities during this project. Naturally, science was a major part of the project, but the children also engaged in many math activities. They measured the size of the garden plot and determined how many rows or mounds of seeds they
could plant. They measured the spacing between plants, kept logs of the heights and condition of plants as they grew, weighed vegetables, tabulated their information and drew graphs. One Friday afternoon, at the end of the school day, we held a "market" outside the front entrance of the school and sold some of the vegetables to parents as they came to collect their children. As a result it was possible to offset the cost of seeds we purchased. The children made price signs and handled all the money.

During the project the children continually developed research questions for themselves with my assistance. From the start, we generated many questions. What types of flowers and vegetables grow well in the sun or the shade? How does heat affect certain plants? Which vegetables should be grown in rows and which in mounds? How long does it take for seeds to germinate? Because some of the plants grew better than others, we generated even more questions. The information was shared with other children, particularly with those in another class who were involved with a gardening project in an area with much more sun and heat than ours. The children compared notes on the different plants they had had to plant because of the location and aspect of the gardens. They made anecdotal notes in their gardening logs, especially when major events happened, such as when a plant bloomed, or when lettuce was eaten by an animal during the night.
The children engaged in a continual process of reading, writing and conversation even after the initial research on the planting of the garden was completed. The children then read about the problems they encountered. For example, they read that squash plants may develop a problem when a grub bores into the stem; this could kill the plant. Besides the factual information the children recorded in their self-made theme books, the children also wrote stories and composed poems about their garden. Some of these stories mirrored those in The Peter Rabbit stories, The Secret Garden, and Jack and the Beanstalk.

Modeling was also an important part of the learning process. I modeled for the children when we were constructing research questions to write in their books. We talked about the types of questions that would help us in the research and writing process. In one example I created a scenario where I was going to buy a pet. I asked the children what questions I should ask before I bought the pet. As many of the children had pets I thought they would have many ideas, and they did. We wrote the questions on a large piece of chart paper under the categories of Feeding, Habitat, and Care. Other people also modeled for the children. The children wrote to local nurseries and asked if someone could advise them and work with them in the garden.

A parent of one of the children illustrated textbooks for a professor of botany at the local university. The
parent worked with the children in the garden and together they sketched leaves and identified them. They then painted pictures of the animals that visited the garden, such as the numerous squirrels, as well as the plants they found (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Watercolor paintings from observations in the garden.](image)

The children were enthusiastic about this transactional environment that permitted reading, writing, modeling and conversation about topics of interest. However, the parents of these children had many questions to ask about the process. During this time I worked with parents to help them trust and understand the process of learning their children
were engaged in. As I worked in the context, and in response to parents' concerns, I developed strategies to help the parents better understand the tensions related to a process of learning which was very different from their own school experiences. One or two nights each month I remained after school together with other teachers in the developmental program. The children and the parents visited the classroom. The children showed their parents the kinds of activities they engaged in and the logs and journals they kept.

The advantage of working with the parents in this program was that they wanted their children to experience an alternative experience to the public school program in the county. The alternative program was initiated because a professor from the local university and a group of parents had lobbied the school board to establish an alternative elementary program. These parents wanted something different, and they were open minded about the processes the teachers were going to implement.

One evening, at the beginning of the school year, I invited the parents to visit the classroom and talk with me about the process of learning the children and I would use in the classroom. We talked about the processes the children would use in the writing of logs and theme books. We discussed the importance of the use of manipulatives in mathematics. We discussed other curriculum areas such as
science. The processes used for assessment were also discussed as was the physical organization of the classroom; for example, unassigned seating.

The sharing of information with parents at the beginning of the second year of the program was much easier than it had been in the first year. I was able to share an edited video of the first year activities, and I had examples of children's work. Also, because we worked with children for several years, only one third of the class were new members. During this meeting with the parents I soon relinquished the responsibility to present information, because parents of the children who attended the previous year had stories to share about their apprehensions and their children's successes within the program.

The other teachers and I implemented other strategies to involve parents. We invited the parents to visit the classroom at any time. We encouraged them to volunteer in the classroom by asking them to join in with the children's activities, or to share a particular expertise with the children. We sent home the descriptions children wrote about projects in which they were engaged in at school. Sometimes we asked the children to complete the illustrating of their books as "homework" or to take their research home to read. They did so willingly, and when they did, they frequently shared their work with parents and others.

The major apprehension for the parents was that in the
program the children's work was not graded. No report cards were provided. The children did take the state-wide standardized test and the county-wide mastery tests towards the end of the school year. As teachers, it was our responsibility to ensure that through working in the projects the children attained all the skills identified by state officials as mandatory. To accommodate the anxiety of parents, and for our own and the children's use, we kept folders of children's work to illustrate progress over time. We used the children's observation and anecdotal notes taken during the school day to record the skills of individual children. We provided and shared information about the children's development during parent conferences. The latter occurred whenever the parents or the teachers required them; between three to six times per year.

The children took home all of the writing, logs and other materials they generated during the projects. The children held open houses for parents during which time they shared their new found knowledge through a variety of media. I provided some aid for the presentation aspect of the open-house but these activities were not teacher-organized performances. The activities the children shared derived from work they completed in the classroom during the projects. The children were responsible for any props they needed. The topics of information varied; a science experiment, a poem, a piece of writing, or a math puzzle.
Sometimes the children presented their newly-developed knowledge to other classes within the school.

**Teaching Pre-service Teachers**

Later, as a doctoral student, and then as a supervisor of student teachers, I was invited to teach a course on the assessment of children's learning to thirty-eight pre-service teachers. The course was an intensive one; we met three days a week for seven weeks. The pre-service teachers spent one day a week in the classroom and observed children. From this observation came a wide range of complex questions about assessment. During the course I tried to mirror the process of learning I developed during my earlier experiences with young children. I wanted to provide an experience that would allow preservice teachers to understand that assessment was a process whereby they raised their own questions about observations they made in the classroom; they collected their own resources to try to accommodate their inquiry.

I wanted these pre-service teachers to reflect on their questions within an environment where the emphasis was on interaction through engagement in reading, writing and conversation. The pre-service teachers recorded questions from their observations to share in small groups and whole groups. After the sharing of their questions I encouraged them to talk to each other further, to develop further questions, or to try and resolve a particular issue. I invited visitors/guest speakers to discuss their views on
assessment with the pre-service teachers. For example, a principal of a local elementary school discussed problems and attributes of standardized testing. Another speaker, a teacher, discussed the process of developing portfolios and the problems and possibilities for such an assessment process. The pre-service teachers were provided time to explore current literature on assessment; time for conversation; time to share; time to question; time to reflect on the literature they found; and time to make connections with what they were experiencing in the classroom.

As a part of the assessment process for the course the pre-service teachers developed a portfolio of their understandings on assessment. The portfolio included the journal they maintained, their notes from observations, articles which addressed their questions, and two reflective essays. For some of the students the experience was unlike any of their university courses. Some found such a transactional process to be problematic because I wanted them to construct their own knowledge on assessment practices and not simply reiterate knowledge. I wanted them to understand that knowledge is generated through reflection on former experiences; through reading their world, through observation, through discussing their world with others. I emphasized that knowledge is a building process in which the learner develops theoretical and practical understandings and
integrates them into his or her life.

The theory of the learning process I advocated was inherent in my practice as a teacher. I believe that the actions of working with the children in my classroom and with the pre-service teachers revealed my knowledge of learning. Interactions between and among the participants, and the use of available resources, help learners to construct knowledge.

These teaching experiences helped me to identify and to make explicit my tacit and intuitive knowledge about transactional processes. I valued the social construction of knowledge. As I continued my teaching practice I found that the expanding of my knowledge on the learning process came from daily interactions with children and teachers in the school context; and not from administratively-organized in-service experiences.

In-service experience

One experience I remember in particular occurred in 1982 when I was a participant in an in-service session for teachers on alternative forms of assessment for emergent readers. The use of the "Running Record" (Clay, 1979) was the focus of the session. The inservice was scheduled for one-and-a-half-hours at the end of the school day. We were given several handouts and copies of forms for documentation of the process by a perceived "expert" who had knowledge, but not classroom experience, of the assessment process. Without giving us time to read the materials, the instructor
began to read the major aspects of the article she thought to be important. She then proceeded to interpret the use of the recording system and briefly related the problems and successes related by other teachers who had implemented the techniques she described. We were allowed a brief period at the end of the session to ask questions. By this point, however, we were so overwhelmed with information, and had so little idea of what the instructor had related, that no questions were asked. I left the session disgruntled and proceeded to place all the handouts in a manila folder and procrastinated about reading them.

At the end of the school year I cleaned out my cabinet and took home several of the folders I had accumulated throughout the year from different in-service sessions. One sunny afternoon, sitting in my garden, I took time to go back through the folders to discard articles and information I thought to be unimportant. I opened the folder that related the process of how to proceed with the "Running Record" (Clay, 1979). The folder contained two or three articles by Marie Clay and references to other relevant materials. I read and reread the information and decided that this process of assessment was something I would like to attempt in my classroom in the following year.

Another teacher and I, while working in "The Developmental Pilot Program," wished to expand our understanding of the assessment processes because we knew it
was a problematic aspect of the program for parents. I telephoned this teacher, and we decided to meet together during summer to discuss the articles and to make plans to try some of the assessment processes during the year. We met frequently during the school year to relate our problems and successes with the assessment process. During the year we also found that other teachers wanted to join in our discussions, and so we became a discussion group and met once a week after school.

At this point I wondered about all those folders, full of materials, which were discarded as teachers cleaned out their rooms. How much more meaningful the information about the work of Marie Clay would have been if we teachers had had the time to read the materials before the "expert" came in. I thought how continued conversation on assessment, and the implementation of some of the practices in the classroom, would have helped us understand the process and the underlying philosophy in such a form of assessment.

I endured many similar in-service experiences during my teaching career and I was frustrated with the process. I found those processes implemented by the administration to be problematic because of their transmissive nature. The topics of focus provided by the administration were not necessarily my own. I was a passive recipient of someone else's interpreted knowledge, and I often came away feeling that my concerns were not important to administrators. In
effect, there was no forum for conversations about practice and my tacit knowledge was not valued.

Sometimes in my practice I found and benefited from the more informal "spaces" created with other teachers where I could explore my evolving practice. For example, I and five other teachers in the developmental pilot program, met once a week to discuss practice from our classroom. The topics of conversation varied depending on the issues that were important to us. Maxine Greene (1988) addressed the need for "space" for teachers to become involved in the inquiry of practice, and stated:

This is what we shall look for as we move: freedom developed by human beings who have acted to make a space for themselves in the presence of others, human beings become "challengers" ready for alternatives, alternatives that include caring and community. And we shall seek as we go, implications for emancipatory education conducted by and for those willing to take responsibility for themselves and for each other. We want to discover how to open spaces for persons in their plurality, spaces where they can be come different where they can grow (p. 57).

Even though I found it was the informal "spaces" that benefited my practice, I think administration can provide "spaces" for teachers to initiate their own inquiry and talk with others about their progress.
Recent Experience

An opportunity to help administrators facilitate teacher learning arose for me when three instructional supervisors were awarded a grant to conduct a project on alternative assessment practice. For these instructional supervisors the focus of the project was the creation of an environment wherein teachers could explore alternative assessment practices within a "community" of learners. The supervisors intended that the environment would provide "space" for teachers to reflect on their practice through transactional processes.

I recognized that the actions of these teachers, and the context devised by the instructional supervisors for the exploration of practice, would provide a unique opportunity for me to observe an attempt to implement a transactional process in teacher learning. I appreciated, through previous discussions and interactions with the instructional supervisors in Montford County, the kind of environment they envisioned for the teachers. I perceived that the processes they envisioned fit with the kinds of environments I had attempted to develop for children and pre-service teachers.

To begin the research process I volunteered to become a member of this team of instructional supervisors. My proposal was accepted by the supervisors themselves as well as by Dr. Simmons, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in the Montford County Public Schools. Becoming
a part of the team of instructional supervisors provided me with the means to develop and explore an environment for teacher learning through socially-constructed knowledge. I volunteered to work with the supervisors in the project and became engaged in all the professional development projects they supported. I volunteered to engage in the administrative work entailed by such projects. As part of my participation, I wrote memos relating the place, time and other details for the meetings. I was the contact person at the School Board Office for the teachers' professional text loan system.

I also volunteered for other tasks such as communicating with principals about the location of meetings and completing the necessary paperwork for meetings. I helped during the sessions with the teachers by facilitating discussions, and photocopying or completing other tasks which the planning team did not want the teachers to have to spend their time doing. I organized a session for teachers from across the county to meet and talk about writing practices in the classroom. I invited teachers to facilitate discussion groups, and made sure that all the participants were provided with a variety of articles to read and for use in discussion groups.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective for this qualitative study on teacher learning arose from the notion that knowledge is
socially constructed. In the early part of this century Dewey (1916) proposed that reflection was important for the creation of change in teaching practice through the reconstruction or the reorganization of experiences. He maintained that teachers have a unique role in that they must investigate their practice through inquiry. He felt that working with others may be essential for teachers to enhance this process of inquiry and to actively explore the nature of the problem. Dewey observed that "all human experience is ultimately social: it involves contact and communication" (Dewey, 1938, p. 38). However, to engage in such a process Dewey maintained that the teacher had to be alert, flexible and curious (Dewey, 1904). He explained, "Unless a teacher is such a student, he [sic] may continue to improve in the mechanics of school management, but he [sic] cannot grow as a teacher, an inspirer, a director of soul life" (p. 191).

Research that has evolved from Dewey's work recently paid increasing attention to the processes involved in teacher learning, such as the role of reflection on practice.

Theorists expanded upon Dewey's thoughts and developed the concept of reflection on practice in teacher learning (Schon, 1983, 1987, 1991; Grinnell & Erickson, 1988; Elbaz, 1988; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Calderhead, 1993). These writers proposed that teachers make meaning out of the world in which they live through joint problem solving. Teachers are perceived to be professionals and intellectuals who can
construct knowledge and transform their practice if given
time and space. The process by which they do so combines
conceptualization, the envisioning of potentials and
possibilities, and it proceeds through dialogue, planning,
and the design and implementation of curriculum in the
classroom (Gramsci, 1971; Greene, 1988; Aronowitz & Giroux,

More recently, Smyth (1992) emphasized the development
of reflection as a means for action, and hence a means to
transform practice. He stated that, "Reflection is not the
attempt to arrive at correct or even better view of the
situation, but rather the attempt to help teachers 'move
towards the point where their elaborations of their own
knowledge generate projects for action' (Elbaz, 1988, p.
179)" (p. 281). It is important that reflection on practice
is a self initiated exploration that will internally motivate
the teacher towards action. Action is important because
through action one can implement the envisioned
transformation of practice.

Shulman (1987), in support of developing communities to
explore practice, considered Lauren Resnick's address to the
called for communities in which teachers could explore their
practice and stated "that learning and problem solving go
best when individuals can work together cooperatively and
share knowledge that would otherwise be insufficient when

23
working alone. Schools, she concluded, must become much more powerful occasions for groups working together to reason about specific situated problems (p. 37)." Resnick's observations encapsulate much of the current thought about collaborative communities.

Teacher Learning

Teachers have traditionally been isolated (Lortie 1975; Sarason, 1982), and coming together to work collaboratively is not an easy task. Schon (1987) cautioned that because of the different perceptions of individuals, the bringing together of those individuals will lead to different interpretations of reality. Therefore, environments need to provide interactions which will accommodate the differences. Given the opportunity, communities of teachers can create environments where they can envision transformation of their practice if learning proceeds through a process that includes interaction, problem solving and sharing knowledge (Shorte & Burke, 1991; Harste, 1988). In such an interactive process teachers can address and begin to explore the complex nature of teaching.

Ayers (1993) proposed that teachers are natural explorers:

As they explore the world and the lives of their students, they cast lines to different ways of thinking. Teaching is often bridge-building; beginning on one shore with the knowledge, experience, know-how, and
interests of the student, the teacher moves toward
broader horizons and deeper ways of knowing (p. 66).
A transactional process may accommodate the "bridge building"
by providing "broader horizons" and "deeper ways of knowing"
through interactions, where the learner constructs meaning by
transacting with others through the use of language; through
reading, writing, modeling and through reasoning processes
which construct and explore complex concepts. The
environment facilitates collaboration within a supportive
community, wherein mutual assistance between all the
participants in the environment is an important part of the
interaction.

The purpose of the assistance is to provide a supportive
environment wherein the participants do not feel as though
they have to construct knowledge on their own. Such
supportive assistance will provide a more reduced risk
environment. The environment created for such a
transactional process helps the learner to experiment, to
risk exposure, and to accommodate the dissonance involved in
the construction of knowledge (Weaver, 1993).

The transactional terminology evolved from the works of
Dewey (1896), Bentley (1950) and later Kilpatrick (1952).
"They offered the term transaction to designate situations in
which the elements or factors are, one might say, aspects of
the total situation in an ongoing process. Thus a known
assumes a knower, and vice versa. A "knowing" is the
transaction between a particular individual and a particular environment" (Rosenblatt, 1969).

The notion of transactional process also developed through the work of Getzels & Guba (1957). These researchers construed a transactional process in their inquiry on the socio-psychological theory of social behavior within leadership styles. In the transactional process interdependence and interaction replace authority and independence. Proponents of the transactional process, such as McCampbell (1972), stated that "If parity is the key term in the transactional structure, and interface a key to transactional role definition, then negotiation is a key term for transactional process" (p. 9). Getzels & Guba (1957) found that transactional process caused cooperative attitudes and the development of trust. They found that when implementing the process with the participants they had to introduce the process slowly; one step at a time. They found that the process of negotiation and development of mutually complimentary roles in the work group was not an easy task.

But in the long run, the frustration and the ambiguity results in a better utilization of resources. Because neither individuals nor roles can be caricatured in a preestablished easily accessible hierarchic structure, the group members must learn about each other. They become more sensitive to each other and gain greater knowledge of the possibilities that are inherent in the
resources of the group. They are better able to adapt and adjust (p. 12).

Getzels and Guba (1957) also claimed that through this process functional change was most likely to occur. However, McCampbell (1972) stated that often an effect of the "decision-making structure in the transactional process is ambiguity and its attendant frustration" (p. 11). McCampbell advised that the ambiguity and frustration need to be introduced at higher levels of consciousness, and participants in the process have to recognize the feelings as being appropriate and valuable and that such feelings lead to "equanimity" in the process. For transactional processes to be successful the problems raised within the community should be viewed as potentially positive.

Transactional process moves beyond, but also includes, interactional process. An important factor in the transactional process is interaction between participants as they transform ideas. This important factor was more recently discussed by Rhodes & Shanklin (1993) who stated that, "In communicative events there is the potential for the transformation of ideas" (p. 79). It is not just the sharing of ideas that leads to transformation of practice, it is the joint action which is established through collaborative inquiry. Such collaborative reflection on practice is a reconstructive experience that results in the possibility for action and hence transformation of practice (Hargreaves,
Action is the process of applying one's understandings gleaned from interaction with others, and the applying of this new found knowledge to practice. Through actions within practice the teacher changes and influences curriculum design. Through such action teachers slowly transform practice so that they become "free to exercise their critical perspectives and assume control over knowledge and curriculum, not to function as servants of authority" (McKernan, 1988, p. 193). The action becomes emancipatory, insofar as the teachers begin to make more decisions within their practice; the teachers gain confidence in self. The action becomes a continuous spiral process of planning and interacting with others, acting, observing and reflecting.

Another important factor of the transactional process is that any focus for exploration should be authentic and should evolve from the inquiry of the teacher. In referring to authenticity for learning in the classroom, Cohn & Kottcamp, (1993) identified authenticity as "intrinsic interest, a sense of ownership, and connection to the "real world."

Authentic inquiry is the paying of attention to aspects of the environment that are problematic through interaction and observation. Authenticity, as applicable to this study, meant that although the teachers did have to explore alternative assessment and developmentally-appropriate practice for the project, the design of the project was such
that the teachers used their individual classroom setting as a place to explore assessment; their conversations portrayed "real life" situations and problems from the classroom.

The focus of exploration in teacher learning must evolve from the teachers' observations of practice; however, such reflection takes time, and "developing descriptions, examining beliefs, and contemplating changes in one's practice are not automatic routines" (Wildman & Niles, 1987, p. 29). Observation is a complex process within the classroom and it is an ongoing process of questioning and observing that leads to the reconstructing and changing of practice and decision making (Paris, 1993). However, observation of practice must occur if teachers are to come together to converse about their practice in an environment conducive for teacher learning.

**Vygotskian Thought**

The emergence of the written work of Vygotsky and others furthered the concept of the social construction of knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that personally meaningful knowledge is socially-constructed through shared understandings and interactions with available resources. He maintained that speech is of vital importance in the construction of knowledge. With children he found that "it seems both natural and necessary for children to speak while they act; in our research we have found that speech not only accompanies practical activity but also plays a significant
role in carrying it out" (p. 26). The interaction involves a
dynamic, and fluid process between the learners, as knowledge
is constructed and reconstructed. Vygotsky claimed that
"the most significant moment in the course of intellectual
development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of
practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and
practical activity, two previously completely independent
lines of development converge" (p. 24).

In this socio-cultural experience in learning, the
learner first experiences learning within the environment
through interaction with others in the community and through
the use of signs and tools within that community. Signs and
tools both involve mediated activity. According to Vygotsky
(1978) signs are internally oriented and their use
constitutes a process to aid oneself in understanding the
world. Tools are externally orientated. "The tool's function
is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object
of activity, it is externally oriented it must lead to
changes in objects" (p. 55). Through speech, thoughts become
accessible to the processes of social influence. The learner
reflects on the socially-constructed knowledge, and makes
connections with past experiences. The reflections and
elaborations that occur are personal and, at the same time,
are social. Knowledge is constructed through collaboration
and a transactional process is internalized. Vygotsky (1986)
stated, "An operation that initially represents an external
activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (p. 56-57). However, as teachers implement their new found knowledge it is not the same as what was constructed collaboratively. Knowledge is reconstructed and is transformed as the teacher implements that knowledge within the classroom context (Rogoff, 1990). This premise is also supported by Brown (1989) who noted:

People who use tools actively rather than just acquire them, by contrast, build an increasingly rich implicit understanding of the world in which they use the tools and of the tools themselves. The understanding, both of the world and of the tool continuously changes as a result of their interaction. Learning and acting are interestingly indistinct, learning being a continuous, life-long process resulting from acting in situations (p. 33).

The process of understanding the world through the use of tools is not done alone it is done within an interactive process.

Lave and Wenger (1991) reasoned and maintained that through the examination of the role of participation, the construction of knowledge within a community is not regarded as a one person act. Learning in such an environment, is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. This means, among other things, that it is mediated by the differences of
perspectives among coparticipants. It is the community, or at least those participating in the learning context, who "learn" under this definition. Learning is, as it were, distributed among coparticipants, not a one-person act (p. 15).

Rogoff (1990) elaborated on the interactive nature of the construction of knowledge by stating that in such interactive settings "it is impossible to say "whose" an object of joint focus is, or "whose" a collaborative idea is. An individual participating in shared problem solving or in communication is already involved in a process beyond the individual level" (p. 195).

Knowledge is a shared activity and is not merely the taking of ideas from the conversation. This premise is supported by other Neo-Vygotskian theorists such as Tharpe and Gallimore (1988) who proposed that assistance within the learning environment does not flow in one direction:

In joint activity, the signs and symbols developed through language, the development of common understanding of the purposes and meanings of the activity, the joint engagement in cognitive strategies and problem solving—all these aspects of interaction influence each participant (p. 89).

Such assisted performance needs careful design and management of the environment.

The initiator of the environment realizes that through
such knowledge construction, and through a process of mutual assistance, the role of "expert" becomes "fluid." The participants share the role of "expert." To achieve this characteristic it is necessary that the participants provide, appreciate, and respect experiences to be shared and conversations to be initiated. The concept that the role of the expert is a "fluid" one was supported by Bayer (1990). She proposed that the capable peer in the learning environment is not always the one who assists. "The roles are not that constant ... he or she is bringing a fresh perspective to the topic, can also clarify, extend and qualify the hypotheses generated by the other group members" (p. 13). Such a community asks questions, seeks help from all participants, and uses the constructed information to change practice. Hollingsworth (1994) found in her exploration of a community of teachers engaged in inquiry that the "social contexts of our dinner meetings allowed all of us to take the floor as "experts" in special areas of interest and teaching" (p. 5).

In such contexts, where assistance is encouraged, Vygotsky's concept of learning could explain how thinking is initially carried out among the participants in groups, and how the process of interaction is slowly transformed, over time, and through further conversations. Subsequently, the participants take more control in the process and in the direction of their own thinking and actions within the
practice (Vygotsky, 1986).

**Relationships and Stories**

Within an environment for the social construction of knowledge there must be multiple opportunities for the development of relationships and conversations. These opportunities may take on different forms such as authentic conversation, storytelling, and summarizing. In a transactional process the participants are frequently encouraged to share their practice through authentic conversation or "real talk" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, & Tarule, 1986). Through "real talk" participants can read and can change their world (Greene, 1988; Freire, 1973) by relating their intentions, interpretations and their experiences, in order to reconstruct their practice (Rosen, 1984). The source of the teachers "real talk" is their observations of practice.

The importance of conversations that derive from "real talk" has been noted by many researchers (Bruner, 1990; Shor, 1992; Giroux, 1985). Short and Burke (1991), for example, proposed that:

As learners, we integrate our own personal knowledge with what we learn from others by developing the capacity to really talk with others while continuing to speak and listen to ourselves. We constantly search for connections between what we already know and what we are currently experiencing in order to construct our own
understandings or stories (p. 31). In order to explore their culture the learners within a community share individual ideas and stories from their practice.

Once shared with others, these stories evolve as they begin to include other interpretations and ideas. Gitlin & Price (1992) recognized that ideas may be individual but once shared they evolve through sharing and then develop. Other researchers talked of the value of teachers working together to construct knowledge in "collaborative settings." Their assumptions were that by working together teachers developed an instructional range, depth and flexibility (Miller, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1994; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Little, 1987).

As a part of conversations about practice, teachers also relate experiences through the use of stories. A story is a tool that can be used to provide images for others that are "rooted in our experiences as cultural beings" (Dyson & Genishi, 1994, p. 4). Storytelling provides a means to relate experiences; it is a unique human characteristic, and it involves a revealing of the social self (Bakhtin, 1981). More recently this premise was supported by Cochran-Smith and Lytle who stated that it is, "through sharing such stories the teachers build "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) which are "constructions of what others are saying, doing and meaning" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993, p. 94).
Storytelling is regarded to be an important practice in enhancing the reflective process. Through the practice of the sharing of stories there occurs a construction and reconstruction of experiences (Clandinin, 1993).

Teachers construct and share thoughts and actions about their practice through the sharing of stories. Such open sharing provides a space for other teachers, with similar experiences, to elaborate on the story, and to verify or question its content (Mattingly, 1991). As stated by Moore and Lalik (1992) "Telling stories can be a means for reflecting on beliefs and instructional practices, a source of knowledge for making sense of new and different teaching/learning contexts and an aid in the enrichment of one's understanding and knowledge" (p. 329). Teachers' stories also reflect care and concern about children (Noddings, 1986).

Clandinin (1993) noted how in the interpretive and constructive nature of storytelling, "We began to know our own stories better by hearing others' stories. As we listened to others' stories, we not only heard echoes of our stories, but we saw new shades of meaning in them" (p. 2). By responding to storytelling, and through the retelling of stories, learners expand the possibilities for transformation of practice and their reflection can become action. However, to engage in such conversations Hogan (1988) and Noddings (1986) maintained that collaborations need time,
relationship, space, and voice in order to be established and to be maintained.

Sustaining Transactional Environments

Time

Teachers have previously been engaged in processes, such as in-service programs, which have proved to be ineffective for the development of practice. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) discussed how "in-service education or ongoing staff development explicitly directed at change has failed, in most cases, because it is ad hoc, discontinuous, and unconnected" (p. 13). These processes were based on the tenuous notion that change would be immediate if the teachers were handed the knowledge in text or verbal form. Time to reflect was not a priority in such in-service activities.

Within an environment designed for a transactional process, teachers need time to come together and to discuss their practice. They need time to enact their new found knowledge within their practice before meeting again for further conversation. If time is given in both these dimensions, if teachers are provided with the opportunity to apply the knowledge to their practice and to reflect on the effects of the change in their practice, then teachers can construct and reconstruct knowledge in meaningful ways. This premise is supported by many researchers who believe that if teachers are given time for teacher learning in collaborative communities, then teachers can integrate their observations
into their emerging theories of learning (Schon, 1983; Cochran-Smith & Lytie, 1990, 1993; Miller, 1990; Wildman & Niles, 1987).

Space

Space to sustain interaction can be defined in different ways. Space is conceived as a place and time for teachers to come together. More importantly, in relation to the construction of knowledge, space is a place where teachers have the opportunity to envision an alternate practice. Space provides teachers with the opportunity to use their imagination and let their envisionments be heard and attended to by others. Miller (1990) proposed that as the space develops over time "the participants hear that [their] our voices express multiple and often contradictory possibilities for [themselves] ourselves. [They] We continue to look for and try to create spaces in which the experiences of [their] our daily lives as educators can be articulated in their multiplicities" (p. 169). Such space is difficult to create within the constraints of the schedules of the present day school. Administrators and initiators of professional development contexts must find spaces for teachers to come together, and must provide teachers with the feeling that they can explore all possibilities.

Relationship

If time for interaction is given within the transactional process, then relationships can develop beyond
a superficial nature (Hargreaves, 1992). As a result of the time given reciprocity, which is an important aspect of the interactive process, may develop. Reciprocity develops as the teachers in a community work together. As the interaction becomes more intense the relationships are renegotiated and this subsequently enhances the interactive process (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). The opportunity to develop such relationships helps teachers develop confidence in self and in the process, and to gain "voice."

Voice

Within an interactive environment where teachers share the tacit knowledge from their practice, knowledge is expanded upon, elaborated and eventually reconstructed. Britzman (1990) interpreted this process of interaction within the environment as a means to gain voice, and maintained that voice is important when one constructs within a social process. The development of voice within the interactive community is an intricate weaving of voice, mind and self (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). As the teacher develops and shares her new found knowledge through the sharing of stories with others within the community then her voice is enhanced and becomes a powerful mode of knowing (Witherell & Noddings, 1991). The enhancement of teachers' voices in collaborative environments has been supported as a means of providing vision for education (Hargreaves, 1994; Miller, 1990). Visions of
possibilities occur through the teachers' practice and through sharing the knowledge with others. Within this reflective and active process teachers become agents of change.

**Difficulties Within the Transactional Environment**

There is a dynamic complexity to transactional processes. They are non-linear and unpredictable. Because of their unpredictability it is hard to guide them (Fullan, 1993). Such a transactional process can create feelings of dissonance and, as a consequence of that dissonance, ambiguity can arise. Even though Dewey (1933) emphasized the need for reflection on practice, he also cautioned that within the reflective process, "One must be willing to endure suspense and undergo the trouble of searching" (p. 16). Kincheloe (1991) also maintained that teacher inquiry grows out of the lived experience of the teacher. Teachers engage in a self-understanding of practice, "especially the ambiguities, contradictions and tensions implicit in them." (p. 17). Grimmett and Erickson (1988, p. 6) suggested that reflection is promoted when the mind is, "in a state of doubt, hesitation, and perplexity about a situation." It is only when we address such perplexity that "suggestions for action occur." Miller (1990) discussed the "messiness" in such collaborative work. However, the placing of oneself in a situation of perplexity is part of transactional learning.

In order to risk perplexity, the environment has to be
organized in such a way as to accommodate such feelings. Another difficulty is that the "equanimity" of the roles within the process need to be attended to. Teachers are used to "receiving" knowledge from experts. The roles in the transitional process are interchangeable as the teachers converse with each other. However, the process of negotiation and the development of roles which mutually compliment one another is not easy.

Another difficulty is the expectation that the ideas shared and generated by the participants are transferable. Ideas can be shared and the successes related but such sharing does not guarantee successful transfer to another context. Teachers' contexts are different and their actions within those contexts all differ. This means for the teacher that whatever knowledge she has gleaned from interaction with other teachers, she has to reflect on the knowledge and transform the knowledge, as she applies it in her own classroom context.

The participants within the transactional environment must be able to respect the interpretations of others. This does not mean that they have to accept interpretation. Rather, teachers within this process must acknowledge that questions may not be easily resolved and solutions to complex problems of teaching are not easy to find. Withholding judgment and considering other possibilities seems to enhance learning. A transactional process for teacher learning is viable; however, close attention has to be paid to the complexity
within the process.
End Notes

All the names in this text are pseudonyms.
CHAPTER TWO

Inquiry as a Process

I am simply trying as best I can to make sense of this experience of living (Lather, 1986, p. 267).

This chapter provides an overview of how I developed a qualitative case study. Qualitative research is an interactive process whereby the participants teach the researcher about their lives. Ely (1991) suggested that researchers immerse themselves in settings that are natural and not contrived. The researchers attend to the experience as a whole, not to separate variables, and the work involves analysis about what was studied.

The design of a case study begins with the seeking out of potential contexts for the inquiry, which in my case consisted of several possible professional development contexts with different groups of teachers. Bogdan (1982) proposed that the researcher, after seeking a research site, proceeds to collect, review and explore data; makes decisions about where to go with the study; decides how to distribute time; considers who to interview or observe and what aspects of the context to explore in greater depth. The researcher continues to modify and redesign and develop the research.

A case study is characterized "by a thick description that not only clarifies the all important context but makes it possible for the reader to vicariously experience it"
(Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 181). A case study also has several purposes. It must render, depict and characterize, provide a discussion between events and an analysis of events, and focus on individuals within the context (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The present case study was "observational" (Bogdan, 1982, p. 59) in that the major method used to gather materials was participant observation; the focus of the study was on part of an organization.

The assessment project was just one of several contexts in the county during the school year 1993-1994 where teachers could engage in professional development. As an intern instructional supervisor I participated and collected materials in all the contexts. I struggled to decide which context would be the focus of my study and chose a context that was a "naturally existing unit." I realized that by selecting this one context as a focus for the dissertation I was, as Bogdan stated, "breaking off a piece of the world that is normally integrated" (p. 59). Within this process of choosing a "case" or "context" for study Marshall and Rossman warned that case can be studied from "any number of angles; a case is those phenomena seen from one particular theoretical angle" (p. 43). They maintained that an important point about the study is that "the identifying and defining of the case under study proceeds side by side with the refinement of the research problem and the development of the theory" (p.
The following section includes information on the qualitative research I engaged in, how I became immersed in the research site; the participants I interacted with in this environment; the materials I gathered and the process of analysis and writing I implemented.

**Becoming a Participant**

In January 11, 1993, I met Dr. Jean Thompson for lunch and discussed with her whether I could participate with the instructional supervisors in their practice in the public schools of the county. I explained that I wished to participate in contexts in which teachers would have the opportunity to meet, talk, and reflect on their practice.

Jean is one of three people I participated with closely during my inquiry. Jean was the instructional supervisor for Elementary Language Arts and Coordinator for Chapter One and Reading Recovery. Kathleen was Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education in Language Arts, Foreign Languages and Social Studies. Clyde was Instructional Supervisor for Science Math and Media K-12. At the start of the inquiry I had known all three of these educators, in different settings, for four years. I was a participant observer in Jean's inquiry for her doctoral thesis. At different times during my graduate studies I attended classes with Kathleen and Clyde. Although I felt comfortable with Jean, Kathleen and Clyde, I was apprehensive about my position with the
other administrators at the School Board Office. On February 3, 1993, I met with Jean and Kathleen at the home of my university advisor, and we discussed my entry into the community. I suggested that I could participate in the context through an internship and could make such entry by asking permission from the Assistant Superintendent, Dr. John Simmons.

I constructed a proposal and a letter of application and explained to Dr. Simmons the kind of inquiry I wished to engage in as an intern instructional supervisor. In the proposal sent to Dr. Simmons I explained that through the internship with the instructional supervisors I wished to further my understanding of how to facilitate and support teacher learning in professional development contexts. I explained that the inquiry would be an in-depth qualitative analysis and that my primary source of gathering materials would be through participant observation; fieldnotes and audiotaping would be the primary collection devices. In the proposal I wrote briefly about my theoretical stance, and gave a background of my experiences as a teacher (see Appendix A for the proposal). Through making contact with Dr. Simmons I tried to project an image of myself that would maximize my "gaining entry" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

However, although my process of gaining entry was ultimately successful, I recognized that I had not necessarily achieved access. The gaining of permission at the administrative
level does not always guarantee successful participation within the context to be explored. The application was well received by Dr. Simmons, but he did not contact the teachers to see if they would want to participate. Primarily, he acted as a "gatekeeper" (Becker, 1970); he permitted me access into the schools in the county, in order for me to work alongside the instructional supervisors. I then had to negotiate with teachers in the contexts to develop their willingness to participate. It is the researchers task, as Ball (1990) stated, "To make themselves acceptable to all parties in the field, if possible, to take on a research role that allows maximum flexibility in forms of social relations and social interaction" (p. 165). One strategy I developed was to discuss frequently the proposal for the study with Kathleen and Jean. It was important for Kathleen and Jean to be part of the proposal construction because we were to work closely together in constructing professional development contexts for teachers in the county. They needed to understand my philosophical stance about the learning process; how I believed that the learner is an active participant who develops knowledge through interactions which involve conversations, reading, writing and modeling. Also they needed to know the kinds of materials I wanted to gather.

I interacted with many people during my internship and study. The offices of the instructional supervisors were
located in the building of the School Board Office of Montford County. I regularly came into contact with most of the personnel, including secretarial staff and the administrative staff. The secretaries helped me locate materials I needed for meetings with teachers. For example they allowed me access to the store room for folders. They also had knowledge of the shelving space I needed for the storing of teachers' professional texts. The latter were available to teachers in the county on a loan system. I participated in all social events and celebrations; for example, a secretary's baby shower, the annual winter party in December and a retirement party. I asked the Director of Elementary Education if I could use a teacher work day so that teachers could come together for the whole language support group. I participated in meetings at all administrative levels, and attended the following meetings regularly: All Staff Meeting, (the administration at the school board office and all the principals and the assistant principals in the county participated); monthly meeting of elementary school principals; meetings of the instructional supervisors with the assistant superintendent; a weekly meeting with the Director of Elementary Education. In addition I attended special area meetings, such as the Chapter One organizational meeting.

I began my study at the beginning of the school year in September, 1993, and established my physical space at the
School Board Office. Jean made space available for me in her office and provided a desk, chair and filing cabinet. I was introduced as an intern instructional supervisor who was interested in participating in contexts for the professional development of teachers. During the first few weeks I visited schools with Jean, and then we began slowly to immerse ourselves in many different professional development projects that arose throughout the school year. As local funding for staff development became available, and as proposals written by the school principals for staff development were submitted and funded, the professional development contexts unfolded.

The contexts in which teachers came together were quite diverse. A cohort group of high school teachers met to explore topics such as block scheduling, interdisciplinary approach to curriculum development, and vocational education. Teachers from an elementary school explored aspects of the reading and writing process. Some teachers held meetings prior to the beginning of the school day or after school. A group of teachers at High Ford were interested in "play" at the kindergarten level so I collected resources, such as articles and texts for them, and I facilitated their discussions. I facilitated a whole language support group that met monthly on either a teacher work day or after school. I worked for one morning, biweekly, in the classroom of a first-grade teacher who was trying to make changes in
her practice (see Appendix B for a detailed schedule).

Other projects included one that was funded by the state department and involved a group of sixteen teachers (elementary through high school) from various schools in the county. A professor at the local university initiated the application for funding for the project and also chose which local county would accommodate the project. The teachers in this project engaged in conversations about their practice during biweekly meetings and read professional texts which pertained to their individual inquiry from the classroom.

Due to the extensive nature of all these projects and the need for me to transcribe, analyze and elaborate on fieldnotes, it was not possible for me to be in the field with my colleagues every day, for the whole day. This constraint presented problems. Initially, the decision as to which contexts would best facilitate my inquiry was difficult to make. This was a continual struggle during my year-long internship because each context was different. I recognized, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) stated, that the researcher should have "sufficient involvement at the site to overcome the effects of misinformation, to uncover constructions, and to facilitate immersing oneself in and understanding the context's culture" (p. 237). The maintaining of balance was not easy.

I perceived that as the year progressed I would interact with many teachers. Even before the study began I had
developed relationships with several teachers through the Whole Language Support Group; I facilitated this group for three years prior to the study. I also knew teachers through my volunteer work as a parent of school-age children. In my capacity as supervisor of student teachers (as a graduate assistant at the local university) I had worked with and met many teachers.

The first teacher I was to have close contact with, and one I also maintained contact with throughout my inquiry, was Julia. Julia was a third-grade teacher who successfully applied for the position of project director for the assessment project. I first met Julia in a graduate education class at the local university and furthered my interaction with Julia when I was a supervisor of student teachers in the school where she was a third-grade teacher.

The formal participants in the assessment project were as follows: the project director, Julia; the supervisors of instruction for the county, Clyde, Jean and Kathleen; the supervisors for the gifted program and special education program; Dana, the Director of Elementary Education; twenty seven kindergarten-through-third-grade teachers; the administrative staff (four principals and an assistant principal); and me, as intern instructional supervisor. The planning team for the assessment project consisted of Kathleen, Julia, Jean, Clyde and me. I spent most of my time with this planning team during the assessment project and
also all the other contexts in which I was involved.

The supervisors for the gifted program and the special education program attended the first four-day session with the teachers. After this session the gifted supervisor attended one other session.

Community

Within Montford County there is a university town, and a neighboring town, within an expansive rural area. Eight-thousand-six-hundred students attended thirteen elementary and seven secondary schools in the county. The twenty-seven teachers in the assessment project came from four different elementary schools in the county. Three of the schools, Bardon, Riverview and High Ford, were in rural areas and had student populations of 192, 291 and 294, respectively. The fourth school, Mary Brevard, with a population of 521 students, was located in the university town.

The population in this county and its workforce is diverse. In the university town many of the parents of the children in the schools are associated with the university. The parents either teach or carry out research at the university. Others provide additional services to the university through catering, cleaning, maintenance and grounds management. Other parents work in grocery stores in community services, in the police force, fire and rescue services, in the local hospital, library, restaurants and
shopping malls, and in the building trade. The university community is centralized within a small number of housing subdivisions with access to major services. Smaller communities, in more rustic locations, are scattered across the county and access is more restricted. The parents of the children in these areas are employed in farming or in some of the light industries in the county.

Gathering and Constructing Materials

Participant observation

To collect and gather materials I became an ethnographer through participant observation. The ethnographer, as defined by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), is a person who "participates overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned" (p. 2). Through such a process of intensive observation, and by listening and speaking (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), the role of the participant observer in ethnographic work can take on several different forms. Some observers play the role of a "complete observer"; the researcher does not participate. Others do participate and the researcher "goes native" (Lofland & Lofland, 1984, p. 34). Going native implies the researcher runs the risk of abandoning analysis "in favor of the joys of participation" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 98). Some
researchers suggest that a middle ground between these two extremes is necessary (Ely, 1991; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1988). I found in some of the contexts in which I was involved that I felt more like a 'native.' This was particularly so during my interactions with elementary school teachers (in the assessment project), partly because I knew many of the teachers from prior interactions, and the environment created by the planning team members was an interactive one. In this context, and because of my interactions, I was able to talk to teachers about the process they were engaged in; I was a part of their community. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p. 93-98) discussed extensively the advantages and disadvantages of the observational role and where the researcher has an "external" view to the participation role where the researcher has an "internal view." A third mode of participant observation is where the researcher becomes a "complete participant" and has access to inside information and experiences the world in ways other participants experience it. In the contexts I sometimes joined in the activities with the teachers but still paid close attention to my research goals.

Very occasionally I felt like the observer--usually in contexts where I was more of a stranger, or where I did not feel as comfortable because it was a different environment than I had experienced previously. For example, I worked in one context in the local high school; I did not know the
teachers, neither was I used to a high school context and therefore it took me longer to feel comfortable.

As I became immersed in the gathering of materials I struggled, as a participant, to decide for myself what sort of role I should take as participant observer. Now I began to realize the complexity of the process and how there must be a balance in the actions of observation and participation. In one session (October, 14) I worked with a group of teachers as they constructed a developmental profile for use with children. The development of the profile, and the interaction of the teachers as they explored the developmental milestones, became intense for these participants. On this occasion I soon lost the ability to focus on the taking of notes and became immersed in their conversations and my own construction of thoughts and ideas on the topic. Many of the teachers knew me. They expected me to be responsive. They expected me to follow their thoughts, and expected me to give input and to ask questions. In short, they expected me to be a part of their community; I was. The documenting of field notes of conversations that were a rapid succession of brainstorming ideas proved difficult. To respond as a participant was challenging. At this point I wrote in my journal (October 14),

The teachers appeared to trust me and [they] include me in all their conversations--it would have advantages. However, trying to record gathered materials, without
the use of a audiotape, [at this point] would [prove to] be problematic.

This is just one example of where I was "going native" but, as my journal entry revealed, I was aware of my actions and saw my actions as important in developing a relationship with the teachers which would maintain access into their community.

Because of my experience as a teacher it was possible for me to bring my perspectives into the reflections of others. I could "Contribute to the action ... such participative research, however, can only take place in the context of well developed collaborative relationships between teachers and researchers, relationships built on mutual trust, and complementary interests" (Louden, 1992, p. 178). In my reading of qualitative research practice, however, I realized that caution was needed before one became immersed in "too cozy a mental attitude" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 102).

The gathered materials for the case study came from two sources: the teachers' sessions and the planning team's meetings (see Appendix C for the schedule). Materials were collected from August 1993 to June 1994. The materials in the teachers' context consisted of fieldnotes of the teachers in the sessions; transcriptions from the audiotaped group interviews; artifacts and photographs. In the planning team's context the materials consisted of transcripts from
the audiotapes of the meetings; fieldnotes taken during the meetings; artifacts in the form of memos and letters; documents for the state department; constructed visuals; my journal and a videotape of the planning team in a planning meeting.

Note taking

Fieldnotes consisted of descriptions of social processes within the various contexts (Delamont, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). When in the field the researcher must ask "what to write down, how to write it down, and when to write it down" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 146). The researcher must realize that notes only have the function of reminding the researcher what happened. They are not complete; notes are inadequate until they are expanded upon as soon after the event as possible (Delamont, 1992). I was fortunate to be able to take notes in the field continuously in all the contexts and as events occurred--one restriction was if I was participating in an activity with the teachers. Then I wrote down very brief one-word reminders as I participated and tried to record the event as soon as possible afterwards. I attempted to record as much as possible of the actions and conversations between the participants in abbreviated note form (see Figure 2). I elaborated and reflected on my field notes diligently. I soon realized upon transcription that the notes I took in the field were incomplete and insufficient. Van Maanen (1988)
noted that "Fieldnotes are gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field" (p. 123). Therefore, fieldnotes of descriptions of events need to be elaborated upon.

I elaborated upon my fieldnotes as I typed them and produced more "expanded accounts" on the description of the context (Spradley, 1980).

Figure 2. Fieldnotes from the research context.
I audiotaped my verbal reflections as I expanded the fieldnotes. At the end of the process I rewound a tape and, in the transcript, I added in 'bold' the reflections and questions I had audiotaped which I felt were important to the study, such as details on participants' actions, and descriptions of the setting. Also, I added analytical notes. I asked myself questions pertinent to the questions that guided my study. In one example of my elaborated field notes a teacher expressed her concern that other teachers did not have the opportunity to be involved in such a project (see Figure 3).

Susan: "What are we going to do for all the teachers in the classroom. This is wonderful for us but what about the other teachers in the classrooms. What is being done for them. (Concern for other teachers without such opportunities to come together. Does this indicate how she values the process as one important for teacher learning)

Dana: We had 58 teachers at Harding Ave, the teachers were together exploring their practice in the whole language support group. (Is Dana is trying to protect administration by illustrating that other contexts are being provided?) (The interesting thing in the county that there are evolving groups of teachers who are exploring their practice i.e. the support group, Reading to Learn, the assessment project, book groups. We need to think of other formats for teachers who are not included in any of these, then again we cannot push the issue (change can not be mandatory) if they don’t seek out and find the space then the ownership will not be there.

The problem with the whole language support group is that this year because of my internship I was able to persuade the administration at the school board office to have the meeting on a teacher work day. Before we have had to have them in the teachers own time. The teachers in their exit slips commented how meeting in the morning when they were fresh and not tired made a difference in their wanting to discuss practice. May be the teachers will not attend the meetings in the future after school, now they realise how better it is that we meet during the day.)

Jean explained what had happened at Falling Birch (a school she has been trying to access by invitation) That the small group of teachers went across grade levels (7 teachers. I think) and didn’t know what was going on in their own school, that they did not communicate. That 4 and
5 grade came together but never the upper and lower grades. Communication is important she heard such comments as "Hey we don't talk to each other, to know what we are doing"

Even though this is true "It is growing and it is spreading"

Susan: "One of key things is time, with inclusion we have no time and we have a faculty meeting every week."

(Interesting as she had mentioned when she attended the support group meeting that she had not spoken with the teacher who was with her that day, that she appreciated having the opportunity to do so. Opportunity for conversation seemed to be important for the teachers) She had felt overwhelmed with inclusion in her room, and the planning aspects of working with the aids. That she found little time to communicate with her colleagues in other classrooms)

Figure 3. Reflections on the contexts constitute an expanded account.

My expansion of the fieldnotes was to ask whether she (the teacher) valued the process within the assessment project for teacher learning. I also raised issues related to teacher learning and made statements that I believed to be important from my observations; for example, "change cannot be mandatory if they [the teachers] don't seek out and find the "space" then the ownership will not be there." I was guided into making these elaborations on my fieldnotes through both substantive and theoretical perspectives.

To supplement my fieldnotes I maintained a journal. My hope was that the journal would, as Hogan (1988) stated, provide "Time to build an awareness of options-time to find threads-to go back and reflect again-to go back knowing more
and to read with fresh eyes. We see things we weren't able to see then" (p. 9). In the journal I aired my frustrations and jubilations as the inquiry progressed. I recorded my questions, my hunches and my concerns about research and the professional development process. On occasion I incorporated journal entries into my expanded fieldnotes, especially if I had referred to a professional text as in Figure 4 where I made the note "Look at Weaver, Time and Space issue, page 29."

Figure 4. Excerpt from my journal

As I elaborated on the "condensed accounts" (Spradley,
1980) during the evenings, after the event, and when the ideas were still fresh in my mind (Delamont, 1992), I kept the conversation of the participants verbatim. This aspect was particularly important. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) emphasized, "We can inspect the notes with a fair assurance that we are gaining information on how the participants themselves described things, who said what to whom, and so on." If attention was not paid to this detail then I may have lost "interesting" detail, "local colour," and "vital information" (p. 153). I felt the need to underline all the verbatim conversation in the field so that I would pay close attention to the conversations as I entered them into the computer.

Audiotaping and transcription

I used different approaches to collect information in the planning sessions and in the teachers' sessions. In the former I used the audiotape recorder freely because the planning team did not view the use of an audiotape recorder as a problem. In fact it became a tool in the planning meetings. Team members occasionally rewound a tape, to listen to a fragment of conversation, to provide a reminder of what had been said or, just to "hear it again." I audiotaped fifty-seven hours of the meetings with the planning team members. In contrast, however, the planning team members felt that to audio or video tape sessions with the teachers, in the early stages of the project, would
undermine the risk-free environment they were trying to establish. However, small groups of teachers did use the audio tape recorder to record their discussions and to aid their writing process for the deliverables for the state department. Occasionally, as in the November 4 session with the teachers, the project director (Julia) asked if the whole group conversation could be audiotaped because it had the potential to be useful for future constructions of the deliverable.

I transcribed audiotapes as they became available. Initially, I intended to transcribe all those audiotapes I hoped to obtain. However, as time passed my commitments in the field, and other obligations, made this task overwhelming. I employed Patty, a secretary from the university, to transcribe tapes I selected for her. She transcribed approximately six one-hour tapes, the contents of which I thought would be of least relevance to my study. I found the process of transcribing to be an arduous task but it allowed me to closely study the recorded information. As I transcribed I relived the event and added thoughts, reflections, and actions. The transcription process became an important part of the analysis. During the final writing stages of the inquiry I appreciated the advantage of such transcription. I was familiar with my text and I knew the location of important conversations.
Interviews

In addition to the gathered materials, I had access to transcripts of interviews (of teachers and the planning team) conducted by Dr. Jon Nelson. Dr. Nelson, a professor from the local university, was the outside evaluator for the project. He conducted one-and-a-half-hour interviews with each school group of teachers. The information from the transcripts of these interviews formed part of the evaluation component of the project that was requested by the State Department of Education. The schedule for the interviews was as follows:

- Mary Brevard, December 13, 1993.

Qualitative interviews are much more like "conversations" where the interviewer covers more general topics and "respects how the participants frames and structures the responses" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p. 82). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1993) interviews are social events in which questioning is directive and non-directive and both the interviewer and the interviewee are participants.

The group interviews were "free flowing" and "open ended" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Dr. Nelson began interviews
by explaining the issue of anonymity and who would have access to the transcripts made from the audiotapes. He began each interview by requesting an introduction from each participant. This first question was posed to the group of teachers from all four schools. He asked the teachers how they heard about the project. For example, at High Ford he began, "One way to begin is to ask you when you first heard about the project. How did you hear about it? In another school he began, "Okay, how did you get involved in the project." At a third, he asked the teachers to tell him "a little bit about the school" and "how you got involved in this whole thing."

After the initial opening question he asked about the direction the teachers were taking. Occasionally he probed for information about a particular aspect by asking a specific question such as "And it was mostly Jean you were dealing with or was it ...?" Or to elaborate on the development of relationships within the project he asked "What kind of relationship have you had with the supervisors prior to the beginning of this study?" The interview questions, although phrased slightly different, addressed the same issues across interviews.

As I read the transcriptions of interviews completed by Dr. Nelson some of the comments or statements by teachers left me questioning some aspect of the process they were describing. Occasionally, in informal conversations at
coffee breaks or during lunch in the sessions with the teachers, I would ask a question pertaining to my query about their comments. To develop a more comprehensive picture of the process I questioned Jean, and a principal, Luke, about the chronology of events (prior to my involvement in the project) when the teachers were invited to participate in the project.

Artifacts

Artifacts can be collected in a variety of forms. One form is the collection of documents whilst in the field. Such documents can be formal or informal; they can be organizational or they can represent a process of record keeping and communication between participants. They are in essence, a record of social interactions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Delamont, 1992).

I collected a variety of documents as they were constructed in the field. Julia, the project director, always gave the planning team members copies of the letters or organizational memos she sent to the teachers. I collected the memos and letters during the year and kept them in a manila folder labeled "memos and letters." The letter from Julia at the beginning of the year welcomed the participants into the project; explained what the participants needed to bring to the first session; indicated the availability of parking and parking passes and the eating arrangements. Four of the memos contained the organization
of the sessions with the teachers. The memos indicated the location of the meeting, what the teachers needed to bring, or any other pertinent information. One memo provided the reviews of the December draft of the deliverables from the state department. Two other memos were sent to the teachers asking for volunteers to present aspects of the project at a state conference.

I collected all the drafts on the deliverables as they were constructed by the teachers. For example I have five drafts of the developmental profile; the first draft in December; the drafts as the profile was reconstructed in January, February and March; and the final draft in June. I dated all the drafts and placed them in a manila folder labeled "D.A.P. profile." I also obtained a copy of the proposal sent to the state department by the instructional supervisors to obtain funding for the project. I have the final draft of both the deliverables on alternative assessment practices and the document relating the process for staff development. I collected other individual documents: a newspaper article, which explained the project and its benefits to the child in the classroom; a letter written by Julia to ask parents for permission to use children's material to explain assessments to be presented at a conference. Other documents were generated just for the use of the planning team; for example, the activity logs constructed by the planning team for each session. Each log
was between two and three pages long.

Photographs were a part of the artifact collection. Clyde and I took approximately sixty color photographs during the year as the teachers worked in the sessions. The photographs portrayed a visual record of the kinds of resources the teachers brought to the sessions from their classrooms and the resources the planning team members provided. The photographs documented how the teachers interacted and organized themselves into work groups and some of the visuals they constructed whilst in these groups.

**Analysis and Writing**

Towards the end of my internship, as I began to spend more time reading and rereading all the gathered materials, I began to narrow my focus. I began to concentrate more on one particular context—the assessment project. Current thought is that as the inquiry progresses the focus becomes narrower. Bogdan & Biklen (1982, 1992) called this process "funneling." Spradley (1980) called the process the "grand tour" that then becomes the "mini tour."

I numbered all the fieldnotes and transcriptions separately. I began to reread the volumes of material. As I read all my gathered materials I searched for possible themes, and made made notes in page margins. I became aware of the themes of ambiguity, trust, time, sources of knowledge, solidarity, control, support, reassurance and mutuality as they emerged in the gathered materials. I
reread those materials that identified one theme as it emerged within the teachers' context and the planning teams context. I made abbreviated notes of the quote, or the activity, as well as the page number of the transcript, or fieldnote, where the activity described occurred. I organized a folder for each theme and consolidated these notes. The end result was nine folders, containing between twenty to twenty-five pages of notes which documented the themes as they emerged in the gathered materials. I reread the pieces within each folder and I marked with an asterisk (*) what I thought to be those critical conversations of either teachers, or those planning team members, which illustrated a particular theme.

Figure 5 provides a visual of the process. In this example I looked at the materials from the teachers' context and titled the page "Ambiguity in the teachers' setting." Underneath I formed two columns; on the left-hand side of the page I recorded the page number and, on the right-hand side I entered the quote, the statement, or the situation which I thought related to ambiguity. I then highlighted (by circling) important aspects or words. In the example given I thought "openness" was important in the project for developing an interactive environment; however "openness" can also create ambiguity. I sometimes added more analytical notes underneath the page number and marked these with an asterisk. The "S" over the number was included to remind me
that the comment, statement or quote could relate to the theme of "support" as well as ambiguity. I found it sometimes hard to categorize the actions, comments or descriptions to just one theme because many of them overlapped as in the example illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Excerpt from the process of analysis: Notes on ambiguity within the teachers context.
After rereading these files I decided to develop one of the themes. Choosing just one theme initially caused me apprehension because of the clinical and clear-cut appearance of such a decision. I believe it was my understanding of the inherent complexity of the themes, and their degree of integration, which helped me further my understanding of professional development. However, I decided that the ambiguity within the environment and how the ambiguity was accommodated would have a major effect on the success of the project.

As I analyzed, and as the year progressed, I realized that I was analyzing in different ways. Glaser and Strauss (1964) maintained that writing and analysis are inseparable; a view supported by Van Manen (1990) who stated:

To be able to do justice to the fullness and the ambiguity of the experience of the life world, writing may turn into a complex process of rewriting (re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognizing). Satre (1977) describes how writing and rewriting aims at creating depth: constructing successive or multiple layers of meaning, thus laying bare certain truths while retaining an essential sense of ambiguity (p. 131). Writing is of paramount importance to the analytical process. As I wrote the contradictions, the successes and the problems inherent in the practice which we had all been engaged in, the nature and the significance of the project
began to emerge. However, the process of writing was not just a reporting process; the writing was "Closely fused into the research activity and reflection itself" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 125). Others have voiced similar affirmation of this view. In particular Barthes (1986) commented that, "Research is the work of writing, writing is its very essence" (p. 316).

Writing was a continual process during my collection of materials; the writing of my journal became a form of analysis. The many written reflections I added to my field notes, and the questions I raised when I transcribed the many planning meetings, constituted a continual process of writing and analyzing.

In the process of writing the text for the dissertation I began by developing a "picture" of the environment created for the teachers by the planning team members. To illustrate the complexity of the interactions between participants in the contexts, I first chose to write "Images" (p. 80). The piece describes the environment that was created, how the teachers and the planning team members participated, and the kinds of activities developed within the respective contexts. Such a description creates plausibility for the reader because "A plausible account is one that rings true. It is an account of which one might say, I can see that happening" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 8). In order to maintain a plausible account I included many quotes from the
conversations of the teachers and the planning team. These are, in most cases, written verbatim from audiotaped transcriptions or written records. However, on occasion, when a comment seemed unclear or incoherent, I asked the participant in question if the statement could be edited for clarity, with the gist of the conversation being maintained. Although this was done on several occasions I was sensitive to the issue that the teachers and the planning team members often struggled to explain their meaning. To rewrite their text would not reveal their struggle for terms or words with which to explain their understanding, and would give the impression to the reader that the constructions the teachers were trying to make were easy. In such cases, therefore, I made no change to the text where a person repeated a statement either for understanding, for emphasis, or for reinforcement. However, changing the spoken word is supported by Nespor and Barber (1995) who maintained that "People do not speak on paper. Transcripts are written forms, and when we freeze interview speech into print we construct those we have talked to as subordinate writers: We make them look ignorant" (p. 57). This premise by Barber and Nespor made me feel more comfortable with the process of changing text for coherency. I did not want to portray participants as ignorant.

After completing the description in "Images" I then sought out what events, occurrences or actions created
ambiguity for the planning team members and for the teachers in the different contexts. After writing this section, I reread all the gathered materials and sought out what actions of the planning team, and/or the teachers, accommodated the ambiguity. As I became immersed in this writing process I realized that the previous "hunches" (Alverman, O'Brien & Dillon, 1996) I wrote about in my journal or analytical notes, slowly began to unfold in the writing process.

Besides reading all the materials many times, I had the advantage, during the internship, of spending many hours in discussion with Kathleen, Jean, Clyde and Julie as they furthered their knowledge on the process of professional development. Van Manen (1990) stated that such conversations can be helpful in analysis. "Collaborative discussion or hermeneutic conversations on the themes and thematic descriptions of phenomena may also be conducted by a research group or seminar--these too are helpful in generating insights and understandings" (p. 100). In a sense the meetings with the planning team enabled both material collection and material analysis.

Through reading, rereading, writing, discussing with colleagues, and continual questioning of my university advisor, a dissertation emerged. The dissertation consists of a description of the contexts for the teachers' environment and that of the planning team members. I then explored the theme of ambiguity in both those contexts, and
considered what caused the ambiguity and what actions within
the community accommodated the ambiguity.

**Generalization and Credibility**

The account provided here should not be viewed as a
tool for professional development. It may be possible,
however, through the reading of this analysis, to reconstruct
the experience and apply what can be learned from that
reconstruction to another context. This is the importance of
such a document. It provides material for reconstruction.
Marshall and Rossman (1989) stated, "Qualitative research
does not pretend to be replicable" (p. 148). The ideas may
be transferable only as ideas that can be taken and tried.
"It does not provide a series of generalizations that might
be applied in other settings" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 180);
the interpretations will be different because of the context
and the participants involved. However, to assist a reader
in reconstructing an experience in another context, the
research must be credible. Marshall & Rossman (1989) stated
that qualitative documents do provide "An in-depth
description showing the complexities of variables and
interactions will be so embedded with data derived from the
setting that it cannot help but be valid" (p. 145). I wrote
"The Images" in an attempt to provide the reader with a
picture of the environment created "to vicariously experience
it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 181).

As to the issue of validity I must emphasize that the
gathering of materials and the interpretation of the context are subjective and contain researcher bias that can effect the credibility of a study. I recognize the many different ways the study could have been interpreted depending on the background, the beliefs and values of the researcher. As Garrison (1994) stated: "Meanings are made through cooperative behavior, and knowledge is produced by using the tools of inquiry and theoretical constructions. Building a body of research requires choosing for a purpose, and that involves our deepest personal and cultural beliefs and values. That is why educational research can never be theory or value neutral" (p. 11). However, the study needs to be credible and Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 238) suggested the means to provide credibility. They suggested prolonged engagement in the field; persistent observation; peer debriefing; progressive subjectivity and member checks. In the following section I describe how I think my study met the criteria for credibility.

**Prolonged engagement in the field**

I recognized the need for prolonged engagement in the field and I worked side-by-side with the planning team members and the teachers for a school year. This approach, I believe, gave me a perspective of the extent and the complexity of their work. Through such an approach I was able to establish a rapport and develop the trust necessary to allow informants to reveal the contexts' culture.
Observation and participation

I accumulated many pages of field notes and transcripts as I observed and participated in the contexts. I entered into many conversations with the planning team members, other administrators at the school board office, and the teachers, about the process of professional development to gain their perspectives.

Debriefing process.

I met with my university advisor who posed questions about the study. I paid attention to ideas and the reasoning of other participants as to the cause and outcome of events, even if my assumptions were different. During the final stages of writing the document I contacted all the teachers by telephone and then by letter. I accomplished three tasks by engaging in this process. First, I gave teachers the opportunity to provide a pseudonym for themselves. Second, I ensured that I had the permission of teachers to include pieces of their dialogue from conversations in the project; four of the participants requested copies of the dialogue I was to include; I mailed the copies to them. Third, through informal telephone conversation I asked the teachers about the project and aspects of it which I had written about. This process gave the teachers the opportunity to provide any other information that might help the analysis and writing. In the last stages of writing I gave a copy of the document to a planning team member to read and respond to. Through
these processes I provided members of the project the opportunity to address anything that was problematic for them.

Through the research experience I recognized the complexity of a qualitative approach to analysis. As Maxine Greene (1995) so readily admits "There are always vacancies; there are always roads not taken, vistas not acknowledged. The search must be ongoing; the end can never be quite known" (p. 15). As a researcher I recognize I must keep my mind open to different theoretical perspectives knowing that no one perspective can adequately provide a frame for the picture. Research is like looking through a multiple prism; it is multi-faceted, complex and can provide multiple perspectives.
End Notes

1. The "I," "we," "they" issue. I struggled with the writing of this document. My interaction in this study was not as an outsider I worked with the planning team members, planning and making decisions. Yet I could not write about "we" as this document is an interpretation of events made by me and not the rest of the planning team. I could not use "I" because I did not work alone. The use of "They" was my resolve, however, even this does not seem an appropriate choice as I was a part of the process, and feel distanced by the term "they." The use of "they" also objectifies the people I worked so closely with.
PART TWO: IMAGES
CHAPTER THREE

Creating an Environment for Constructed Knowledge and
Reflection

Construction of the Proposal.

In the Fall of 1992 Jean, Kathleen, and Clyde designed a project to enact a vision they had constructed over time through their life experiences. These three instructional supervisors wrote an initiative to the county school board requesting funding for a five-year plan for professional development. When their efforts to obtain funding from the school board failed, they sought alternative sources of funding.

At that time, in the Spring of 1993, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction identified a request for proposals from the State Department of Education, one which emphasized research on assessment practice in the classroom. A proposal was seen by the instructional supervisors as a means to accommodate the inquiry developing from teachers' practice within the county. According to Jean, "It made sense to us because Kathleen and I had been out in the schools during the year taking materials on alternative assessment to the teachers, and talking to primary teachers about portfolios and the issues this grant actually touched on." The supervisors considered that the proposal request "fit" and 'made sense" with their ongoing practice.

The three supervisors believed that teachers can
construct their own knowledge when a setting is supportive of change and of self-critique. In order for teachers to obtain such support, an environment must be created so that teachers have the necessary resources, and the time, to come together and develop understandings about their practice. The three instructional supervisors wanted to create such an environment. The following statement from the five-year plan for professional development reveals the philosophy of the supervisors:

Because change is slow and complex, a process that requires both time and commitment, and the vision of many dedicated people, we must rethink our ways of working with teachers. We need to devise and provide an institutional structure that is supportive of opportunities for teachers to work in collaboration with one another; to talk openly, read, write, plan, and explore possibilities; to become risk takers; and to consider and reconsider their unique instructional contexts.

This construction of "professional development" contradicts staff development models that assume that "expert" minds should hand down curriculum to teachers.

Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde believed that the people responsible for initiating professional development needed to establish an environment that would provide opportunities for teachers, instructional staff, and administrators to come
together to critically examine educational practice.

The proposal the supervisors wrote in the Spring of 1993 was accepted and funded for $125,000, and the county became one of three sites in the state to be invited to examine alternative assessment and developmental practice in kindergarten through third grade.

Invitations to Participate

The supervisors related to me later (during the project year) how important the preceding year had been in terms of their interactions with the teachers. The supervisors, through their interactions, were able to identify school faculties who would be interested in the assessment project. Working with these faculties, and discussing with them the participation which was needed in the project, entailed time and effort by the supervisory team. In the following sections I describe the events leading to the participation of four elementary schools in the project.

Bardon Elementary School.

Luke, the principal of Bardon Elementary School, had a long-standing relationship with the instructional supervisors. He had taught in a public school setting with one of the supervisors, and had had contact with the other supervisors through graduate classes at the local university. In the Fall of 1992, he asked the instructional supervisors to work in his school and to help him with his professional development. On January 20, 1993, Jean met with the faculty
at Bardon. The teachers, together with the principal, established a meeting schedule. They decided that the staff development meetings would be scheduled for every other Wednesday from 3:30-5:00 p.m. Jean raised the question with the faculty: "What do you as a faculty want for Bardon school next year?" The teachers began to identify their major concerns, through brainstorming ideas as a whole group. Luke related, in a discussion with me, that "the faculty identified three areas which they were interested in looking at. In priority, these were parent involvement, assessment, and instruction." Jean left the meeting after the three key areas had been established. In the time between that meeting and the next, the faculty were asked to narrow their focus to one of the three areas of interest.

On February 10, 1993, Jean, Kathleen and Clyde attended a staff development meeting in the school library. The teachers by this time had decided to focus specifically on the involvement of parents. In a discussion Luke related how the faculty divided itself into groups. Each group brainstormed the idea of how to encourage parent involvement, and used chart paper to record the focus of their inquiry. Groups then shared their understandings with other groups. The lists were available at the school for the teachers to look at. The teachers could reflect on their ideas, and they could add new ideas.

Due to inclement weather the teachers did not meet again
with Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde until March 24. For the teachers to read at this meeting, Kathleen, Jean and Clyde had brought a published article called Problems with Parent Participation in U.S Public Schools (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1991, p. 25). This article was chosen by the supervisors because it related variations on parent involvement. After reading the article, one of the faculty members, with the support of others who nodded their heads in agreement, raised the issue that the faculty as a whole needed to ascertain the extent of parent involvement they wanted in the school.

After teachers had read the article, Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde invited a whole-group discussion. Luke wrote in his journal "how good the discussion was on the parent involvement and how many concerns and issues it raised about the degree of involvement of the parents that the teachers wanted."

In the next meeting, on April 7, Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde again invited the faculty to discuss ways of encouraging parental involvement, and the problems and successes that had occurred in doing so since their last meeting.

During the last of the school professional development sessions at Bardon, on May 19, Luke had asked the faculty to discuss how they felt about their inquiry into parent involvement and their feelings about the professional
development they had experienced. After the meeting, he wrote in his journal how, from the teachers' comments, he discerned that the sessions were "faculty ruled, which was unique and different; the teachers were encouraged to share their ideas and their apprehensions." He also wrote that one of the teachers, Emily, was "concerned that some of the ideas would die if we were not careful; we need continued discussions." This view was reinforced by the comments of other teachers. Luke related this concern of the teachers to the three supervisors. The supervisors later explained that it seemed natural to ask the Bardon faculty to participate in the assessment project as one way to accommodate teachers' concerns about losing knowledge.

On a teacher work day, at the end of the school year in June, 1993, Dana, county Director of Elementary Education, Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde went to Bardon to meet with the teachers in the school library. During this meeting the supervisors informed the teachers that they had received a grant for an assessment research project and that they wanted to include Bardon faculty as participants. In an interview, on January 25 (during the project year), Nora, a second grade teacher recalled, "I think they just asked us that day, didn't they? Our response was immediate, we said, yes!" Nora explained that the unanimous decision to participate in the project "was because Jean and Kathleen had worked with us all year in staff development." The teachers had first-hand
experience of the kinds of interactive professional development sessions the supervisors organized. When asked why they didn't hesitate to become involved, Nora again responded by saying that the supervisors were "substantially different from any other supervisors we have worked with." She emphasized her point by saying, "You were working with them, rather than for them." She felt that the project experience would be a team effort, with the teacher and the supervisor "working together." In describing the earlier meetings with Kathleen, Jean and Clyde, Lindsey, a first grade teacher, explained her feelings, "I felt as though I were being treated as a professional." Nora reinforced this comment: "Right, this is the first, one of the first times that I felt like I had been treated as a professional, and that my experience as a teacher and the opinions I shared were valued."

The supervisors also perceived that teachers' interactions with them before the project led to the teachers being willing to do "a lot more" and "willing to take the risk to do something new." Teachers felt free to choose what they could handle, and the supervisors developed that premise for teachers at Bardon by saying that, "anything is possible." Stephanie, a special education teacher, stated, "There was nothing out of the realm of possibilities." Kara viewed the supervisors as being "open-minded" and stated of Kathleen, Jean and Clyde "You know they went in with open
minds and let everyone contribute."

Riverview Elementary School

The faculty at Riverview Elementary School knew Jean as a former fifth-grade teacher in their school. In her more recent role as supervisor, she had allocated funds that permitted the teachers there to purchase children's books. She was, in the words of one teacher, "sincere and concerned" and was thought to be willing to take the "professional opinions and strategies" developed by this faculty and use them elsewhere. Jean perceived that the teachers at Riverview were a "different group" because she already had a "history there" and there was "probably some trust there already." Kathleen had had some contact with certain of the Riverview teachers outside the school setting, at the local university.

In the Spring of 1993, Jean talked to the principal at Riverview, by telephone, to explain the project and to invite the participation of the Riverview faculty. It was the principal who first met with the teachers in an after-school meeting to explore their reaction to the invitation. A decision to participate was not immediately forthcoming. Teachers expressed concern about the amount of time to be spent out of the classroom and the amount of work that might be involved. Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde agreed to visit the school on several occasions to talk with the teachers and to discuss their concerns. Jean, in an interview at the end of
the project, recalled:

Dana, Kathleen and I all went to all four schools, but then Kathleen and I ended up going back out there to Riverview several times because they had lots of questions. They raised hard questions about what we were doing. They made us rethink what we were doing, and as a result we did some rewriting of the proposal before it was submitted to the state department.

During the process of encouraging the teachers to participate in the project, Susan, a third grade teacher, characterized the way that Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde interacted with the teachers, "They [the supervisors] tried to work gently with us to begin with ... I think that helped a whole lot, whereas if they had been strangers and forced it and said, 'you will put this out,' it would have been real hard to handle." It was after the meeting with the supervisors that the teachers asked for a meeting with the principal. During this meeting the teachers voiced their concerns. In the words of one teacher they "hashed it out with the principal." The principal then telephoned the supervisors and asked them to return to talk with the teachers. Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde revisited the school to address the concerns of the faculty and to encourage participation in the project. During this visit, the supervisors told stories about their own experiences with
professional development and what they valued. During this meeting in the Spring, the supervisors gave a very rough copy of the project proposal for all of the teachers to read. The time issue was still perplexing to the teachers. Betty, a first-grade teacher, stated, "We were concerned about not only the time limit as far as being out of the classroom, but the magnitude of this, this whole undertaking. It seemed like a lot to us and as I say it was Spring and we were tired a lot." Teachers also expressed concern that the project might mirror other staff development in which they had been involved. Susan stated that in prior staff development in the county, before the hiring of Kathleen, Jean and Clyde, "we spent lots of time and lots of effort, that never really amounted to anything." Another teacher expressed concern about the ambiguity of the proposal, even though Kathleen had explained that the supervisors wanted to keep the process as "open" as possible in order to allow them to reconceptualize the project together.

The supervisors responded to the teachers' concerns by taking several actions. They altered the initial proposal by limiting the out-of-classroom days to one day per month. To address the concerns about the ambiguity of the contents of the deliverable (the document to be presented to the state department which would contain assessment tools developed by the teachers), Kathleen, Jean and Clyde assured the teachers that the deliverable would develop from the
teachers' practice in the classroom. Concern persisted however, even after the teachers had committed to the project. Susan stated, "I did have real reservations and was not even sure after we had decided to commit to it that I was really, real excited about it."

Mary Brevard Elementary School

In the year prior to the project, the teachers at Mary Brevard Elementary School had been meeting once a month, in cross-grade level meetings at the kindergarten, first- and second-grade level, as a part of a staff development program initiated by the principal. Conversations at those meetings revolved around children's developmental stages and transitions between grade levels. Apparently there was concern in the school with the transition from kindergarten to first grade. The instructional supervisors, through invitation, had already attended several of these discussions and realized that this group of teachers had an interest in assessment. The teachers reiterated that they had recognized the need to improve assessment tools in the classroom. They judged the report card recently developed in the county to be an inadequate reporting tool.

In the Spring of 1993 Jean, Kathleen, Clyde, and Dana attended a monthly staff development meeting at Brevard "to talk about report cards." They listened to teachers' concerns and discussed their interests. Later, when the supervisors were identifying potential project collaborators,
they quickly identified the faculty at Brevard. The supervisors informed the teachers at Brevard that they were preparing a grant proposal to submit to the Department of Education, and they asked the teachers if they were willing to participate in the project. Lynne, a kindergarten teacher, stated, "I guess it was natural to ask Brevard to participate."

On the last teachers' work-day, at the end of the school year in June, the kindergarten through third-grade teachers received a copy of the proposal. The teachers perceived that there was no pressure from the supervisors to participate, but if they wanted to commit themselves they would have to make it known that day. The teachers did commit to the project.

High Ford Elementary School

One evening in the Spring of 1993, Jean had a telephone conversation with Kara, a third grade teacher at the High Ford Elementary school, about an unrelated issue. Jean mentioned in passing that the supervisors were writing a proposal for a grant that would support inquiry into assessment and developmentally appropriate practice. Kara expressed her interest in the project.

In the final week of the school year, Louise, a Chapter One teacher from High Ford, visited the school board office for a meeting. During a conversation, Kathleen explained that the supervisors had three schools already in the project
and were actively looking for a fourth school. Louise encouraged Kathleen to invite her faculty to participate by saying, "think about High Ford ... please consider us."

Later that week, Dana and Jean, as a part of staff development at High Ford, were invited to discuss the multi-age grouping of children. It was Dana's idea to take the proposal to the school, to inform all the teachers of its existence, and to explain its contents.

After this discussion and Jean and Dana's departure, the teachers agreed that participation in the project would be the logical next step in their ongoing efforts to develop their curriculum. Dylan, a kindergarten teacher, commented "this is just a natural next step for what we are trying to find out about the multi-age grouping of children, and assessment was creating problems for us."

By June, at the end of the 1992-93 school year, Kathleen, Jean and Clyde had established which schools would participate in the assessment project. On July 15, 1993, Julia, a third grade teacher in the county, was hired as the project director. On August 1, 1993, I began my internship and became the fifth member of the planning team. The planning team proceeded to plan a four-day session with the participants for August 9.

The First Days Together: Creating a Common Ground

The Assessment Project began formally on August 9, 1993. A year-long plan for the project included an interactive
four-day session two weeks before the beginning of the school year. The session was the first time that the different school groups were brought together. The teachers received a stipend for attending these daily (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) sessions. Principals, already under contract, also attended and participated.

The location for the first session was in a student center, a new building, on a large university campus. The room where we met was not spacious. However, the teachers and principals could read or work in small groups in open lounge areas adjoining the room. The furnishings consisted of long trestle tables, arranged in rows, with seating for all. Two windows on one wall allowed some natural light to filter into the room. Coffee and doughnuts, or muffins and fresh fruit, were available. The teachers met for lunch in a building a short walk from the meeting room. The members of the planning team told me that keeping the teachers together at lunch time was important, so that the teachers would not dissipate into their school groups. Rather, they would become more familiar with one another across schools and grade levels. In the afternoon similar light refreshments were available.

Supplies for the participants to use during the sessions included a accordion folder, a three-ring binder for the many articles the participants would receive during the sessions, a composition book, and materials for constructing
representations during the sessions. During the week the participants received copies of the texts *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children* (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992), and *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Eight* (Bredekamp, 1987).

**Day One: Monday, August 9.**

I entered the room at 8:30 a.m. Groups of people were chatting, drinking coffee, relating their summer exploits. At 9:00 a.m. Julia, the project director, began by welcoming everybody. She introduced the support personnel, who were seated in and amongst the participants, and gave an overview of the day. Apart from the planning team the support personnel at that meeting included Dana (Director of Elementary Education), Sheila (the Instructional Supervisor for the gifted program), and Cynthia (Special education). Dana, Sheila, and Cynthia were present intermittently during the following days, as they participated in the activities and listened to the participants in their discussions. On that first day, Dana also had the responsibility to read a children's text as an opening for the session.

Dana stood and read the story, *The Patchwork Quilt* (Flournoy, 1985). In the story, Tanya and her grandmother are making a quilt from scraps of material that belonged to family members. Tanya's grandmother subsequently becomes ill and can not work on the quilt. So, with mother's assistance,
and then alone, Tanya works to complete the quilt. When almost finished, Tanya feels 'something' or, as she comes to realize, 'someone' is missing from the quilt. While Grandma lies sleeping, Tanya cuts a scrap from Grandma's old quilt, which is lying on the bed. Grandma finally recovers from her illness and is again able to work on the quilt and to finish a special patch for Tanya. When grandma finishes the quilt, she exclaims, "There it's done!"

The planning team hoped to use the story outlined above as a point of reflection for an activity on the second day. Julia thanked Dana for reading the story and began the first activity for the participants. Standing in front of the rows of tables, Julia reminded all the participants that "in the letter you received I invited you to bring an artifact that related something about yourself." She then explained the procedure for the sharing of artifacts. Julia asked the participants and the planning team to form pairs; each partner should talk about respective artifacts for a few minutes. As the participants sought partners, some turning to their neighbors, I stood up and waited to see if everyone had found a partner. I saw that Dylan was without a partner so I joined him. He shared his artifact which was a piece of amber. He explained why the piece of amber was important for him and how it revealed a snapshot of time. He connected the snapshot image to a form of assessment such as standardized testing. I then presented my artifact which was a piece of
malachite. My piece of rock is important to me because, as a
former Geography major, I find that rocks can reveal so much
about our past and major happenings in the Earth's evolution.
My rock collection represents a path of my travels and
reflects adventures and experiences which created who I am.

Julia invited us to expand our sharing by having the
individual pairs form larger groups to share what had been
learned. The group I was with consisted of six people. The
assortment of artifacts in the room was extensive and ranged
from photographs of family, handiwork from an individual's
hobby, a quilt, favorite pieces of literature or poetry, a
telephone, and a tool box, to name but a few. Participants
noisily recounted the significance of the artifacts as had
been shared by their respective partners. Obviously, with
the amount of noise in the room, each artifact was extremely
significant to its owner and each had a story to tell.

In the next stage of the process Julia asked us to
construct a way to share some piece of information about an
individual to the whole group. The group that I was with
decided that one person only would recount the descriptions
of the artifacts to the whole group. Stephanie, a teacher,
volunteered. As each group shared, people listened intently,
and laughed as glimpses of the participants emerged through
the artifacts. We took a short break for coffee and
reconvened as Kathleen began the next activity.

Kathleen began by reading "The Lobster and the Crab,"
from *Fables* (Lobel, 1980). The story is about a crab who meets a lobster on the beach just as the lobster is about to set sail in a boat on a stormy ocean. The crab is extremely cautious but will not allow the lobster to journey alone. During the storm, the crab's concern is about their destiny. Meanwhile the lobster enjoys the thrill of such risks. The story ends with the moral: "Even the taking of small risks will add excitement to life."

After the story, Kathleen, Jean, and Julia handed composition books to the participants, and Kathleen explained, "We invite you to write in the composition books about your classroom, or the sessions you will be involved in during the year; they are yours to keep." Kathleen then explained that the participants would not usually be given a specific topic to write about. At that time, however, the planning team members did want to use the composition books to permit the participants to write down any expectations or apprehensions they felt, or to raise any questions they had about the project. All the participants sat and wrote for ten minutes. As the participants finished and began to look up, or talk to their neighbors, Kathleen judged they had had enough time and explained the next part of the activity.

Kathleen asked us to organize ourselves into groups of five or six people. She then asked each group to designate a recorder and a reporter. The participants quickly formed the groups and for fifteen minutes shared concerns and questions
from the reflective pieces they had just written in the composition books.

The culmination of the activity involved Julia, Clyde and Jean standing together to record the information whilst Kathleen, standing to one side, continued to lead the activity. The recorders for the groups called out their ideas to Kathleen who then reiterated them for Jean to write quickly on a large pad of chart paper supported by an easel. Clyde quickly tore off the pieces of paper as they became full and as the rapid succession of questions and statements unfolded. The mounting of the large sheets of paper on the wall, by Clyde and Julia, created a visual of the fifty-one questions or statements that reflected those concerns, fears, apprehensions, and observations of the participants (see Appendix D for the complete list of questions). Kathleen then reiterated the purpose of generating the list: "The purpose for us generating this list is so that we are aware of your concerns and questions about the project." Kathleen invited participants to add more concerns or questions as they thought of them during the week.

Kathleen also explained that all the questions on the list could not be responded to by the end of the week. Rather, it was a collaborative plan, a guide for future sessions. Some of the concerns and questions were addressed during the early stages of the sessions. For example, "What is my role as a teacher in this grant?" "How much time do we
spend on the project--instructional time and personal time?", "What's wrong with what we are doing and why change?" and, "Will we really change." Other questions were bookkeeping questions; they related to recertification points and payment of the stipend. Another group of teachers posed questions that reflected the ongoing complexity in the teachers' practice, questions whose answers depended on the situation and the time. This group included questions such as "What is authentic assessment?", "What are the deliverables to the state?" "Why do we assess and who does the assessing?", "How does this fit with the state's direction?" For example, a major concern within the group was what the deliverables would look like. This was a question for which there was no easy answer. The planning team explained to me that the deliverables should evolve out of the practice of the teachers. Because of this belief, the planning team did not have a preset vision in mind for the form or the content of the deliverables.

At 11:35 a.m., the planning team used eye contact to signal to each other that it was time to break for lunch, and bring this activity to closure. Before the announcements, Kathleen concluded the activity by asking the participants, again, to add anything they wished to the list. Julia announced that lunch should be taken in another building, and explained how to get to the building, a short walk from the location of our morning session. The participants gradually
left the room, some talking in small groups, others in pairs, chatting, and laughing.

The planning team remained in the room to rearrange the room for the activity that would take place after lunch. The tables were rearranged to facilitate small group activity. They placed a folder containing six copies of each article on the tables; there were seven different folders and each folder contained a different article, such as *Sprouting magic beans: Exploring literature through creative questioning and cooperative learning* (Baloche, & Platt, 1993). To aid the participants in determining which article they might like to read, Jean had written a brief synopsis of the article, on the cover of each folder. Planning team members then checked with each other that all was ready for the afternoon and walked to lunch.

Lunch was taken in a room that seated the number of people present, at round tables, each with eight chairs. During lunch the talk was more casual but lively. Some participants maintained the focus of the discussion in the morning session, others inquired about family members, related summer exploits, or talked about plans for their classrooms, their hopes for lower class sizes, or their apprehensions for the coming year. Toward the end of lunch, at twelve forty-five p.m., Julia stood up and explained the activity to occur on the return of the participants to the meeting room. She invited the participants to peruse the
folders on the tables, indicating that the folders contained articles that were to be read and discussed in the afternoon. "Choose one article that appeals to you, find somewhere you can read the article, and then we will reconvene to discuss the articles in small groups and finally relate that article to all the participants." Julia reiterated that the planning team wanted those participants who had the same article to form a group after reading the article; however, they could go anywhere individually to read the article. Julia, looking at her watch, then suggested one o'clock as being a good time to be back in the meeting room and to start the session.

On returning to the room, the participants perused the articles and chose one they wanted to read. Some participants stayed in the room to read. Others retired to a lounge area outside the main room, while others went outside in the sunshine. After reading individually for thirty-five minutes, the participants returned to the meeting room to sit with others who had read the same article. Julia then explained again that the participants would be given time to discuss the article together; then they would present their understandings about the article to the whole group. Large sheets of lined and unlined chart paper and markers were available for the participants to create a visual representation of their understandings. The groups used the chart paper and markers for representation. Also, Julia handed each participant two sheets of paper upon which was a
bibliography of all the articles. The planning team designed the bibliography with the name of the article, the author, and then a space underneath so that the participants could write comments during the presentations of the different articles.

The presentations varied. For example those who read *Learning about Early Writing in Response to Literature* (Danielson, 1992) listed the key points under headings such as "Uses for writing," "Demonstrations of engagement," "Concepts of early writing" and, under the heading "Conclusions," listed what they thought was important for the development of reading in young children. The teachers concluded as follows:

In a literacy-rich environment adults should read, provide opportunities to write, praise, model, discuss, involve print, show enthusiasm.

Another group of five participants read *Sprouting Magic Beans: Exploring Literature through Creative Questioning and Cooperative Learning* (Baloche & Platt, 1993). The participants constructed their list in the form of the visual shown in Figure 6.

After each presentation the discussion addressed the presenters' key points from their articles.

The participants, for the next forty minutes, discussed their own practice in the classroom and the connections to developmentally appropriate practice they were reading about.
Figure 6. Photograph of a visual constructed by a group of teachers from the article "Sprouting magic beans."

in the articles. Through this whole group conversation it became apparent to the other participants that the teachers from High Ford had been inquiring about the multi-age grouping of children. A focus of this inquiry had led them to begin thinking about developmentally appropriate practice for children in the year prior to the project. Other teachers in the session asked this faculty some questions about their inquiry. For example, had the High Ford teachers visited schools which implemented the multi-age grouping of children? Were the schools whole language schools? What did they perceive to be the advantages of multi-age? Was
multi-age grouping of children able to accommodate developmentally appropriate practice? How did the schools assess children?

Kathleen, Jean and Julia continued to allow the conversation to evolve from the inquiry of the teachers, and rarely interjected. They occasionally gave a nod of confirmation, or a smile in response to a participant's question or statement. Occasionally, a glance to each other would reaffirm that the discussion was of interest and was important. As the conversation between the school group and the other participants about multi-age came to a close Danielle and Dylan made the statements:

_Danielle:_ In order to multi-age team teach, one has to be open-minded.

_Dylan:_ Control and open mindedness are interconnected; this whole issue is a control issue ... how much are we willing to give to the child?

Dylan also drew connections between the conversation and the experience of the participants:

We have to remember that developmentally appropriate practice is for all ages. Even though we are primarily concerned with kindergarten through third grade, we are discussing the education of children. In developmentally appropriate practice we are addressing issues of respect, mutuality, trust.
What we do to children, and how we do what we do, effects development. We have to recognize values in all participants, their background knowledge, and their expectations [looking directly at Kathleen and Julia]. Just as you are doing here.

The conversation had become a dialogue between just a few participants; therefore the planning team, again through eye contact, agreed to conclude the discussion. Julia commented that this was an ongoing discussion that she was going to bring to a close: "These are important issues you have raised and I feel sure we will return to many of the issues you have raised today." Julia then proceeded to explain that a folder for each participant was available. In the folder, the planning team had placed all the articles reviewed that day, and more, for the teachers to read at their leisure.

As a culmination of the day's activities, Julia then explained, "I invite you to take a few minutes to write in the composition book we gave you earlier, and this time we will not be sharing our thoughts." Julia and the rest of the planning team also sat down and began to write. As the participants finished writing, some left immediately while some stayed in the meeting room and talked to Jean, Julia, Kathleen, Clyde, or me.

After all the participants had left, the planning team tidied up the room, reassembled scattered materials, and made
comments about the day. They agreed that the High Ford group who had been inquiring about the multi-age grouping of students had become the focus of the conversation. The planning team members agreed that the afternoon's discussion had been a confirmation of their beliefs of how professional development should evolve from the dialogue of teachers and that time should be given to such conversations. The conversation by the High Ford teachers and the rest of the participants had raised some important issues in the understanding of what is appropriate for children. Because the conversation was not interrupted, the High Ford group had been able to share some of their understanding about developmentally appropriate practice and learning processes. Kathleen also commented that the articles the planning team had selected seemed to fit with many of the participants' beliefs about the learner. Even though their classrooms may appear very different, the participants held some underlying beliefs about learners that were compatible.

Day Two: Tuesday, August 10.

At 9:00 a.m., after the coffee and usual early morning chatter, Kathryn, standing in front of the group, began to relate the agenda for the day. The arrangement of the furniture was the same as at the previous afternoon's session. Kathryn began the activities for the morning by drawing an analogy between the anticipated proceedings of the day and an excerpt from the text Reaching Potentials:
Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children. (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 6). The piece described how the manufacturers of children's clothing pay attention to the developmental level, the cultural background, and the preferences of the child in the design process, and that education needs similarly to address differences in children when developing curricula. After Julia had read the opening piece, Julia, Kathleen, and Jean distributed a piece of text by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (N.A.E.Y.C, 1987) entitled N.A.E.Y.C. Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades Serving 5-Through 8-year-olds, as well as a response guide (see Appendix E) designed by the planning team. Julia invited the participants to read and to respond to the text by making notes on the guide. As the participants began to finish reading and writing, Julia asked the participants to discuss their written thoughts.

The planning team had initially thought of assembling the teachers into two groups for the discussion. However, when asked whether the participants wanted to break into smaller groups they declined and said they preferred to stay as one large group. The reason for this decision was aired by one of the participants, who said she wanted to hear all the participants' thoughts, not just those of a small group.

The participants' responses to the text revolved around their understandings of developmentally appropriate practice,
which had been gleaned from what they had just read and their experiences in the classroom. The following comments are among those I wrote in note form:

* Current education practices have narrowed the curriculum, and there has to be a connection between life and education in the schools.
* Recognize that curriculum should develop from the child, the content, and the society, to involve social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development.
* The curriculum, when it evolves from the child, becomes much richer and meaningful. They [the children] are full of ideas that are relevant to their own lives.
* Education has become broken into parts.
* In an integrated curriculum which combines and considers the whole process, the children make connections to prior experiences.
* Recognize that children in the early years do not separate domains.

As the discussion came to an end, Julia announced a fifteen-minute break. The planning team then briefly huddled to review what had just occurred. Planning team members told me they were hoping to continue the conceptualization and would further explore the participants' understandings of developmentally appropriate practice from their classroom.
experiences.

The participants reconvened and Kathleen began the next activity by reflecting on the N.A.E.Y.C position statement. Kathleen then asked the participants to divide into six groups. Also, Kathleen asked each group to designate one participant to record the ideas which emerged. Each group reflected upon their individual responses, made earlier on the response guide, and listed characteristics of developmentally appropriate practice. The noise in the room rose as the teachers quickly and briefly provided their individual annotations from their response guides. After ten minutes of brainstorming, Kathleen described the rest of our task. Each small group, using the list of comments generated through the previous activity, was to make a visual to present to the whole group. The participants portrayed, in various forms, their lists of the characteristics of developmentally appropriate practice.

For example, the group in which I participated consisted of five participants. We brainstormed ideas from the article, just using descriptors. Characteristics flowed in rapid succession. One of our group suggested that, since learning is not a linear process, we construct a visual (see Figure 7) that would show these interactions as they evolve. So we used a web format with the Child as the center, surrounded by the six main ideas from our constructed list that are important in a classroom and that address the
developmental characteristics of the child: Play, cultural, natural, self esteem, change, social. We then developed a sublist which included the following words: joyful, acceptance, scaffolding, respect, concrete, internalized, reflection, strengths, metaphor, inclusive, collaboration, participatory, manipulate, generalizing skills and strategies, exploratory, reading and writing, drawing, discovery, acceptance.

![Diagram]

**Figure 7.** Photograph of the visual constructed exploring developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom.

A second group completed the task by producing statements in a list:

* Teaching is a complex—no one solution fits every
circumstance or variable to be considered:
comprehension, previous knowledge and skills that
child brings to the classroom.
* Use prior knowledge as a foundation to build upon;
give some "permission" to continue what they are
doing.
* Teachers generate goals by understanding individual
needs.
* A teacher-directed/ child-centered classroom would
  - be active, flexible, noisy
  - create
  - direct
  - pose questions, work with children
    individually or in small groups
  - focus on self discovery
  - exploration
  - reflect
* Vertical and horizontal learning expands on
  quality, rather than quantity.
* Developmentally-appropriate practice (D.A.P.) is a
  philosophy, not a fad. D.A.P. is not what we do, but
  how we think. How we think about children and how we
define success.

The groups shared their visuals, which were then mounted
on the wall so that, during breaks, the participants could
look for commonalities or make further additions or comments.
The visuals provided a reminder of the process and the development of the conversation on developmentally appropriate practice. The visuals served, too, as a foundation upon which to build an activity for the following day as the participants revisited the issue of developmentally appropriate practice. Then we broke for lunch.

The participants slowly drifted out of the room, chatting as they left. The planning team began to arrange the room for the afternoon's activity. The planning team was hoping to videotape the activity, so Clyde placed video cameras in locations around the room. Julia, Kathleen, Jean, and I spread out on a table an array of collage materials: yarn, fabric pieces, straw, buttons, construction paper, beans, seeds, popsicle sticks, glitter, assorted pasta, light bulbs, and numerous other materials. We then left for lunch with the participants.

At 1:00 p.m., we all returned to the session room and began an activity that the planning team had informed me would have multiple purposes:

* It would reinforce the participants' understanding of D.A.P. by having them produce a representation of their understanding of the characteristics of D.A.P.
* It would allow for discussion and socialization as the groups worked together to strengthen the trust that was beginning to evolve.
* The teachers would learn to construct together.
* It would be a modeling process of group work.

Julia explained the task for the afternoon's activity. She stated the goals, the process for constructing the representation, and ways to present the final product. I wrote down the following as she related the task to the group:

Directions: * The products demonstrate at least three characteristics of developmentally appropriate practice.

* Drawn on a poster, not to exceed the size of the poster board.
* Abstraction.

Process: * Each person contributes.
* Practice first and reflect on practice to assess our process.

Presentation by the group:
* Explain the poster.
* Explain goals added and why.
* Explain how and to what extent met the goals.

This occasion was the first time the participants had been videotaped. The videotaping of the activity was essential for the following day's activity to explore the concept of "observation."

Approaches to the task varied, although most of the groups initially, and hurriedly, went to gather an array of
materials before they began to construct their representation. One of the groups worked in a different way. They planned their representation before gathering materials. They also discussed and thought through the representation before beginning its construction. Most of the groups hurriedly constructed as they planned, constructing and removing pieces until they reached a consensus. The room was loud with a discussion of what should go where and for what reason, and with the continual reiteration of questions: Does this fit? What do you think?

After forty minutes, each group explained the representation they had constructed. As the groups finished their explanation; Clyde and Jean attached the representations to the wall in a quilt-like arrangement. After all the groups had presented, Kathleen revisited the story Dana had read on the first day. Kathleen reread the final part of the story The Patchwork Quilt and emphasized "There it's done!"

As an extension of the discussion, Myra, a kindergarten teacher, posed the following question to the whole group: "Are we not doing the kinds of activities here and doing them in a way that could be done with children? " Discussion followed and focused on the planning team's attempt to provide an environment that was giving the participants the opportunity to work cooperatively. One of the responses, from Kara was "Yes, we are involved and participating;
therefore our understanding will be more meaningful."

Kara's statement was reinforced by Dylan, who stated, "We and children have to be a part of the process." Joan, a second-grade teacher, gave her perception of the environment: "One thing I appreciate about our discussion together is that a low-risk environment has been established." This prompted other teachers to nod in agreement and to make comments, such as:

Betty: We really appreciate coming together and sharing ideas and thoughts.

Pam: Being treated as professionals.

Kara: Teachers getting together and just talking is not always valued, it is seen as a waste of time.

There were nods of agreement from many of the participants.

For closure on this day, Kathleen extended the invitation to the participants for a volunteer to have the "last word". The participants were silent. The planning team waited. And then a principal said, "I don't want to be the last but I will say this ..." and proceeded to relate a short story. After she had finished, there was again silence that was broken by Julia who reiterated the principal's statement about not wanting to be the last. With the invitation still open, Julia related to the participants some procedural information about the following day. After a glance at Kathleen and Jean, Julia discerned that nobody wanted "the last word" and so informed the participants they
had finished for the day.

As the participants began to depart, the planning team took down from the wall the individual representations and attached them to a large sheet of poster board constructed of several sheets. When constructed, the arrangement resembled a quilt. Around this construction, we left a six-inch border, upon which we placed photographs of the participants which had been taken during the two days of sessions. The following morning, the planning team mounted the "quilt" on the wall. As the participants arrived they were invited to sign the "quilt" with a gold-ink pen.

Day Three: Wednesday, August 11.

After the usual coffee and casual discussions between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m., Julia opened the session by describing the agenda for the day and making announcements. She reminded the participants of the purpose of videotaping the session on the previous day, and directed, "While you are watching the video, we invite you to make notes which convey your questions or confirmations which arise from the video to do with developmentally appropriate practice."

While viewing the video, the participants nodded, smiled, made notes, looked puzzled, whispered occasionally to one another. The video presentation lasted about fourteen minutes. After the viewing of the tape, the planning team intended to have the participants break into two large groups for discussion. However, the preference of the participants
was to stay in a whole group discussion. Then the participants discussed their reactions, and I recorded their comments. Many of the responses consisted of one- and two-word descriptors of developmentally appropriate practice such as collaboration, peer tutoring, sharing ideas, respect for each other's ideas, confirmation, questioning, information giving, self-esteem, the breaking down of hierarchy (the principal was working alongside the teachers in constructing the representation), negotiation, and problem solving. The participants also drew attention to the comments made in the videotape such as, "Can I write on the board?" and "We are just messing around with it, aren't we?" and that the videotaped participants frequently asked for support and affirmation from each other for their actions.

As the participants discussed their notes, it became evident to them that the conversation was shifting from the observation of developmentally appropriate practice to the different ways which we observe and the problems of observing. One of the participants reported, "In trying to observe the overall scene, I missed the individual comments or actions." Another participant concentrated her efforts on "one or two people and missed the whole scene." A third participant explained that it was difficult to record and observe at the same time. These comments elicited nods of agreement as if many of the participants experienced similar dilemmas in the process of observing the videotape. The
problem of how to observe and assess became the focus of the conversation, and it evoked many questions from the participants. For example, participants asked:

How do we know what to look for?
Can we assess all the participants at the same time?
Do we need to assess all the participants all the time?
In group construction, how do we ascertain the levels of participation?
Can we really see all that is happening conceptually?
Does this give us a clearer picture of the learner?

From all the questions raised, two important aspects were then identified from the participants' discussion:

What do we look for?
When do we get the time to do this [observation]?

As the discussion proceeded, the participants proposed the need to restructure time in the classroom, to accommodate a different kind of assessment.

Kara: We need to restructure the assessment process, we need a three-way partnership for the child. Who does the assessing? What is its purpose?

Danielle: The motivational issue--assessment has to be self regulating, constructive and reflective.

Dylan: Children become the experts in their own process.

Kara: Through observation of the child we need to
look for the literate behaviors.

This concern about the issues of time, assessment, and the restructuring of time, led to a discussion about the Common Core of Learning (C.C.L.), a curriculum that was then being developed by the State Department of Education, and that the participants thought could become a reality. They were trying to build connections between the C.C.L. and assessment. They raised questions such as, "How would C.C.L. affect what we are trying to do in changing the assessment process?" and "Did the C.C.L. fit with the questions and comments we have just engaged in during the morning session?"
To ease some of the mounting anxiety about trying to connect assessment work and C.C.L., Dylan shared his view, "We can, as teachers, develop assessment tools that are open-ended, natural, holistic, that go along with the Common Core." As the session that morning ended, Julia informed the group that the assistant superintendent from Montford County was scheduled to visit to discuss the Common Core of Learning.

Day Four: Thursday, August 12.

Julia began the day at 9:00 a.m. after our informal chat time. She summarized participants' concerns that had been expressed during the week. She began with three questions: Why are we assessing? What are we assessing? How are we assessing? Julia then continued to reiterate some of the statements, and summarized some of the conversations. She explained:
We are reexamining assessment, going from the snapshot, static one-shot way of assessing, to assessing over time. However, the implications for the actions are that the child is different in different situations, growth is different for each child; therefore, how can one measure, yet accommodate all the facets? We have to have multiple measures and multiple ways of assessing.

Julia, raising her voice slightly for emphasis, reiterated: Why assess? We continually assess, the child continually assesses. We assess in order to gain an understanding of our process.

The conversation became intense among a few of the participants as it revolved around the issue of assessment. One or two participants had a lost or distant expression on their faces. Other participants continued to talk about the "gut feeling" connected to assessment and how we formalize the gut feeling. Here Dylan suggested, for the first time, that the developmental profile for use in the assessment of children is a possible tool, but it is going to be subjective.

The major questions under discussion were reiterated by different participants: Why assess? What are we assessing? How should we assess? After a few seconds of silence, Kara directed the following question to Julia, "if we are going to assess informal instruction, then are we not going to
formalize it?" Julia responded to Kara by stating:

As teachers, we are continually thinking about our
children; we are informally assessing the child as we
 teach. What we need to do as teachers is bring some
structure to what we know so that we can
relate it to parents. We need to formalize the
informal.

As Kathleen, Jean, and Julia realized that some of the
participants were not participating in the discussion but
were beginning to talk among themselves, they signaled Julia.
At that point Julia ended the discussion by commenting,
"These are just beginning conversations about the assessment
issue," and "the answers are not easy."

Sensing that some of the participants might be feeling a
little frustrated by the lack of answers to all their
questions, raised at the beginning of the week, Julia also
talked about the cognitive dissonance involved in such work.
That day some procedural issues needed to be addressed for
future meetings. The planning team hoped that the
participants would decide how they wanted to construct their
sessions in the future. Julia then mentioned to the
participants that the afternoon would be spent structuring
the next session together. Julia then stated the time to
reconvene, and the participants left for lunch in the usual
place.

The teachers were being paid for five days and the
sessions thus far had used four of the days. Therefore, the teachers could discuss and make decisions about how to use the fifth day. They needed to decide how to construct work groups, and where they wanted to go from there. One teacher suggested using a Saturday, but another exclaimed "just don't touch my weekends!" The planning team assured this teacher, and others who were concerned, that the fifth day would not interfere with their personal time.

The participants had essentially remained in their school groups for the activities during the week's sessions. It was Lynne, a kindergarten teacher, who first suggested that it might be more beneficial to meet in grade level groups if they were to look at developmentally appropriate practice. It was then decided that the individual grade levels could determine a time and place for that grade-level group to meet, letting the planning team know so that they could participate. Several locations were selected. The kindergarten teachers would meet in the kindergarten room at one of their schools, the third-grade teachers at the home of one of the participants, and the second-grade teachers in a small restaurant. All of the meetings would be for approximately half a day. The participants decided to use the other half day as reading time. The fact that the participants were being given time on their own, to read or think about the former sessions, was discussed by a few of the participants. One of the comments I overheard was made
in a joking style: "You really trust us!"

Julia explained the process for reimbursement for the five days, and estimated a time frame for payment. The planning team members then organized places in the room where participants could get together to plan what they would be doing in their half-day session together. Once congregated, some of the grade level groups decided to go out in the lounge area to further their discussion.

After about forty minutes, the participants came back together, as the planning team had requested, to bring closure to the week. For closure to the four days together, the planning group used a poem to be read aloud. The piece was "Together" by George Ella Lyon.

You cut the timber, and I'll build the house.
You bring the cheese, and I'll fetch the mouse.
You salt the ice, and I'll crank the cream.
Let's put our heads together and dream the same dream.

I'll drive the truck, if you'll fight the fire.
I'll plunk the keys, if you be the choir.
I'll find the ball, if you'll call the team.
Let's put our heads together and dream the same dream.

You dig for water, and I'll make a pail.
I'll paint the boat, if you'll set the sail.
You catch the fish, and I'll catch the stream!
Let's put our heads together and dream the same dream.

However, instead of a member of the planning team reading it to the participants, Kathleen had designed the reading in such a way that each line was read by a different participant. All were encouraged to join in the last line, 'Let's put our heads together and dream the same dream.'

With smiles and nods of appreciation the session ended and the participants began to slowly disperse. Some participants lingered to continue conversations with the members of the planning team, others talked with new friends they had made.

Schedule for the year

After the summer session of four days, the participants met once a month to discuss assessment issues which arose from their practice in the classroom. The schedule of meetings during the school year of 1993/94 was as follows: September 1 for the morning, September 28, October 19, November 4, December 7, January 13, February 10, March 15, April 14, April 26, and June 21. I have chosen two of these sessions, those on September 28 and February 10, to portray how the sessions evolved and how activities constructed by the planning team guided participants in exploring their practice.

The term "participant" was used in, "The First Days
Together" because the sessions included the principals and other administrative staff from the school board office as well as the teachers. In the following sessions the term "participant" has been replaced with "teachers." The principals felt uneasy about having so many substitutes in the schools on the teacher work days. Therefore so that all the teachers in the project could meet together they decided to withdraw from the work sessions. However, they paid close attention to the progress within the project.

Selected Sessions with the Teachers.

Tuesday, September 28.

The County School Board Office was the location for this session. The room is large and rectangular, with ample space for a variety of interactive activities. However, it is in a basement and has limited natural light; it is sometimes regarded as gloomy. The furnishings consist of long trestle tables and numerous metal chairs. Situated at one end is a door leading to a small room that has cooking facilities. At the other end of the room, a step up leads to an area that contains two long conference tables, around which are situated approximately ten easy chairs.

The teachers had access to refreshments: coffee, juice, fruit, muffins or doughnuts. Lunch was to be eaten on the premises. On this day the teachers donated money to purchase pizza. The planning team members brought salads or desserts. Besides the teachers who had attended the original four-day
session, Dr. Jon Nelson, the external evaluator for the
project, came to visit for one hour.

At 8:35 a.m. the teachers began to move slowly toward
their seats, finishing conversations as they heard Julia
announce that she was ready to begin the session. They
listened attentively as she announced the agenda for the day.
Kathleen, who with Julia and other site directors, had
recently met with officials of the state Department of
Education, gave her interpretation of the position of the
state regarding the common core of learning. Kathleen
explained that she felt comfortable with officials of the
Department of Education in that they were very indecisive
about the curriculum and did not give much guidance. She
reaffirmed the participants' concerns by saying that, "we
will base what we are doing in our practice which aligns with
the state department as they are looking at Math, Science and
Language Arts." Julia, who had attended the meeting with
Kathleen, threw her arms up in the air and exclaimed, "They
didn't tell us anything!" Julia seemed a little more anxious
that the officials of the Department of Education had
appeared vague and hadn't told them anything. In a brief
discussion that followed, Kathleen and Julia reassured the
teachers that the inquiries they were pursuing, and planned
to pursue, would be satisfactory to the state officials.
They explained their judgments, "As there doesn't seem to be
a set direction from the state department, [it is] ours to
create."

Julia related how at the meeting with the officials of the Department of Education she had had conversations with another site project leader and had noted important differences between sites. The other project had included participants from different counties. Therefore, in some cases there may have been only one teacher per school, making it difficult to maintain a collaborative environment when teachers are so far apart and in different schools. The teachers asserted that they enjoyed having teachers from different school locations because that gave them perspectives on what was happening in other schools. However, as Betty stated, it was reaffirming to have "someone down the corridor to be in the same situation as I am in, as I can talk to her about things."

Kathleen emphasized some of same differences that she and Julia had perceived between the sites, "Others [assessment project sites across the state] talked about their projects with enthusiasm. I think we talked with a passion. The Department of Education officials liked the parent contact to be developed, and the fact that administration was involved in the project."

The conversation moved towards a political and educational issue in the State, that the Department of Education had abandoned the Common Core of Learning. The feeling was that a certain group of people did not agree with
its contents and the program had been dropped in response to pressure from that group. The following discussion ensued:

**Dylan:** We must avoid the "us" and "them" situation

**Julia:** The perception is that the common core was top down within the schools. Williams [the governor] is really pushing the grassroots. Our project fits, ours is very powerful.

**Dylan:** It [the movement against the common core] was well planned and executed. That group is powerful. We have to remember it's what we want for the children.

**Cathy:** I called a representative of the Education Association, and discussed the C.C.L. issue with him. He claimed that "at this point it was a politically savvy thing to do. He [the governor] did it because of pressure from another politician."

**Dylan:** He kept it in the paper.

**Cathy:** They took it out before it caught fire.

**Kathleen:** California--look at the example of introducing multiplication in second grade. To be politically savvy with our project we have to determine what is good for our children, to have parents understand and for us to spread the news that what we are about is for the good of your child.

As Kathleen mentioned parents, the conversation evolved from the political arena of the state, to issues about
communication with parents. Teacher conferences with parents would be held in a few weeks.

*Kara*: We have a good opportunity to talk with parents in conferences and on an individual basis. Now would be a good time to think of how the teachers can relate assessment information to parents.

*Julia*: Parents become less hostile if you invite them in.

*Betty*: But we need to educate people who are not associated with education, but also pay the taxes to support education.

*Kara*: Harristown [another project site]. How are they feeling about their project? They are further along with their tools.

*Kathleen*: We talked in the summer about validity, objectivity, you will have to look at their tools. Others [project sites] are going for more in isolation as opposed to ongoing assessment.

*Julia*: Debra [other site project leader] was very positive but she has worked with industry; she seems very efficient.

*Kara*: I wonder how the teachers are feeling?

The talk of tools developed by participants at the other location, and the fact that the other site was already testing these tools prompted the following question from a participant.
Lynne: Is the timeline different? [has the state changed the date for handing in the first deliverable?]

Julia: It's already changed to December 17. They [the Education Department officials] are very accommodating. We are the ones out here doing it.

Kathleen: I think as long as we are true to the project and fulfill our obligation, and it is a contractual obligation (Jean, interrupts, in a reassuring manner).

Jean: Julia put together a very nice packet to present to the state department at the meeting. [Julia had put together all the information in a package about what the project had accomplished thus far. For example, she included the plans for the four day sessions before the beginning of school, and the articles used in the sessions, and the proposed budget, also the ideas the teachers were beginning to explore].

Kathleen held up the packet in the form of a document for all to see. She explained that she would leave it on a table located behind her so that the teachers could look at it during the day.

After the opening discussion, Kathleen began the session by reading a poem, "How many, How much," from A Light in the Attic, (Silverstein, 1981, p.8).
How Many, How Much

How many slams in an old screen door?
Depends how loud you shut it.

How many slices in a bread?
Depends how thin you cut it.

How much good inside a day?
Depends how good you live'em.

How much love inside a friend?
Depends how much you give'em.

Julia gave the instructions for the next activity. The teachers were to meet in their grade-level groups, to share what they had done since the last meeting. After thirty minutes, they would share with the whole group the central focus of their discussions.

The long trestle tables were covered with examples of children's work that the teachers had brought with them. Some of the teachers had begun to collect examples of individual children's work in a folder. Some teachers brought examples of go-home journals designed to establish a connection between home and school. Other teachers brought examples of record keeping. One group of teachers who had attended a conference on portfolios brought the materials they had received at the conference. Julia asked the
teachers to keep a record of the key points of their
discussion. She handed out a sheet of paper to each group.
The paper, headed "Small Group Share," gave the task for the
small grade level discussions and the directions for sharing
by the whole group which was to follow.

The planning team members became a part of the
conversations, with one member sitting with each grade-level
group. I sat with the first-grade teachers. A teacher who
was normally less vocal proceeded to share a story about a
child in her classroom who enjoyed making Indian crafts.
Nicole explained how she had been writing in the go-home
journal to the parent about the fact that Mark was appearing
distracted at school. The parent sat down with Mark at home
and discussed the problem; the outcome was then written in
the go-home journal for Nicole to read at school. Mark
returned the journal to school along with a gift, a bracelet,
he had made with a feather attached to a piece of string.
This was the beginning of the communication between Nicole,
the child, and the parent which was to continue all year.
Recognizing the potential that the journal held for parent
communication, and the importance of Nicole's story, the
first-grade group of teachers were thoughtful and silent for
a few minutes.

Dr. Jon Nelson, the external evaluator for the project,
entered the room, and Julia stopped the teachers briefly to
introduce him to all the teachers. Julia then talked to him
whilst the teachers proceeded with their grade level discussions. The teachers noisily returned to their discussions with each other, showing the array of children's work they had brought, and sharing instructional practices from their classroom. Julia stopped these conversations at 10:00 a.m.

At that time one teacher from each grade-level group reported back to the large group. Nora was the spokesperson for the second-grade group. The focus of interest for this group was parent involvement. Therefore, their discussion revolved around the logistics of how to manage the time it takes to do go-home journals. Go-home journals had been introduced to the participants by Danielle, a teacher from High Ford, who used this process of communication with the child and parent in her classroom in the year before the project. The idea came from the article From Teacher to Child (Ramsaur, 1992). In this process, the teacher constructs a folder, or booklet, inside which there are pages with space for the child, the teacher, and the parent to write, on a weekly basis. After the child and the teacher write in the booklet, the child takes the booklet home for the parent to read and to write a response.

Questions about the process arose from different teachers. For example, they asked "How much time does it take you to make the teacher responses in the journal for all the children?" "Do all the children write?" "What do you do
for the children who don't write?" "Do all the parents respond?" Helping parents to understand that the teachers wanted more input from parents was important, particularly for the faculty at Bardon. Nora, a teacher at Bardon, said the main problem she found with the journal was the amount of time needed to make responses to the children's writing.

The first-grade group consisted of five teachers, who shared their idea, an adaptation of a "behavior calendar." Betty had adapted the calendar for use in keeping a record of a child's reading progress. She related how useful the calendar was, during parent teacher conferences, to show the progress of the child.

Kara, a third grade teacher, added another idea for recording. She had obtained a copy of a recording profile that was used for assessment in another school district. She reported to all the teachers the information she had received and what these assessment recording sheets looked like. At this point Julia suggested she could make copies for all the teachers during the lunch break.

Pat: They seemed to like it because it didn't limit the teacher and yet ...

Betty: It's nice to have something concrete.

Kara: It's great preparation for the Literacy Passport Test.

Dylan: It's called whole language.

Julia then invited another group to share its
experiences. Pam, a third grade teacher, began with a discussion of "show portfolios," an idea she learned during a workshop sponsored by the Society for Developmental Education (S.D.E). The six teachers in her group had spent time deciding what they would include in the portfolios and their concerns about developing a portfolio. At this point, they had decided to include go-home journals, share letters from parents, and pieces of children's work. Connected to these decisions emerged questions about organization, space, and how to choose the best work. The larger group of teachers also had an interest in the readers' and writers' workshop and questioned how to get it started. Pam suggested a book, Reading and Writing: Getting it Started (Jackson, 1990).

Pam's group had also begun to explore ways to manage anecdotal notes. Pam explained her use of a pack of index cards, one card for each student, held together by a ring. She would flip the ring, to show the child's card, as she needed to write something about a child during the day. This explanation elicited interest and questions from the whole group. Nora, a second grade teacher, asked "When do you do that [write comments about the children]?" Pam explained that she did them during "whole class time." Lindsey, a first grade teacher, explained that she took time at the end of the day to write her anecdotal notes on the children.

As the group of third-grade teachers finished sharing their thoughts, the discussion returned to the go-home
journal issue and how different teachers constructed journals in different ways. Rachael, a first-grade teacher, explained how "You make like a sentence journal, then leave the children to write what they learned to do, daily review, weekly review and slowly they will begin to write their own pieces." Danielle, who had first introduced the concept of the go-home journal to the teachers, explained how she really needed to model the process. She felt that in the early stages of introducing the journal to the children, she had not taken the time to model enough.

As multiple discussions broke out about the management of go-home journals, Jean, in a loud and clear voice, asked Pam to explain how the child and parents communicate in her process. The hum of multiple discussions slowly quieted as Pam proceeded to give an example of the process she implemented in her classroom. As Pam was talking, another teacher, Joan, from the same school, interrupted Pam's conversation. Joan emphasized the importance of the connection with parents and how she kept the journal in a slightly different way. The teachers listened intently to this part of the conversation because this individual teacher's interpretation of the go-home journal, and its use for the classroom, seemed to be important. Danielle, towards the end of this conversation said, "I am sure there are many different ways to do the journal--you just have to make it your own." Many of the teachers were smiling and again
outbreaks of small conversations percolated through the room.

Julia raised her voice and stated "last but not least, kindergarten," to remind the teachers that the six kindergarten teachers had not yet shared. Whitney began to share the discussion of the kindergarten group "The focus of our group was on center time and how to address the individual needs of the children." Dylan proceeded to share what the kindergarten teachers, in his school, had tried to develop to accommodate the children's individual needs.

The Chapter One teachers [reading specialists] come into the kindergarten open area during the center time [a time when the children work in small groups, each group centered on one activity]. The centers are designed around thematic units. Planning is awesome. To establish a common planning time, we need release time. We are trying to schedule Chapter One time in the morning. In this way we have more teachers to help with centers and the Chapter One teachers still get to interact with their children in a more natural setting. It's just in a different way from the traditional Chapter One way. (The teachers in Chapter One used to take the children, identified as needing extra assistance, out of the classroom and work with them in a small group)

Whitney followed by raising a concern about how to show the progression of a child's work. "We have to find a way
that makes sense to the child, the parent and the teacher, and is manageable. Portfolios?" Here, Whitney made a facial gesture, shrugged her shoulders, and moved her arms and hands in an open gesture and looked questioningly toward the other teachers. There was a silence until Julia questioned and reiterated Whitney's concern. "How do we manage the crucial pieces that may not be crucial at the time?"

Dylan: How to decide on which pieces?

Rachael: Several children have wanted to take pieces home and asked me to copy it and put it in the portfolio but we lose the quality, the color, sometimes.

Danielle: Scanning the work onto the computer would be a good way; couldn't we keep records on the computer?

Danielle glanced over at Clyde (a division technology specialist) who responded, smiling, with, "Color and color printer would solve the problem, but technology is expensive." After this comment, everyone was quiet. Julia took the opportunity to announce a ten-minute break in the morning's activity.

After we reconvened, Julia demonstrated a manipulative math lesson from Connections: Linking Manipulatives to Mathematics, Grade 4, (Charles & Brummet, 1989). Julia started by explaining the math task (See Appendix C for a complete description of the task). She asked the teachers to
find a partner and work in pairs to solve the math problem. The search for partners elicited some amusement and laughter as people tried to assess good math partners. I became partner to Nicole, a first-grade teacher. The other members of the planning team, apart from Julia, also found partners. We spent the next few minutes trying to solve the math problem. Julia was standing by the kindergarten group of teachers and frequently glanced to see what they were doing. When Julia thought that some of the pairs had arrived at a conclusion, she stopped all the teachers. Clyde moved from his place to the easel, on which was a sheet of chart paper. He recorded for Julia as she asked the teachers for their resolutions to the problem. She began with Dylan, one of the teachers she had been observing. She explained that he had made up an alternate way of stacking the blocks. Julia then asked the teachers for any alternatives and some other pairs of teachers gave alternate patterns that they had found in trying to work out the problem.

Julia turned to focus on the kindergarten group of teachers and raised two questions. "How do we document the progress of each child?" and "Do I assess all the children in the class at the same time?" Dylan asked in response, "What would be your criteria for mastery? We have to establish that." In response to the latter, Myra replied:

You have to have a good understanding of the math concepts to assess, and [to determine] what is
mastery. That also involves acknowledging different learning styles as we look at the differences in how we came to an answer. And how do we choose which child to observe in each task?

Whitney: I think we have to remember we are assessing over a period of time and that there will be multiple chances for the child to show they understand a certain skill. If we are not going to teach skills in isolation, then one skill may be frequently exhibited.

Nora: If you were doing a developmental approach, it's almost an Individual Education Profile (I.E.P.) for each child. We can't do an I.E.P. for each child!

As this conversation continued, Kathleen and Jean went to fix salad. Clyde went to collect pizza for lunch.

The conversation returned to the issues of how to find time to assess and construct ways to assess on an individual basis. When there were a few seconds of silence, Julia took a step back and almost whispered, "I don't have an answer." The conversation had come to an end. Julia announced that it was time for lunch as everything was ready.

We all had lunch. There was much personal chatter but conversations about assessment still continued. The superintendent of the school board, and the Director of Elementary Education, came to talk informally with the teachers during the lunch break.
Julia and I talked briefly over lunch. She expressed concern about her reaction to the teachers' thoughts and that she did not have the answers to the assessment issues. Julia and I agreed that there will be many situations where the planning team members don't have the answers, and that the teachers will realize they are the ones who can work around the problems of alternative forms of assessment.

Julia opened the afternoon session by mentioning that the group of third-grade teachers had already decided that they wanted to get together to continue to work in their group. Other teachers went off in pairs, or alone, to other parts of the building to read or engage in conversation about practice.

Jean, Clyde and I went to photocopy articles or other information that the teachers had requested during this morning session, such as the profile form Kara had brought from another school district. Kathleen left for another meeting. Julia and Kathleen explained to me that it was important that we did not work with the teachers today, as they needed time to study alone, or in groups. They felt it was important that the teachers did not feel as though they were being monitored, and that they needed to realize that the planning team valued time for reading and discussion.

The teachers reconvened at 2:45 p.m. The various photocopied pieces were available for them to collect from the conference table. The teachers were invited, to write a reflection of
the day in their composition books, and share this reflection as a closing activity.

I made a written record of their reflections:

Kara: Sharing with other teachers, getting ideas down was important.

Lynne: We need as teachers more planning time to share ideas. For the classroom I want three pieces of writing during the year to go into a portfolio.

Betty: We need tools we choose to use:

- portfolios
  - tape of each child

Nora: I feel better about the writing process, writer's workshop.

Susan: I really enjoyed working with the group. I'm going to use Pam's information folder, I feel unsure in sharing whole language stuff with parents and will gain more confidence in children's conferences.

Stephanie: Sharing enthusiasm, just showing the parent where the child is.

Lindsay: We change things constantly; even veteran teachers plan constantly. The cooperative spirit of getting together. I plan to work on an evaluation journal.

Cathy: I'm surprised that as we share all this good stuff that other people are not as enthusiastic or involved.
Vicki: Overwhelmed with all the good ideas. Until you have the class you don't know how it will work. I enjoy the simple management ideas that we create for assessment.

Renee: Sharing is the best part of the project. Joan and I have got our portfolio so that we don't get overwhelmed. How to manage the Math Journals though, is a question.

Joan: We have the power of observation, we just have to recognize it.

Danielle: Speed of recording observed information. How do we do it?

Dylan: The healthy attitude in the room today.

Emily: We are really sharing ideas and becoming a community.

Carolyn: To prevent being overwhelmed—we get too fractured; we get too little time to talk.

Myra: The need to get together is extremely powerful. I get back and forget and have to look at my notes.

Whitney: I feel more focused in what I am doing this next month, collecting information by observation and looking at what children are doing.

Liz: Wonderful to meet and share, I feel as though I am barely getting my feet on the ground. I want to explore the Portfolios.
Jane: I feel good about the take home journals. We don't want to move too fast.

Pat: First grade is having a meeting county-wide. We need to share with other faculty.

After the sharing of reflections, the teachers packed up all their materials and slowly left.

The teachers next met on October 19, and November 4. In these sessions, the teachers and the planning group grappled with assessment processes and products. In both sessions the teachers brought work from the classroom. The sessions involved discussion in whole groups and in grade-level groups. The organization for the mornings was to take time to enhance the knowledge base about assessment, through the sharing of experiences from the classroom or personal stories. These stories related journeys of teachers' transformations in understanding the learning process. Also, at the November meeting the session focused on various ways these teachers used to record examples of the children's work. They discussed ways to formalize the informal, and ways to bring meaning and to make sense. Julia helped this session by providing a piece from Dancing with the Pen (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1992); it included the developmental stages of the writing process. The teachers had brought numerous samples of children's writing to the session and were invited, using the writing profile, to assess the children's writing.
Before the December session, Julia went out to the schools to talk about the different areas of inquiry which we had heard the teachers discuss. She wanted to encourage them to commit to one area. The four areas of focus for the deliverables became: 1) Developmental profile for language arts; 2) Go-home journals; 3) Parent connection; 4) Instructional tasks. The session on December 7 became an all-day work session that followed an initial whole-group conversation. The teachers began to construct and make early drafts for the December deliverables. The format of the December session was followed in all subsequent meetings.

Thursday, February 10.

The meeting on February 10 took place at the Continuing Education Center on the campus of the local university. The session was held in a large room, with an extra room which teachers could use for small group activities. The large room had trestle tables arranged in two long rows. At one end of the room, a long trestle table held refreshments including coffee and juice, as well as muffins and fruit, for the teachers.

The weather that morning was cold, and a pending snow storm threatened to close the schools early. Teachers from the outlying areas related stories of how hard it was to drive to the session because of the snow and ice. The Director of Elementary Education attended the session. She sensed the teachers' apprehension and explained, "If the
schools were to close early, we will also finish early." A few smiles emerged and the teachers began to focus on the session.

Julia began with the agenda for the day. She announced "We will begin the day by sharing our progress in the grade level groups. Lunch will be at 12-1 p.m, in the same room we ate in during the four-day session at the beginning of the project. We need to discuss the Virginia Association for the Education of the Young Child, (V.A.E.Y.C.) workshop and the presentation in Richmond in March." Julia tried to encourage teachers to make presentations at the latter, by stating: "The stories we have to tell are your stories and they need to be told by teachers." After announcing the agenda, Julia continued, "Okay! Where are we within the groups?" The groups then gave a brief overview of their work and their plan for the day. The first to volunteer was the profile group:

Cathy: We are working on the social aspect. We got stuck on the wording the last time; we ended up looking at the value judgment statements. The socialization was causing some problems as we came to the conclusion that socialization is the foundation of all learning areas.

Julia: When you say "socialization" what are you saying?

Dylan: Interaction, making all those good things they
are learning and making them real. We need to acknowledge the social aspect and accept that the child can be at varying levels. For example a kindergarten child could be well advanced in some areas but an adult may not be.

Carolyn: We need to be able to look at it. We really don’t have a hard copy to be able to look at.

Jean: We have a printer this time. [After the last session, the planning team realized the participants needed access to printers for their writing process].

Danielle: We also realized that our conversation was set around teachers' standards. Are we looking at developmentally appropriate practice or our own expectations?

Danielle then gave an example from the reading section on the profile being constructed.

Danielle: Do we expect them to be a life-time reader? Is that our expectation? Or should we developmentally say they can be a reader?

Dylan: We began to question if it was valid or not. We were also stuck on the writing.

Betty: We don’t like to write, because we didn’t write because we were not taught how to.

The conversation deviated from the description of where the group was, to a discussion about the problems of writing. Julia interjected and encouraged another group to volunteer
by saying, "and next."

Clyde began to report for the parent-involvement group. He had acted as recorder for this group at the January session. The teachers in this group were in the process of constructing the different ways that contact could be made with those parents who do not normally come to the school. For example, the teacher could ride the bus on one occasion to obtain some understanding of the neighborhood of the child. Jean's response to this idea was that as we construct alternate ways:

We have to recognize that this kind of interaction is a different role and it will take time. As we talk about teacher change, we have to realize that we are also talking about helping parents change.

Kara: We are not used to having that role. It used to be the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) and money raising where the contact came with parents. What we are also asking them for is the development of their child up until they reach the school.

Jean: We are empowering parents.

Rachael: And parents are afraid they are doing it wrong.

Danielle: With whole language we were not trusted; time and reinforcement is needed.

Rachael: Not only seeing the home with Chapter One, there is a special connection.
Rachael explained how she spent fifteen minutes at the home of each child in her class, at the beginning of the school year. "It pays for itself many many times. At Bardon, a rural school, I couldn't do it, but I did it this year at Brevard." In response to Rachael's issue, Dana explained, "We do have a principal who goes out to visit in a very rural area." Jean shared that, at Bardon, the principal and Danielle also went out into the rural areas.

Kara: Another idea is to take a Polaroid photo before the children come to school [in the spring when they visit] and have it displayed when the children entered the classroom.

The next group to relate some of their thoughts and progress was the Instructional Task Group. Deanna began the presentation by relating a story from her experience.

I had a child from another county begin in my classroom ... the child had reported to the parent that she had not had reading today. What she actually meant was that she had not been in reading group today. Educating parents about the kind of reading we do with children is important, or else the parents think we are not doing reading--they only have their own school experience to refer to. We have to show the parents that there are different ways of working with children which may better facilitate the learning process.
Julia: That's why we are doing a parent connection. That's why the parent involvement is important. As we move to site-based management in the county, we are going to have to educate parents about the work of teachers and the kinds of things we do in the classroom to enhance learning.

Joan, a second grade teacher, then proceeded to relate an idea she and another teacher had implemented:

Renee and I had the children write on report cards. We now have a student report card. The idea was out of the scholastic book. The children have a separate report card from the county-mandated report card.

Joan then related a story about a parent who described the report card as "ridiculous." Joan first thought the parent was relating to the children writing a report card. After having "a heart attack," because she and the children had put "a lot of effort and time into doing the student report cards." Joan realized that the parent was referring to the county-mandated report card.

Changing the subject, Danielle turned to Julia and asked "What's the date for the deliverable?" Julia explained that she had talked with the project director from another site, Debra. Debra had had a chance to look at the deliverable that had been presented to the Department of Education by Julia and Kathleen, in December. Debra's comment was that,
on the first look, she reported that "It was true to teachers, true to holistic ways of teaching." Reflecting on her own project, Debra mentioned that if she had had a chance she would have done things differently. Debra was brought in as a consultant at this other site after the participants had begun the project.

As a change of topic, Kara introduced an issue she felt needed to be addressed.

For all our information, I have heard the comments through the county that we are producing something [the assessment tools] that is not user friendly and that it would take a lot of time. We [the teachers] need to get stories out, we need to get something out in the newspaper.

Dylan: One common denominator is that time commitment. We have to construct the time for teachers to enact what we are doing. It is really an issue.

Julia: Teacher time, we need to address that and have a section in the deliverables. 

Discussing the time issue encouraged Nora to outline for the teachers the time-frame necessary for responding to go-home journals. "They do take one whole evening a week to do them."

During the discussion and as each group related their progress, a flier distributed from the Gifted Program was passed down the line of teachers seated opposite to me.
Apparently, in order for teachers to be qualified to teach a gifted child, they must have attended a series of workshops with the gifted supervisors. The schedule for these workshops was from February to the end of the school year. One of the teachers commented that due to inclement weather, the gifted workshops, and the assessment project, teachers would spend too much time out of the classroom. Nevertheless, two assessment project meetings were planned in April in order to complete work for the deliverables.

As Nora refocused the attention of the group on the go-home journals, Betty related the story about a parent of one of her students. "In one of our earlier sessions in the project, a long time ago, I had talked about a parent who would not respond in the take-home journal and so the principal in the school had responded." Turning to Julia, and smiling, she explained, "I just had to share this story." Then turning back to the other teachers, Betty continued her story. "The parent recently sent a note to me to say that the principal was writing on the page." This story by Betty caused smiles and laughter amongst the teachers. Stephanie, a special education teacher at Bardon, read out loud one or two of her letters from the special-needs children in fifth grade, to emphasize how the ideas from the assessment project extended beyond the K-3 grade levels.

At the end of this reporting and sharing, we formed work groups. I stayed with Julia to work in the math group.
Kathleen continued the work she had begun in the January session with two teachers, Nora and Deanna. These two teachers were writing descriptions of instructional tasks from their practice. Clyde continued to act as recorder for the parent involvement group. Julia, who was perceived as being a math person, left the math group because they were looking to her for guidance. They needed to concern themselves with what was important from their practice. I stayed with this group.

After much discussion on how to construct a math assessment tool, our group decided that the use of a profile, such as the reading and writing profile, might be a good idea, as would keeping the language the same i.e., emergent, etc. A text, The Language of Mathematics (Bickmore-Brand, 1990) seemed to be relevant to the teachers as they browsed the materials the planning team had collected. Kara asked if she could borrow the book in order to read it before the next session. (The following week, Julia ordered this book for all the teachers in the project.) Kara also volunteered to try to obtain more information on the Carawatha model from Australia that is mentioned in the text. For this group, the day became a browsing session as the teachers passed ideas back and forth, read ideas from the collection of books, or shared ideas of their own recording processes. That day, their problem to focus on was to answer whether they were going to create a profile that would accommodate all the math
strands, or whether they were going to create a separate profile for all the thirteen strands.

At 11:30, the teachers came together before going to lunch. Julia explained that the session would end after lunch, as the schools were closing early due to the inclement weather. After lunch the teachers returned to the session room, collected their belongings, and took with them the books they wanted to borrow. Some of the teachers waited for copies to be made of what they had written that morning. The planning team remained behind to collect materials together and to load them into a vehicle. Before we left, one of the teachers, Nicole, gave a piece that contained her experience with the go-home journal to Julia. The piece reflected the continuation of the story I had heard this first-grade teacher share with her grade-level peers, in the early days of the project, at the September session. At that time, I urged her to relate her story to the larger group, and Julia asked her to relate the story in written form for the deliverable. Julia received Nicole’s story "The Feather Boy." (see Appendix G for the complete Feather Boy Story). The five of us sat huddled around Kathleen as she read the piece out loud. We had no response for the strength of this story. With tears in our eyes, we left for home.
CHAPTER FOUR

Planning Meetings

Following is an illustration of how the planning team planned the interactive sessions for the teachers in the assessment project. Through discussion, the reading of professional texts, and relating their own stories of practice, the planning team grappled with the concepts associated with assessment and the issues related to working with others in professional development.

The planning team members created a microenvironment within a larger group of participants. Like other participants they also had to collaborate with one another, come to trust one another, share their practice, and reaffirm and question one another's perspectives.

The team members had all known each other in different settings: as colleagues in a classroom together, as peers in graduate studies, as participant observers in research, and as friends. However, the assessment project provided a new setting and posed new challenges to their relationships. They were able to work at developing a collaborative environment that would allow each of them to express their voice.

There were many planning meetings throughout the year. Each evolved in different ways. In order to illustrate the kinds of environments they created for themselves, the form of the interactions which occurred, and the issues and
dilemmas that became important to them, I concentrated on planning meetings prior to the September 28 and February 10 sessions with the teachers.

**Contexts**

The planning team members met at two different locations. One of the locations was Julia's office. The office was located off the foyer of an elementary school, in the pathway of the entrance to the library. To maintain privacy, and to be able to hear each other, they closed the door. The room was small and it barely allowed the five team members to be seated comfortably. The room contained a bookshelf upon which was Julia's personal collection of professional texts. A computer sat on a large desk and a chair was located nearby. A rocking chair, and three wooden high back chairs provided additional seating. The room had no windows and was illuminated solely through artificial lighting. During the first meeting we were continually interrupted by the intercom (there was one speaker in this small room). A member of the planning team disconnected the speaker.

On other occasions they met in the executive board room at the school board office. This location gave them the necessary space to use the articles, texts and artifacts they accumulated. A large conference table with space for twelve people dominated the room. A table of smaller size was located in the corner of the room. A white board stretched the length of one wall, and they used it occasionally to

158
record visual interpretations of their mutual constructions.

I audio-recorded all of the planning sessions that took place at these locations.

In planning for the September 28 session, planning team members met on five separate occasions: September 2, September 9, September 13, September 20 and September 23. The length of the meetings varied from one to four hours.

Planning Meeting One (September 2).

Planning team members arrived at Julia's office (in the elementary school) at about the same time, 1:00 p.m., on a sunny Monday afternoon, ready to begin. They opened the session by discussing the value of time for reading as this was important for teachers.

*Kathleen:* But then when we come together again there will be some time for reading, right?

*Julia:* And studying.

*Kathleen:* Because I found when I was with the Language Arts group of teachers, when we passed out all these articles, and we just sat and read, and they [the teachers] chose what they wanted to read from this package it was just important because one would be reading one thing and say, "Hey! listen to this," and read it out loud and one would say, 'That is kind of like what I am reading.'

By giving an example from another setting, Kathleen emphasized the advantages of reading individually, and of
having a community to respond to one's interpretations. Raising this issue of responding to one another led to a conversation about the diversity of the teachers. They concluded that this diversity was a strength. Planning team members appreciated that they were working with groups of teachers that represented study groups within their own school. The focus of the teachers inquiry ranged from multi-age teaching, to assessment, to parent involvement.

Julia drew our attention to the logistical issues that she needed to address about the project. The discussion centered on the times and dates of the all-day project sessions. In planning these sessions, team members had to consider the different schedules of the participants. For example, they needed to consider the schedules of the principals, the availability of substitute teachers, and how to disseminate information to all the participants along the lines of the formalities adopted in the county.

The issue of deliverables for the State Department of Education was raised and led to a conversation about what planning team members expected the deliverables to look like. The Department of Education appeared to have problems giving out benchmarks because of political problems with the Common Core of Learning. Team members used the absence of benchmarks to their advantage. It allowed them to maintain their position that the deliverables would evolve from the teachers. Or, as Kathleen aptly stated, "We really don't
need the benchmarks from the state department."

Kathleen: Well the deliverables are not defined and it just means the deliverables. Now what they had originally said in that document was two deliverables for every outcome or something. Now in a conversation that you (looking at Julia) had with the state department, they narrowed it down to the process.

Julia: And who knows.

Kathleen: Fundamental.

Julia: Yes, the fundamental skills but who knows what it is now, did I tell you, I called, they will not give benchmarks.

Kathleen: Oh, they won’t!

Julia: They will not give them out, they will not let anybody see them.

Jean: Did they give a reason for that?

Julia: No, they are just not going to let them out. I assume this is because of all the hoopla that is going on with the Common Core and she kind of alluded that it was that basically we are not going to. I said, "Well, how are we supposed to know what exactly we are assessing?" "That's a good question" was her response. I said, "So, I assume that the date the deliverables are due will change." And she said, "No, those dates are still for us so they are still for you."

Following this conversation about the State Department of
Education, team members began to plan activities for the September 28 session.

Julia: I have just got to brainstorm, although you may have already thought of this but I just got it.

(Laughter) What if when we structure this next meeting—that they show as they are learning about portfolios, start creating their own portfolio.

Jean: For themselves.

Kathleen: That's something we wrote about earlier.

Both Julia and I proceeded to share stories from our own experiences with portfolios. Julia, when in a classroom position prior to this year, was looking at portfolio development with children. She wanted to maintain her own portfolio as an illustration of her developing understandings. I had tried to encourage preservice teachers to develop a portfolio of their understanding of assessment as they engaged in a university course on assessment. After sharing these stories, Julia encouraged team members to refocus their attention.

Julia: Okay, now get back on.

Jean: It's on task.

During this phase of the meeting, I felt that planning team members were validating each others perspectives about guidelines. They wanted to believe that it was okay to do their own thing and that they didn't need somebody else to set the parameters.
Jean shared a story of her experience with a group of the teachers. She related how the teachers were beginning to develop their own benchmarks, based on their knowledge about children and from their own practice. Jean went on to predict that we would likely hear more of this construction by teachers. This story reinforced the planning team's premise that the teachers were capable of creating their own benchmarks. With this story from Jean, and the shared support for our theory, planning team members felt a consensus that, yes, teachers were capable of constructing for themselves. Yet, they did not believe that teachers should ignore the professional literature as they developed assessment processes and developmentally appropriate practice. The planning team's constructivist view was revealed in the conversation that followed:

Jean: We might want to listen to things purposefully like that to bring those types of things out. Looking for potential conversations in the groups and raise some consciousness on all of the thinking. If we are going to look at things developmentally and it's going to seek the context that we are in, then it has to come from those understandings of self.

Julia: Oh yes!

Jean: Self understanding of children and how they develop. And then it might be that, if we are looking, whatever we are looking at in the portfolios, and in this
case organization, and how children organize themselves individually not as groups. Cathy (a teacher) said "that makes me think of so and so writing," and she went back to a professional resource which documented, and you know, gave that validity out of the professional literature that you need. And so I think over time you are going to start to see things like that happen and I think it will become more content focused as they start looking at those children’s portfolios.

Kathleen: And also if we think back to the fundamental skills--I said this to one of you, but I don’t know whom. The fundamental skills are situated within content, they are not content, they are process.

Ann: That’s right.

Kathleen: And they are processes that are used across the content like organization and ...

Jean: Yes! Sure, it fits.

Kathleen: That fits that third grade group was about to the point and they didn’t get there, trying to think of something, some kind of tool that would relate to a bigger thing like a process. I didn’t identify that we go across content areas and they didn’t quite get there.

Jean: But they are going to get there.

Kathleen: Yes, and I was excited when they were going, then they shifted back to content and I thought ...
But they will get there, I think.

The planning team held a mutual belief in the teachers that they could construct the knowledge, if given the time, and the opportunity, for conversation.

Again, they turned their attention to the logistics of the project. In rapid succession, they called out things that needed to be attended to, such as scheduling of future dates; the budget; trying to locate other forms of assessment from around the country; discussing contacts for external review of the tools to be developed; the kinds of conferences the teachers would like to attend; the funding required for travel to conferences or for visiting other project sites for schools to look at alternative forms of assessment; the reasons for seeking outside evaluation; the need for outside evaluators to be guided by a philosophy similar to ours; and connecting with parents to help them become aware of the project.

One additional problem was raised, and that was the title for the committee that would be formed and that would include parents. This problem raised the sensitive issue of the response of the teachers to involving parents so early in the project. "How do we (teachers) inform parents about the project?" had been a question raised by the teachers in a half day session on September 1. The planning team members brainstormed ways of providing the information through the general Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) meeting or the
P.T.A. board meeting. Still the question remained--just how might parents respond?

Kathleen: I know that level of ambiguity, taken where the teachers are, and moving it now to parents, is, ... but yet we don’t want to come to parents with the idea that we have got this in place. We know what we are doing, and now we are involving you, I mean it’s a delicate balance.

Julia: But yet, then again, we don’t want to go and say, "Well, we are not really sure what we are doing."

Kathleen: Right!

Jean: We are starting to get to the point where we can, because we know we are going to look at developmental profiles, we are going to look at portfolios, and I think those are going to be things that are not real scary.

Kathleen: Right, those are words that parents, at least some parents.

Ann: I think it’s ambiguous to the members of the group, to the teachers, and for us, because we know what a portfolio involves--the ambiguity involved with portfolios. To parents, when they don’t have the knowledge of what portfolio could be, it’s like, "Oh! they are doing portfolios."

Kathleen: Right, it’s a buzz word.

Ann: So, like you said, they don’t realize the ambiguity that goes with it.

166
Jean: And it can also be seen as something that is supporting the other types of assessment that are already going on.

Ann: It's how you present it.

Kathleen: That's true.

Jean: It's going to be important as to how we present it so even though it is a grant for alternative assessment ... we can soften it a little bit, and I think that is important so that it does not, it's comforting. It's not anxiety producing.

Kathleen: We know that we have to speak in different ways to different communities.

Planning team members then returned to the issues of assessment and referred to an article they had read together with the teachers in the session before school began. They tried to remind one another about what they had read, and reflected on the important issues raised in the article which could help them move forward.

Kathleen: Again, that's why I thought that Farr (1992) article [one of the articles given to the teachers in their folder during the first week], was important because we can talk about the numbers and that they give us this little piece of assessment. But then we need other things that tell us more, and we are situated. I know we know this, but we have to keep saying we are situating this in the classroom and the purposes for
classroom instruction and we just have to help people understand.

The kind of assessment being explored in the project was just one piece of the total picture. Planning team members spent time drawing out and discussing the advantages of such assessment to each other, extracting what they believed to be advantageous. A discussion ensued about the current process of standardized testing in the state and its relevance to the classroom. Julia related the story from her practice of how she used standardized tests in her classroom. This reminded the team of materials one of them had found in an issue of Educational Leadership. (Association for Curriculum and Development). They mentioned more resources that they knew of and that they needed to obtain from the library. Kathleen raised the issue of the reporting system in use in the county and stated that this was the time to build a case to support an alternative way of reporting a child's progress to parents.

Planning Meeting Two (September 9)

We met in Julia's office at about one o'clock; this was to be a short meeting, more of an update about Julia's work on creating connections. Julia began by reporting her progress in making contact with another site director. She explained what she had learned. The planning team members all sat and listened. The teachers involved in the project at the other site had invited the planning team members, as a
part of their external evaluation, to look at their assessment tools. The planning team discussed ways they could have the teachers travel to that site, instead of the planning team, with the intention of giving the teachers something concrete to look at.

The meeting was spent primarily discussing budget issues and the Virginia Association for the Education of the Young Child (V.A.E.Y.C.) conference in March, where planning team members wanted the teachers to present some of the tools they would develop. Team members also discussed the procedure involved in placing book orders for teachers. The teachers could choose professional texts they liked, and Julia would place the orders. The planning team also purchased texts related to assessment for their own use during the year.

**Planning Meeting Three** (September 13).

The planning team members met in Julia's office and began discussing a book they had selected for the teachers entitled, *The Portfolio and its Use: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment of Young Children* (N.A.E.Y.C, 1992). Julia updated them on the state of the project and the arrangements she had made for the teachers to visit the other project site.

After a brief discussion they began to focus on the planning.

*Julia*: Okay, on the twenty-eighth, what are we going to do?
Kathleen: Well, what's your assessment of where people were the last time we met.

Planning team members discussed what they had synthesized from the teachers' conversations and they summarized those ideas they thought were important. They all recognized that two themes had emerged from teachers' discussions: the portfolios and the developmental profile. They identified, from their interpretations of responses and comments, major activities for the day of the session with the teachers. Kathleen adamantly asked for time, for time to read again. In unison, the rest of them exclaimed, Yes! Yes! They then proceeded to question each other as to what they wanted to construct for the teachers in the project.

Julia: Do we want to collect together some portfolio articles? I think we want to, we probably have some things already collected but we probably want to figure out what they have already in their folder.

Ann: It was my understanding that they [referring to the teachers] are going to brings things, too.

Kathleen: They are going to bring? Okay, so Julia could you get a letter out this week to prompt them that if they have things they want to share, to give them to you so that we can get them copied and ready for then?

Jean: I felt, didn't both of you, that the kindergarten people really wanted to spend time looking at developmental profile [that day], because everybody
else kept going portfolios, and they would go, but we want to look at our developmental profiles.

Through the recalling of the teachers' conversations, the planning team assessed the teachers' needs and preferences. They agreed on the desirability of providing spaces so that all teachers could look at their inquiry. They tried to keep the agenda open enough to accommodate the varied interests of the different teachers. Yet, they worked to develop community—a general sense of concern and connectedness among teachers. Interspersed with discussions about the upcoming session, and what they perceived would be a beneficial structure, they made suggestions about literature which could provide a helpful resource. For example, they considered that the work of Marie Clay, (1975) and the book What did I Write, which contains the developmental stages of the writing process, would be appropriate. Team members thought this text would also be useful for Julia to order for the teachers. They then suggested the names of associations that they could join in order to access more information.

The planning team members' conversation about what they had heard the teachers say about themselves led them to the following discourse. They began to look at interpretations and the multiplicity of the terms that they, as educators, tend to use without clarification. Many of their discussions during the year revolved around the clarification of such terms, and what they themselves understood those terms to
mean. The following is an example of how they tried to "unpack" their understandings with a view to understanding those of the teachers.

*Kathleen:* I have no idea what people talk about when they talk about portfolio.

*Julia:* I don't think they do or we do.

*Jean:* No, because they keep throwing out so many different, working portfolios, and then what was the *(Julia interrupts).*

*Julia:* Go-home, take-home.

*Jean:* And then the "I-can" kept coming up.

*Ann:* I think maybe a way of doing it is for everyone to brainstorm, or to bring examples of what they are doing in the classroom. What a portfolio means to them and how they are similar and dissimilar. The most important part of a session I once led in staff development was the sharing by the teachers of how they constructed "centers" in their classrooms, and how all their constructions were different. The teachers need time to share their differences.

They began to clarify their understanding of the term "portfolio." They discussed what they had heard teachers say about the portfolios they were trying to develop in the classrooms.

*Jean:* Let me write that down, but it's like that is one way you could use a portfolio to look at those types of
processes. But another way to use a portfolio is to look at content, whether it is integrated or not. Integrated, depending on where you are in your understanding of teaching, through looking at the concepts you are developing and how they are being discussed, and talked about, and the processes they are going through. Right, so you could look at a child's reading and writing to understand developmentally where they were with their reading, with writing, with their thinking, with their problem solving. Right, all those types of things. But you could also look at it to see it [as a] more content-oriented way to understand what is there (turning to Clyde). Give me a concept, Clyde, that would come in natural world. Just anything.

Clyde: Earth is a closed system.

Julia: Habitat.

Jean: Habitat, closed systems, right, you could look to see what their understandings were and how they were evolving over time which would be a different type of analysis of that child's work.

Julia: Yes, no, no that makes sense.

Clyde: So you are talking about ways of using this, the portfolio?

Jean: The materials in the portfolio. Right, those are two ways that are sort of leaping out at me right now whether or not it is a working portfolio or an at-home
portfolio. Regardless of the audience for the portfolio, and that is where the tools would come in.

Julia: Right.

Kathleen: Yes.

Jean: Looking at the processes. Are you looking at the concept development in the content?

Kathleen: And I think that ...(Jean interrupts)

Jean: Let me do it one more time just to hear myself say it.

Kathleen: Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead.

They focussed their attention on developing a working definition of portfolios, and issues involved in moving portfolios beyond being just a collection of children's work. In doing so, they raised for themselves an important issue that they had raised in the first week with the teachers. That is, do we, as teachers, know what to look for in developmental practice? Kathleen assessed the consensus of their understanding. In her words, "we all have a lot of learning to do."

The planning team members realized, at this point, that they had to explore many possible interpretations of portfolio. Through the addressing of this issue, they raised another issue which directed the following related line of inquiry.

Clyde: If I imagine then that each, if you had a set of people working on whatever, [and] they were looking at
portfolios in a certain way, and somebody else is looking at portfolios in another way. You are saying that one thing that all these people have in common is that no matter what kind of portfolio they are constructing. There are ways of pulling out the content? There's ways of looking at the developmental appropriateness of the instruction. Is that what you are saying?

Yes, that's it, the processes.

Kathleen: The processes.

Jean: Yes! That makes sense.

Kathleen: It does, and I guess one of my worries has been --and, again I haven't been with the teachers for a little while and I know everything is evolving--but that they (the portfolios) end up being a collection of materials but nothing is ever done with it.

Julia: Exactly.

Kathleen: To analyze it.

Julia: Well, it becomes an assessment without any evaluation going on.

Planning team members were, at that point, struggling to clarify for each other their meanings, ideas, and interpretations. In doing so, they constructed together to the extent of completing each other's sentences.

Julia: Do you know what I am trying to say?

Jean: The tool helps facilitate that thinking though.

Julia: The tool helps to show ...

Julia: Yes!

Jean: So the tool helps the thinking in order to ...

Julia: Yes!

Jean: In order to see what's there.

During this rapid construction Jean recorded, through writing, the major issues which they had begun to address:

Jean: Well I'm just going to stop us for a minute, okay? As I've listening to it, I've been sitting here thinking I've written down major assumptions, but I don't know what these things are. Okay, how [do we] help teachers to know what to look for, help teachers to know how to look, help teachers to know what questions to ask, and then how do we help nurture all of this? Those are four things that hit me immediately, and the other thought that's just come to me as we've been playing with this is, what is a tool? Is the tool the actual process like the thinking you're involved in. Okay! Is the tool the actual process of evaluation, or is the tool something that stimulates the process of evaluation?

Julia: Well.

Jean: Wait a minute, let me, let me just try to articulate. You could have a matrix, right?--that you could look at and in that case the matrix would be something that stimulates the process of evaluation. And if we go back to the writing portion you could look at
those domains, right?--at literacy passport for the writing portion of it, as the matrix. That is a tool that stimulates the interpretation of that child's writing, right?--so it's a tool. But to go beyond that then a different way to think about a tool is the actual process you go through once you're engaged. Like I said, what you're doing in your head.

From their discussion and understanding they continued to reflect on their processes.

Julia: Carry on, it's scary to think that our minds were that close together (laughter). I mean it's scary for you, not that scary for me, but probably scary for you (laughter).

Jean: I find it comforting actually because someone is thinking the same thing and I am not out there by myself.

At least one other person has had a similar thought.

The laughter in response to this last statement by Julia seemed to release some of their tension. The tension in the conversation was building, as they attempted to construct their understanding of difficult issues. Team members then continued the discussion. They clarified and restated their ideas rather than adding to them.

Kathleen: And it is a balance, and we can't deny that and we talk process, and I certainly do, and it's process I'm most interested in, but its not for the sake of process. It's process for understanding concepts and content, if
you like, so you know, we are not saying absolutely one or the other. One thing I'll tell you all is that Margaret (a participant in the project) did send me some very early stuff on what were then called benchmarks. I'll get copies--now they are called standards. And another thing I wanted to say as you were talking, Jean, about the tools. The thing that stimulates the process of evaluation--I guess I want us all to keep in mind--also restricts, as well as stimulates.

Julia: What is assessment? What is assessment versus evaluation? The assessment is the tool and evaluation occurs when you put meaning to the tools.

Jean: That's right, I like that.

These points stimulated a conversation in which they questioned the value laden or subjective/ objective issue.

Julia: It is when you give meaning to the tools by whatever process you go through, so I guess doesn't that kind of answer.

Kathleen: But okay. Let me be a little convoluted here. Aren't you giving meaning, I mean, this may be a different kind of meaning than you mean right now. You are giving meaning in the design of tools because what you choose to say is part of the tool, and what is not part of the tool is part of evaluation.

Julia: Yes, and that kind of goes without saying.

(Jean laughs)
Kathryn: Yes! That's true for instruction, too.
Jean: Sure, it's value laden.
Kathleen: It is not value free.
Jean: Because what you said was what stimulates also restricts, stimulates in one way, it restricts in another way, and that's value laden.
Clyde: I think everybody in this room is you know pretty much in the subjective, instead of an objective type.
The planning team members' conversations did become convoluted and ambiguous, however, they were all connected with issues which were important enough to raise. They slowly began to construct their understanding of assessment and how they would like to establish the environment for teachers to construct their understandings of assessment.
As part of a discussion of environment for teachers, Julia shared her concerns about the level of ambiguity she believed teachers experienced.

Julia: I was concerned about Erin being there and that it would just confuse her even more because she wasn't, you know she hasn't been there before. To jump in at that point would have been very confusing for her, and the comment was made "Well, she probably would have been no more confused than the rest of us." So you know the fact that we didn't even clarify anything at the half day session on September, 1. For some people, I think we need to come up somehow with some very concrete,
I mean I think we have gone, not gone overboard, but we've gone to the point of really trying to make it be so much the teachers, and they have the ownership, and that they are developing this and that we are not being prescriptive for some people. It is too much, and that, you know maybe, if there was something out there that we can give some examples of some different tools or you know be more concrete that there is a real, there's a real frustration. We have been to ambiguous, and they want something they can turn around and take and do.

Ann: Well, actually when you look at those groups it's the kindergarten group who have come up with something more concrete. They really want to look at developmental profiles. I mean the rest of the groups are still kind of playing around with what's out there. Don't you think?

Julia: Yes, but you see they are willing, the kindergarten group is, okay ... I think there's another group of people out there that really want something to start trying out or looking at [referring to the professional literature]. That's concrete. So they could use this in this way, or I could change it in this way. I think there is a real feeling that we are not getting anywhere, though they're [the teachers] are getting all these articles to read they are still.
Do you know what I'm saying?

Kathleen. Yes, I well, in, in that attitude, that we have heard various comments among different people, but the idea that somebody must have done this before, why don't we just get what they have done kind of thing.

Julia: I mean, I don't, I think it's a catch twenty-two. I mean I think it's a real tightrope we're walking.

Kathleen: I agree.

Julia: But I think that we have got to give those people that are feeling that way some security.

Jean: Yes.

Julia: So that they feel secure to continue on in their process, rather than leaving them floundering. They feel like they're floundering.

Ann: But I don't necessarily think they need a tool to use. I think they just need to know, or the planning team need to be more explicit in the fact. If we just give them a tool to use then that is going to really limit what they do. (Julia interrupts)

Julia: I know, but I know, I know, I don't think that's going to do it. I think we need to give them specific examples of portfolios. Well I mean it's what I'm thinking. From the articles that address it or something you know what I'm saying, I don't know.

Julia was voicing her perceived concerns of the teachers. By
raising this issue, she made the team members think about the meeting of the September 28 and how they needed to be careful with the perceived nebulous nature of the project.

Jean: It sounds like you're saying part of that day—even though we are going to read about portfolios—maybe some of them are going to look at developmental material, like we are starting to pull together. Like the Newkirk and some pieces like that, the Clay material. That part of that day, however we put it together, needs to be a presentation of something.

Julia: Well it may not be that, but it may be that if they had choices of things to read. Yes, you know, so that those who are feeling that they need that will get it.

Clyde: Yes, because you have some that are at a different stage.

Julia: Oh yes.

Ann: I have that one article that I picked up out of the Educational Leadership 1989.

Julia: Yes, I haven't got that yet.

Ann: That specifically, is on portfolios. It gives some kind of examples of what to put in it. It's '89, so it may be a little dated already but ...

Julia: But I think we just have something like that.

Jean: How about the Graves book. Have you ...

Ann: And also there is also the one I used with

182
student teachers.

Julia: Oh! I've got to get over to the library. Oh! I know ...

Ann: Tierney. There is a chapter in there that starts out in how to begin a portfolio.

Jean: Oh!

Ann: There's a chapter on that.

Kathleen: I've got the Tierney book. Do you have that one?

Jean: I don't have that one.

Ann: The support group has a copy, and there is an article in there on that.

Julia: Because that's something that I just think, if there's a choice of reading.

Clyde: I would like for them to have a chance to articulate, to posit, what they have thought about to the other group.

Jean: (interjects) so they get different perspectives.

They then realized, as a group, that they did need to structure the day.

Ann: Maybe what we need to do that day is listen to or share what they [the teachers] have brought, listen to what they have to say what they have discovered. Then have materials that we can insert at some point. That we may, and may not, use. For some it might be important, for others it may not.
Jean: Right.

Clyde: I liked your idea of saying the very first thing is kind of let them, because I think some of them have things to show and share.

Ann: I mean that was their task that we set up last time.

Clyde: To start.

Julia: Yes.

Ann: To bring materials in and bring.

Clyde: To start it up.

Kathleen: I mean these are important questions. What is the purpose of the portfolio? I mean that's what we are wrestling with, and there can be various purposes and who makes it is another, and for whom is it developed and what we're saying is it's developed, Okay, let's talk about why (Kathleen laughs).

Jean: Okay, that's it--bring us back.

Kathleen: Why are we developing assessment tools--what is our purpose?

Jean: Because we want to understand more about what children are learning [and] what they can do. So that can inform us to cycle back with appropriate instruction for those children. So, one sort of feeds the other.

Kathleen: And there's also an issue of self evaluation.

Julia: Yes.

Kathleen: That's what I keep hearing, too.

Julia: And we'll, we'll bring that up, that the purpose,
that kids have got to know what they are learning.

Ann: How that becomes intrinsically motivating.

Clyde: That's what you've got to do.

Kathleen: That's it!

Ann: It's the motivation which leads to further understanding and reflection on what they have done.

Kathleen: Okay. I think that is really important for us to keep those ideas in front of us, not only us but in front of all of us.

Clyde: Organizing ideas.

Jean: As we start to get some structure and form to this day, and have in our mind our organizing idea and what our purposes are and maybe two or three questions—broad questions, and now I'm thinking of putting this thing together so that it comes across as very purposeful—we could point those things [articles] out and have them just laid. We have got to make sure it is concrete and purposeful even though we may "wiggle" around and we have many different things that we pull in. Real flexibly, you know, depending on what comes out of these different pieces of the puzzle.

Julía: Right, but if we can cycle back, like Kathleen says, those are very important questions. If we decide these seem to be the important driving questions for us for the purpose of the meeting that day. Within this, the teachers are going to have their own questions for
the day.

Team members decided they needed to include the questions the teachers had formulated on the first day of the summer session. The teachers needed to know that their questions had provided the planning team with a guide and that there were connections.

Ann: Yes, we need to involve them.

Kathleen: We can even spread out in here and do that.

Jean: If that's what we want to do. I think something like that shows how this is all cycling back in.

Kathleen: I think what Ann said.

Jean: It's all got to tie.

Ann: Yes, I think it would make that connection between the large headings.

Jean: We could even put the charts up, our messy charts with those lists, but see them categorized.

Kathleen: Okay, that's one thing that is possible in terms of just framing the workshop for that day.

After this conversation about "how to frame the day" there was a silence. The team members all just sat and thought. Perhaps the extent of their inquiry, at this point, had become overwhelming. Kathleen spoke first.

Kathleen: I'm just looking at your questions [Jean's list] you know what to look at, and how to look, and what questions to ask. I mean all of these.

This comment immediately triggered the team into
discussing the dates of the next meetings and how many meetings they had left before the deliverables were due.

Jean: And too, when's our next meeting?

October something. Oh!

Julia: After this one, October.

Jean: Nineteenth.

Clyde: Oh! for the whole group?

Jean: October 19.

Clyde: Yes.

Julia: Yes.

Jean: Then do we meet again?

Julia: November 4.

Jean: Okay, so we have two more sessions.

Julia: And December.

Kathleen: Oh, before our tools are due to the (State Department of Education).

They then had a lengthy conversation about applying all this information to the common core and Standards of Learning (SOL's). They discussed the need for teachers to bring materials and children's products from their practice to the September 28 meeting. They again confirmed, for themselves, that the deliverables would derive from the classroom practice.

Jean: I could see a process of refinement starting to occur across that time ... Now where material is going to start to accumulate in those portfolios--self or child--
and that those could be things brought to the group, and we raise these kinds of questions. What do we look for? How do we know what to look for? What questions do we ask etc, etc?

*Kathleen:* What is our purpose in looking?

*Jean:* Yes, what is our purpose in looking, you know?

Maybe, something else. If some of them do have definite ideas, like Riverview, you know Riverview teachers are all keeping portfolios. We know this is going to be their focus. Then maybe they can start in their journals asking themselves those kinds of questions. What questions are you having about the purpose of this portfolio? Not even say that, but let’s see what their own questions are and have some time to write.

*Kathleen:* Yes. Though I think the questions overwhelm them, at this point the ambiguity overwhelms them, as Julia was saying.

*Jean:* *(In a sympathetic tone)* Yes.

In planning the day, they began to reconsider the kinds of groupings the participants were drawn into. The teachers tended to maintain the grade level groups that were established at the end of the summer session. The team members raised issues and discussed them as a checking process. They asked whether their actions, and what they were developing, made sense?

*Jean:* So it might be even that day we want to mix and
match there might be a time to work within their schools and there might also be time to work across grade levels.

Kathleen: Because the third grade group that I was with wanted to be able to work again as a third grade group they liked that.

Kathleen defended why it worked to have the teachers in grade level groups. By this time the teachers' preferences were to work within such groups, and the premise of the planning team was to follow the lead of the teachers.

Planning Meeting Four (September 20)

The planning team members met briefly in Julia's office to discuss the contents of the document that was to be sent to the State Department of Education. The department required documentation at intervals during the year as regards the budget, the process of professional development, and the kinds of assessment tools the teachers were constructing.

In planning for the meeting of September 28, team members used Julia's notes from the meeting of September 13. They used the questions they had raised as a framework for the session and incorporated the teachers' questions. To assess the purpose of the session with the teachers they began to review their perceptions from the last planning meeting.

Jean: Our purpose for the day is, let's talk about that first. Our purpose is going to be to read and talk about portfolios, different types and how they are used.
Developmental profiles is part of that. So it's read and talk about portfolios, developmental profiles, and then the teachers have been asked to bring in examples of instruction that we can look at. If they started portfolios, they want to keep them. Help me remember. Why was it important for them to bring instruction with them?

Julia: Because I was talking about how I feel a lot of the teachers feel everything is real nebulous, so we can pull it down to something that they are doing.

Jean: Make it more concrete.

Clyde: Make connections.

Jean: Between the portfolios or the developmental profiles.

Julia: I was thinking that if they are going to develop tools to go in the portfolios, they need to look at the instruction because to develop generic tools is too "out there." To look at a piece, like a theme, or a unit, or lesson and develop a tool to assess that, then that gets them kind of going on portfolios.

Clyde: (Reading from the notes he had made) A model, too, they should model something. Does that make any sense? I just wrote that. We talked about doing something in common. I have, "Look for examples to share that they are using."

This was a brief conversation. They all tried to reimmerse
themselves in the conversation from the last session and also to make sense of their note taking. They decided, at this point, to use a piece of instruction as a context for exploring the questions they had raised.

Jean: Use them as a framework to look at the content which is why we wanted them to bring the instruction. Right!
Julia: Right!
Kathleen: Yes, but not only look at those things that were process skills, fundamental skills, but look at the content as well. How do we know that a kid has developed this concept? Remember Ann with her example of measurement and how kids were taking things and using them as lengths of measure, but if you observe the kids they weren't necessarily going end to end, they were doing all kinds of funny things. So even though the kids had done the activity, they hadn't mastered the concept of measurement from end point to end point.
Jean: That comes back to observing and what to look for.
Julia: Maybe that's when I piped in about a math lesson, because you could almost do a process break of "Where's the math?" with that. And you could almost do the activity called the "Green Door." It's a pattern activity. That could be the model, and then the process break would be "Where was the math in this?" "Where is the content?" Then you can talk about where there's
pattern, there's number sense.

Julia went on in detail to explain the math activity, and at the end she explained again what she thought they could do with the teachers.

*Julia:* Then afterwards you can say where was the math in this activity? It was fun, but where is the math in this? What was being assessed?

*Kathleen:* What can we assess is content.

*Jean:* But it's also process.

*Kathleen:* Not only, what can we assess? But now, how do we assess it? What are the tools we use?

*Julia:* Right, and that's something we can talk about, too, because you are going to have that work sheet. But what else?

*Clyde:* I think if you are going to do that, let's not confuse it. I would go with the idea of the worksheet and the process in that, and talk about that, before we get into the idea of how we assess.

*Kathleen:* Exhaust what was being learned. What the content was.

*Jean:* After the math activity we can go back to looking at what the teachers brought with them. It might be then that they want to get into grade level groups or something and share what they have brought and pick something to look at more closely.

By constructing what they thought would make sense to the
teachers they were developing their own understandings of what constitutes assessment. They began to articulate what it meant for them.

Jean: It's concept development being more important than testing on the content. The content becomes the vehicle for looking at the understandings of the concepts being taught. Does that make sense?

Julia: It sounds good. Say it again.

Jean: I don't know if I can. Let me say it this way, the more important part of it is looking at the concept development the content becomes the vehicle for looking at it. The content is the context for concept development.

After hearing this statement and drawing together their understandings, I believe they felt as though they were approaching the beginning of an understanding of what assessment might be. There was a calmness about the group as they went back into planning the logistics. Unanimously (again) they reinforced the need for the teachers to have time to read.

Today, the planning team members began to use their notes to type (using the computer) a time framework for the day. Julia frequently used a laptop computer to record their constructions of the professional development sessions. They discussed the physical comforts for the day, and they questioned where to have the breaks and what to plan for
lunch. For the latter, they decided to order pizza. Each teacher would give a donation and the planning group would bring salads and desserts.

They then brainstormed ideas for the construction of the day. They were continually asking each other, "Should we?" or, "It might be a good idea," to emphasize a certain aspect, or "I think we need to do that first," to prioritize ideas.

*Kathleen:* We'll have some social time, then some kind of opening, we are not exactly certain what that will be. Then we will, either before the opening activity, somewhere we'll make it clear what our purpose is for the day, which is linking together concept development, developmentally appropriate practices, and then maybe. And then if we have something to read in the beginning that's fine.

*Julia:* You mean for the opening?

*Kathleen:* Yes, but then our first day activity ought to be the math I think. What were you going to say?

*Julia:* I was going to say, then we might want to have, well since they are going to bring portfolio materials, is there any time we want them to share? I was thinking is there any time we want them to share what they have done since we last met?

*Kathleen:* That's where we start.

*Julia:* Share what you've done since we last met, then the math activity. Then break into groups to look at
their instruction by grade level or whatever.

Kathleen: How are we going to share what they have been doing? Do they share what they have been doing and then spend some time reading before we do the demonstration lesson and they begin to look at their instruction?

Julia: I think we need to do that first.

Clyde: The reading?

Julia: The demonstration lesson along with, do the demonstration lesson to talk about the tools and how do we assess it, and then they go to their own instruction and from there they go into reading.

Julia continued to record the plans they had made and the materials they might need to locate. They finished for the day. Julia agreed to collect all materials for the next time they were to meet.

Planning Meeting Five (September 23)

For this session, the planning team members worked in the executive boardroom at the School Board Office. Kathleen found her notes from the previous planning meeting and placed an outline of their key ideas on the white board. Their beginning discussion centered around the issue of process, their attempt to establish an experience that could help teachers to think more about observation as part of assessment, and ways to record these observations. However, this conversation led them into a deep quandary about promoting ideas on assessment as they began to realize the
time constraints that the teachers felt in the classroom. The resolve was to discuss the need to restructure the use of
time that had been established in the classroom. The
planning team perceived that if assessment was to be
authentic, it would not be something that came after the
fact, but it would be done as the child and teacher
interacted and learned together.

Kathleen: And when we look at the content and the process
--that's where we really started looking at a lesson
that Karen might do. Then trying to explicate out of
that the benchmarks or the standards or whatever those
things, and not only that, but then the processes that
went on in terms of writing skills or thinking or
communicating. Really, at least in terms of that
process, we are back to something we tried a little bit
in the workshop. It didn't work I don't think, well,
because people just weren't there yet, but I think we
have, in my opinion, we have to keep coming back to it
because.

Julia: Well it's critical.

Kathleen: It's critical, not only to our project but it's
critical in education that we have to, we focus on
processes and not only ...

Julia: Oh, and the documentation.

Ann: Are you referring, when it was a difficulty, are
you referring to when the teachers had to analyze the
video [an activity on day three of "The First Days Together"]).

Julia: Right, because we were trying to get them.

Ann: Because I think the reason that's difficult goes back to the whole issue of the fact that people find it very hard to observe.

Kathleen: Yes, yes!

Julia: And I mean the thing is, is that as teachers we often don't trust our observations.

Ann: That's right.

Julia: And so we go to thinking we have to look at something now. What was that word, let's see am I using the right word, quantifiable? You know to validate our observation.

Ann: Somebody else constructs a test for their use, they have not had the responsibility.

Kathryn: Yes.

Ann: It's the whole self concept thing. They think there should be more analytical things to do with this that, you know, I just can't believe that they would accept my observations, they must be validated or verified by somebody else. We have always relied, as teachers, on other people to tell us how to.

Julia: (Kathleen nodding her head in agreement) And now what's happening? We are going to do it ourselves, but I think it will take a lot before they value
themselves as observers and people who can.

Kathleen: But even this issue of, Okay, valuing self. Oh! And then you were saying other sources.

Julia: Outside?

Kathleen: Well not necessarily.

Ann: We have relied on outside resources.

Kathleen: We have relied on outside resources and haven't valued self but even in valuing self, let's see confirming.

Ann: Confirming, yes! We have needed other people to confirm on what we have decided.

Kathleen: I am thinking what we have relied on are tests and things like that but coming to value themselves. I think they will need some kind of confirming other observation but the source for that is student.

Ann: (Adamantly) Yes, yes, then you get into self evaluation the real motivator of the learner.

Kathleen: Meaning the students themselves.

Ann: To back up the kinds of things you are going to say that's why in teacher/child conferences. You reconfirm what your ideas are so that in conferencing with a student, just about a piece of writing, you will present your observation within what they are saying. And you will take the child's observations, so really you are making sure that you both are observing or are feeling.

Julia: Basically it's validity.
Ann: Yes.

Kathleen: Teacher valuing her observations.

Julia: Yes, yes.

Clyde: So do you think part, sorry to go back to the this workshop I know we are trying to recreate this part, but, do you think we should, part of this would be talking about skills, observational skills at this time?

Julia: Well, you see that's the thing that I feel really kind of frustrated about, because I listen to the conversation we have here, you know, as the support team, but then how do we go about facilitating their gaining of that understanding without it being prescriptive?

Ann: Well, then too is our understanding going to be the same as their understanding?

Julia: Right.

Ann: Can we impose our understanding?

Julia: Well yes, I see.

Ann: The whole issue is their development. Can we say that our opinions are what should be?

Julia: Oh! I know. What I am concerned about is that in talking to the teachers, I feel. I’m feeling like we are just kind of muddling along. I don’t feel like we are, you know I am looking at December 17 [Due date to the state department for the deliverables]. You know what I am saying.

Kathleen: Well, I think, yes, now we have to, I think
maybe one of our purposes if we contextualize this within a demonstration lesson, and we talk then, and it won't be easy ... I think it will be easy for them to identify the content things like standards and things I think they will be more familiar with those and they will be able to identify them. But then there comes the whole issue of Okay so we identify them within the lesson, then what are the skills or strategies we need for documenting them.

Julia: Right.

Kathleen: How do we go about documenting them? The issue is that you could not document all children, when you document. I will document what it was that learned, but that's not the same for you, so we can't just like a Standard of Learning (SOL), put it in your book and say we have done it.

Julia: Yes.

Kathleen: Okay, you have to document it in terms of ..., and then the issue of managing all the documentation.

Julia: That's an issue, that's a major issue.

Kathleen: Because there is no way that in one lesson, when children are in some kind of interactive activity, and I would go around, I can't look, I can't document for very child. And the whole idea of coming up with a schedule of documenting, and the idea that these concepts have to keep spiraling, keep repeating and spiraling, in different activities so that you can have opportunities
to make documentation for various kids, right.

*Julia:* Yes.

*Ann:* I think you have hit on something there, Kathleen, in the fact that it relates back to something that was said when we were discussing portfolios. I think with a teacher, in the fact that report cards should be done every six weeks. We are still trapped into this time line of when to observe or when to do assessment. And I think that is what makes them panic about the management, and that's what I sense there, because basically they were saying, well, I will have to do this all on one day or I will have to do it in a week, and they don't realize that it's fine if you don't observe all the children at the same time. If you have observed two or three children you have got an in-depth assessment of them on that day which is much more valuable than having this sketchy description on about ten students. It goes back to the whole issue of reading--that it is much more valuable to me, to listen to five children read in depth, individually than to work with ten in a group situation.

*Julia:* Can you clarify, I am not sure I am following exactly what you are saying when you say in-depth. You mean spending a lot of time with one child on one day?

*Ann:* Not so much spending the time with them but really observing them. For example, it goes back to the math
issue that I observed in kindergarten last year. If the
teacher at a point had said, "Okay, today this is the
activity" it goes back to their whole instructional
style, how they set up the classroom. Basically they
were doing measurement; therefore, she feels as though
she has only that day to assess where all the children
are as regards their understanding on measurement. If
the activity would be set up for a week then she would
have time each day to maybe zero onto five children in
that classroom and really watch whether they could
measure or not. And I think it is all connected to their
instruction and how they organize their classroom. But
whilst we are doing these one-shot, this is how
you do it type thing. then it not going to, the
assessment has to tie into, it goes back to the holistic
practice.

Their discussion on how to restructure the teachers' schedule
was complex and it took time. Finally, in a desperate tone,
Kathleen voiced a concern, "The conversation that we are
having in here now needs to be the conversation that everyone
has."

Jean then shared a story of a teacher who had to
restructure her use of time in order to conference with all
her students. Jean concluded her story about Nora by stating
to the planning team, "But it's Nora telling those stories
about her students in readers' workshop." The stories
teachers told in the sessions and outside the sessions helped to validate some of the thoughts of the planning team. The planning team members considered that they needed to be watchful for the teachers stories and make them available to the whole community.

Again, they returned to the plan for the day. For a while, there was confusion and the conversation went back and forth within the team as they tried to construct meaning through questioning each other. Questions they asked of each other included: How much do we guide the teachers' thinking? How much modeling do we do? Are we restricting the teachers' constructions?

Julia: One thing we thought when we talked last week about how to structure this, if we do the "50 Green Doors" (Charles & Brummet, 1989) activity, and like I said what I usually do when I've done this in a workshop, is to talk about, where is the math? This is a great activity, but where's the math? Okay, I still think we ought to structure that, "where's the content," and then going back to what you were saying about how we can structure this conversation and pull from the group to start discussing it, is to say, "Okay we know there was content in this math lesson, we know that we've got this one piece of product from the students, that's just one part, but there were other things going on, how do we document this? "What are some ways we can go about doing
it?" I think that question right there, I think, would lead to that discussion you're talking about that would be important to take place.

Clyde: You mean questions like, "What questions did you ask them?"

Julia: No, just the whole issue of getting to the observation issue.

Clyde: So you're saying that you are modeling this in a sense.

Julia: I'm saying, if we do the "Green door activity" we are going to model, that, then we are going to talk about where was the content in this then, to kind of bring the question to the table, is to say, "Okay, we know this math is in this lesson, we know the kids are engaged in these kinds of activities and this kind of mathematics is taking place, how do we document that?"

Kathleen: Okay, so at that point we're talking about documenting content?

Julia: Exactly. Or it may be that we start talking about the process, too. Because it's both.

Kathleen: It's a construction really to separate them.

Julia: What that will bring to discussion is, Okay, you observed each other as I walked around the room as the teacher while you were doing this. I observed that such and such over here, did this. And Kathleen over here wasn't relying on patterning, she was relying on

204
something else, and Clyde over here was doing an algorithm. I observed all this, but how do I document this? Maybe for this lesson I might have only looked at the four of the students for assessment purposes. Those are my four students I was targeting to watch that day. I think it could bring out all those issues.

Ann: I think that would be a good way of doing it. Basically then, you could set it up to say, "How would I document this?" Which is what you are saying. Then they are going to bring up the same issue with so many, how could you possibly document all of them? Then you can bring in the issue, I focussed on one group and really gave you what I think about that one group.

Julia: And what I could do, as a teacher is, I could focus on a group and model, okay you are right. I focused on this group. I decided that today, for the rest of you I am not going to worry about this math lesson because I know these types of things. Particularly, this I would do in a pattern part of my math, a unit on patterning and I know I am going to hit it for a lot of days, and so today it's these four children. I will watch for their understanding of the concept. Tomorrow it may be four different children; the next day, but then to take it, so there's the structure, there is the organization, but then now I've got the organization and I can tell you at a gut level, or I can tell you what I saw, but, "How am I
going to document what I saw?"

Clyde: Are you considering on this part of it, that after you've done it, then you're going to kind of stop and tell everybody, all that's listening and participating, kind of what we were doing and what you saw, sort of a reflection out loud.

Julia: We could.

Clyde: Well, what I'm saying is that what you were planning on before you get their involvement in it?

Julia: I'm talking as we are going along, and I haven't thought it all out.

Ann: I think, in that respect, you may have to do some of that. But I think it would be nice if we saw what the group was going to construct, first, as opposed to coming in and doing the direct modeling. Then if you're stuck, you can go back and reflect on what you have seen or observations of the group. I think because they're in a thinking mode, we have already got them there, and I think it would be interesting to see what they come up with and then we can steer it.

Clyde: It says right there, you're trying to get them to start valuing their own observation.

Ann: What would be a good idea too, is when you come to that point of having done the lesson, when you are asking from them what they did, is for you to record it in some way. Whether you do it on the board or a piece of paper.
or whatever, so that actually you are documenting what they are giving back.

Clyde: That's real good! I like that.

Ann: (Looking at Julia) So you are documenting. They are going to see the difficulty you have either getting it down quickly or you giving information to somebody else to record--that's going to set up that whole thing about, "That's fine, but how are we going to document this?" Do we have to document everybody every day or do we have to? It goes back to the issue of what we are trying to do is to get the teachers to realize we don't have to assess everybody at the same time. We are all at different levels. That might bring that out.

Kathleen: And I'm thinking out loud that's what we are doing. As Julia's leading this discussion and Clyde has agreed to document it on chart paper somehow, we have to think this through some more, but maybe part of what ...

Clyde: Records is the person's name with what it is they say. So it's not just whole class kind of things you're getting up there.

Julia: So you'd say, Kathleen.

Kathleen: I'd put what it was that somebody said and in parenthesis after it, the name.

Ann: You are recording so it to goes on permanent record, either in a portfolio or some other documentation.
Based on their own experiences of flexible grouping patterns in professional development and their practice from the classroom, they explored ways of grouping the teachers that seemed to make sense.

Kathleen: I think it has to be in small group.

Julia: But then again, how do we do this in a whole group?

Kathleen: Let's just think about how we are going to group them.

The planning team members through questioning each other returned to the discussion of assessing the teachers' preferences. They knew the teachers liked to listen to whole group conversations.

Ann: I think so far I can see where it's going ... you'll have the teachers who have experiences to relate, how do we accommodate that? They are going to have personal experiences. How do we take that so that it is not redundant to someone else over here who is really not quite ready for that story, or that the story is irrelevant to their inquiry? How do we get those people to share without ending up having ten minutes of each person having a story with everybody else waiting?

Kathleen: I think it has to be in small groups. Let's just think about how we are going to group them. I don't understand what we want to come out of this. I think Ann jumped one step beyond where we were talking. So let's
hold that, put it aside for now. I'm wondering if I'm understanding what you are saying. If it isn't valuable because when we start talking about observation and documentation I could envision people, that it will just come out as a group and that will say, you know what I, in writers' workshop do, and I think that's valuable that the whole group hear those things rather than breaking it out, we can break into small groups and kind of place people in small groups to discuss it, but I do sense that this large group as a group wants to hear what everybody's doing.

Ann: And I worry about how certain members of that group, who are very vocal--and it's the same people every time--get into their own stories. I see your point, I think it definitely needs that story and that's my dilemma, I'm just working through dilemmas.

How do we have those stories relate to the whole group without getting bogged down?

Kathleen: There are some people who perhaps have a story, but they don't even know they have a story. So they need to go into small groups to kind of think, there might be in that group that you'll have one dominant person who may share a story, but then the other person will think, "Oh well wait a minute let me think back," and something will emerge from that.

Ann: In fact the whole group needs to hear those stories.
But like in a classroom situation, you can't have twenty children all sharing their story.
The planning team members struggled with how to deal with the perceived frustrations of the teachers; how to assess; what processes would enhance the environment they were trying to create; and how it would be much easier to return to the the former model of inservice, in staff development.

Julia: There are times, do you guys struggle with this? There are times, that I just want to say, just tell them you know.
Ann: You can't.
Julia: I know.
Ann: It's what your perception of the world should be.
Julia: I know but the frustration sometimes. I just want to say, come on people get it together, this is how we do it.
Kathleen: I'll share with you here.

Kathleen proceeded to tell a story.
Kathleen: The other day when we [Kathleen and Julia] were in your office and everyone was tired I'm sure, and you [Julia] were having trouble, and, I think this is important to say, you were having trouble with that calendar and figuring it out. And you said you were getting frustrated, and I was thinking, just do it. I was! I was very frustrated with it, and you said, "It's somebody else's construction and I don't understand it."
And I thought, well ... pick it up and read it again 
then figure it out. So it's the same thing.

Julia: I know how it is, it's just that I'm sharing the 
frustration. This is the community to share it with, not 
the other community.

Kathleen: I know you are sharing just be careful, just 
don't have it written on your face. (smiling at Julia)

Julia: Right, I know.

With their frustrations aired, they began to construct the 
day again.

Kathleen: I'm feeling the need to rethink the whole thing 
again. Go back over what it is we think and record it in 
some way.

Julia: I have down here (looking at the computer 
screen) the September meeting, so we obviously at some 
time rethought it and decided it would work into this 
September meeting, but now we have reconceptualized it, 
which I like. But really it's just interesting. We 
keep cycling through, but its basically the same thing. 
It's not as good as what we've come up with now, but it 
was hitting the same issues. I thought that was 
interesting to share.

At this point, they began to design a time frame as a 
prediction of how long each activity might take, and decided 
the kinds of groups to be structured.

Kathleen: I personally think they ought to get together
in grade level groups since that's how they were before, because then it would be a real sharing. If they stay with the school groups, it's not sharing.

**Julia:** So let's just suggest grade level groups. Then we will go to the demonstration lesson.

**Ann:** My only concern there is the fact that they mentioned last time that they want to know what everybody is doing in the groups. This is, I'm just posing this, I think it will be fine, but will there be concerns that they don't know what another group is doing?

**Kathleen:** So there needs to be a large group discussion?

**Ann:** A large group discussion just as a kind of overview of what they have collected and where they are right now. It seems like there's nothing to build in what you're going to do next, it's like--okay we've addressed the fact you've collected all this material, now let's just dump it and do what we want to do.

**Kathleen:** There has to be a transition between the two.

**Ann:** Yes, to respect what they've brought and the work they've done and also bring in the other materials and ideas.

**Kathleen:** Maybe the transition is, we can predict what they may bring in are some beginnings of portfolios, and they'll be talking about that and the developmental profile.

**Julia:** Have each group share.
Kathleen: Yes, its group shares and when you set it up they'll be reporting out of their group sharing what it is they have been doing, but then also issues the group has raised in reference to what they're doing.
Ann: Which most likely, hopefully, will tie into exactly what we're planning. Maybe we need to think of the object of what we want the whole day to do, and maybe one of them is to broaden their concept of portfolios and that ties into what we need for the day.
Kathleen: I don't know that they have to have common ideas, but they will have broadened.
Ann: I think they'll have brought their own definition of portfolio whatever that definition is. They're all going to come with a perception of what portfolio is as they had last time. Some of those perceptions already may have broadened through their reading and collecting materials. I think what needs to happen is that this work session, this day together, takes it a step further and broadens their understanding and also makes them realize how powerful the sharing is.

The planning team members spent many hours planning for the first sessions with the teachers, yet what they were also doing was establishing their philosophies on assessment and professional development. They needed time, they needed to be able to question each other, they needed to create conversations which addressed the difficult concepts.
Sometimes, like the teachers, they weren't "there yet." They needed more time to think, and more time to construct together and to mull things over.

**Planning meeting (February 7)**

With their previous experiences and reflections in mind they began to prepare for the session of February 10 with the teachers. By now, their planning meetings involved much less time. This was due to what had evolved from the previous sessions with the teachers, and the fact that the teachers had now organized themselves into work groups to develop the assessment tools. For the February 10 meeting the planning group met just one time, on February 7.

The meeting opened with Julia stating,

*Julia:* Well, where do we stand? I feel like we are kind of where we were.

*Kathleen:* I think we're to the point of. I thought you were saying people are going to feel like we're not really going forward, we just keep doing that same old thing.

*Julia:* No, I don't mean that.

*Kathleen:* I see these days as work times.

*Ann:* I think they feel like they are doing something.

*Kathleen:* That's right, they are work days and I don't see them only in the sense of deliverables, but I would hope that people see there's a kind of benefit in the kind of conversations and pooling of ideas together that
they are doing and not just simply work. The purpose of providing time for teachers to work with others in these ways, in order to construct knowledge, was two-fold. The teachers could see the power of collaborative work in their construction on assessment. Also, they might take what they had learned back to the classroom setting and establish an environment for children which may involve more collaboration.

The planning team members' role, at this point in the project changed. They joined in work sessions, added to conversations when called upon, and answered questions about logistics, i.e., the format of the instructional task for the deliverables. They worked alongside the teachers. For example, Kathleen spent many hours with Nora who related her practice for the writing of an Instructional Task for the deliverables. In another setting, I transcribed an audio tape that Danielle, Louise and Dylan had made about their practice in kindergarten. From the transcription, the teachers were to write an instructional task. The planning team members collected supplies of equipment and resource books for the teachers. They read and reread and helped to edit many of the pieces that finally were submitted to the State Department of Education as the deliverables.

The assistance at the writing stage was important as they were aware of the limited time that the teachers had. In addition, they had mentioned, at the beginning of the
project, that the teachers should be able to complete the deliverables in paid release time from the classroom.

The nature of these days, and the way the days were structured by the teachers, led planning team members to decide that there should be less control from the planning team. They continually reminded themselves that if they saw a group of teachers spending, what seemed to be, a long time discussing an issue then they should not interject nor move the discussion along. They had to trust that the teachers needed the time for that conversation in order to develop an understanding, and then move forward. Had planning team members not had the luxury of time in the early planning meetings to discuss the same issues that the teachers were now struggling to understand? In an extended conversation with Kathleen I reiterated "that we need to allow teachers to play with ideas and concepts just as we had in our early planning days." This is easier said than done, when there are deadlines to meet. Out of this conversation with Kathleen also evolved the question of "How do we refocus a group after they have finished one task?" On one day in particular, the planning team needed a group to begin the math profile. The latter was a daunting task and maybe it was the extent of the task that caused the hesitation of the teachers. In the planning meeting, team members had identified that the teachers needed study time. We provided professional texts for the group to browse.
Kathleen: And math is something we have identified and I liked your idea last time we met, that it is really a study time.

In this planning meeting they tried to assess the progress of each group of teachers since the January session, and also to recognize what was happening in those groups that supported their approach to professional development.

Ann: It was wonderful! The interactions and the building up of concepts, but I don't think it was recorded [audio taped] back there. They [the teachers] get so involved, and the audio tape runs out. But they are just, they really were unpacking every word and term they used. It was just really wonderful to listen to ... I was just ...

Julia: (Julia supports Ann's observation) And it's neat the ones (participants) that contribute--it wasn't always the ones you expected. Then there was the parent profile group. Clyde was working with them and he was doing a good job. I was really impressed with the way he was facilitating that group and they were there just talking away and he was just typing for them.

Kathleen: Laura and Betty had already set themselves the next task and I think Nora and Deanna for the next time they meet they are extremely self motivated.

Jean: I would like to spend some time with the profile group, I've never been with them.

217
Julia: I think Kathleen was doing well (with the teachers writing instructional tasks), and we ought to leave Clyde where he was. Kathleen emphasized to the planning team her actions as she interacted with the teachers.

Kathleen: Once they kind of set their direction and go, I kind of step back from them because if I am there, they're looking to me for the words. And then when they really get stuck how to say something, they'll flag me down and we'll talk and figure it out.

Julia: (Julia turned to Jean) One thing that might be helpful for you to do that day, have you had an opportunity to look at the deliverable that they wrote on ...

Jean: No I'll do that.

Julia: Maybe Kathleen can go back to that.

Kathleen: But, you too, because you have fresh eyes.

Julia: That's one piece if you could look at it from that perspective.

Team members tried to help each other construct their use of time for the day on February 10 as the teachers worked in their groups.

A discussion about dates ensued (Julia was going out into other schools in Montford County to inform them about the assessment project) and lead them to deviate from the central theme of their work.
Then they refocused their attention on the February session and they concurred that they needed the groups to self focus using an idea from a teacher’s professional text by Nancy Atwell.

_Kathleen:_ Back to Thursday, what if we do a Nancy Atwell kind of thing where she does the "state of the class" and do the "state of the groups."

_Ann:_ That would be helpful so they can say where they are and what their plans are for the day.

_Julia:_ That would be good for focussing.

The planning team was also in the process of developing a session on assessment for presentation to the school board and they wanted feedback from the teachers as to what they would like to see included.

_Jean:_ Then we had talked about possibly sharing with the group our presentation for the School Board if we were ready and getting some input from them, in the afternoon, on alternative assessment.

_Ann:_ I think that is a good idea, especially if we want the teachers to attend when you present. They need to feel as though they have a part in its construction.

_Kathleen:_ What we can do there, we won't have our polished presentation by Thursday, but this is a group where we can say, we are thinking about talking about this and brainstorm on what the presentation should look like.
Ann: I think that is a better idea than going prepared because they can have some input and ownership. From the extremely time consuming, and detailed, considerations involved in the sessions at the beginning of the year, Jean summed up planning for the next session as follows:

Jean: The day, do the "state of the group," spend the morning working, and then do the school board presentation after lunch, which is more time than we need to do the school board presentation. If they do the math reporting, it will get into a discussion. We structure first the math, so we get that in, and then we go to the school board thing. And then if there is time, maybe just other groups do a report. What they accomplished. Start with the "state of the group," and end with the "state of the group."

Ann: We could also go back to the idea we had last time that we didn't get to. What do you see for the next meeting? Looking to where you think you will be going.

Kathleen: We did that a little bit.

Julia: It was more structured, it was me saying, "This is what I see we need to do next time; how do you feel about it?"

Ann: I think it may be beneficial to have half an hour in small groups, talking about where they see this going, do they see themselves doing tasks or whatever for the next
three meetings?

They then became absorbed with the time frame for the
different activities in the day, and tried to assess how much
time they would require for each part. The rest of the
planning session focussed on the dates and number of sessions
they had before the deadline for completion of the
derivable in June, and how to construct the final session
of the project at the end of the school year.
PART THREE: REFLECTIONS
CHAPTER FIVE

Evolving as a Leadership Team

During my involvement with a team of instructional supervisors I recognized the issues of ambiguity, time, trust, sources of knowledge, mutuality, solidarity, control, reassurance, and support as being important to consider when planning for an environment conducive to teacher learning. In the following two chapters I address the issue of ambiguity.

Ambiguity

In the process of planning the project, the planning team members realized that many of the issues, problems and concepts which were likely to arise for discussion, could be interpreted in many different ways. This was the ambiguity they had to accommodate and which they resolved to manage. In the following interpretations I highlight sources of ambiguity and explain ways that members of the team accommodated the ambiguity.

Sources of Ambiguity

Deliverables

A major cause for ambiguity in the initial stages of the project was the deliverables—a collection of documents to be presented to the State Department of Education that would include the assessment tools the teachers developed and a description of the staff development process in which the teachers had been engaged. The planning team struggled to cope with the consequences of the dynamic political climate within
the State Department of Education. As the project began, it was intended that the assessment tools should address the core curriculum being designed by the officials of the State Department of Education; known across the state as "The Common Core of Learning."

Criteria

The planning team members struggled to determine the criteria for the deliverables (the assessment tools) the officials of the Department of Education were indecisive about what part of the curriculum they wanted the assessment tools to address and how many assessments they wanted. Julia frequently updated the other planning team members on the information she received from the officials.

Let me quickly update you on the state department. They have decided we don't have to do pilot studies. They've phased that out completely. There is a new option now. We had to do two assessments for an outcome. Now they have said if we do a complete assessment of "citizenship" and "natural world," which I think is that "environmental stewardship," and then one other domain, that will be all. But there needs to be more complete assessment of those domains, which I think is where portfolios might fall. And that's the new option, we don't have to do that, we can go per outcome so it is an option. Oh! and our staff development plan is not due until June. They (the Department of Education officials)
do keep changing things.
Planning team members struggled to understand what was required
by officials of the State Department of Education. Again, in
another meeting in September, Julia and Kathleen related the
changing and elusive criteria for deliverables.

Julia: ... but you know in looking towards November,
the deliverables ...

Kathleen: Well, the deliverables are not defined and it
just means the deliverables. Now what they [the
officials] had originally said in that document was "Two
deliverables for every outcome" or something. Now, in a
conversation which you had had with the State Department,
they narrowed it down.

Not only were the guidelines for the curriculum areas
they were to assess changing, but the state department
officials would not release the benchmarks they were developing
to indicate a child's performance. Planning team members
questioned whether the benchmarks established by the State
Department of Education would fit with their growing
understanding about the developmental levels of the child.
Their continued frustration with the State Department of
Education was revealed in a planning team conversation in which
Kathleen, Julia, and Jean considered their uncertainty.

Julia: Did I tell you I called, they will not give
benchmarks.

Kathleen: Oh! they won't?
Julia: They will not give them out, they will not let anybody see them.

Jean: Did they give a reason for that?

Julia: No, they are just not going to let them out. I assume this is because of all the hoopla that is going on with the Common Core and she [the official] kind of alluded that it was. I said, "well, how are we supposed to know what exactly we are assessing?" "That's a good question," that was her response. I said, "so I assume that the date the deliverables are due will change." And she said "no those dates are still for us so they are still for you."

Julia's frustration with this situation was palpable. Every time they met in September, Julia had more news from the State Department of Education which revealed indecision concerning the criteria for the project.

To their relief, officials of the State Department of Education dropped the Common Core of Learning before the teachers session of September 27. This action meant that the project participants no longer needed to attach the assessment tools to that particular curriculum design. The planning team could follow its original premise that the assessment tools should and would evolve from the teachers' instruction. Team members also recognized they did not need the State Department of Education to provide benchmarks—as Kathleen asserted rather confidently—and as other planning team members listened. "We
really don't need the benchmarks from the state department." Kathleen's assertion was reinforced by Jean who related a prior observation of the teachers. "The benchmarks, our own benchmarks, are going to emerge, and that's what was happening yesterday." Jean concluded, "We are likely to hear more from the teachers."

Form

Considerable ambiguity revolved around the form of the deliverables promised to the State Department of Education. The intention of the team members was that the deliverables would contain assessment tools and the latter would evolve from the practice of the participants. The ambiguity for the planning team members arose from the fact that they relied on the teachers to develop the tools and to record practice from the classroom. The role of the planning team was to compile the deliverable and to help in the writing and editing processes. The design of the project was such that until the planning team began to obtain the pieces from the teachers for the deliverables, it was difficult to plan an outline.

Due Dates

The due dates for the deliverables were interspersed through the project year. The planning team members were concerned about the dates because they believed in the importance of the reflection processes they had planned for the teachers. They were worried that the time required for the process might not match the predetermined schedule the
officials of the State Department of Education set for the deliverables.

To support the teachers' reflection process the team considered due dates in their planning meetings.

Julia: Because, I said to Debra (another site project director) that we decided that [to have] the deliverables due in December is ridiculous.

Kathleen: Good.

Julia: And that we wanted the first set due in March and the second set due in May.

Even though the State Department of Education changed the deliverable due date from November to December 17, Julia still maintained that such deadlines were not appropriate for the kind of professional development process the planning team members wanted the teachers to experience, or the kinds of assessment tools the teachers were developing.

Defining terms

The planning team members attempted to define many different terms during the project year. For example, they felt uncertain about the meanings of portfolio, developmental, concept, content, evaluation, assessment, literacy, learning, developmental levels, and tools. I chose one of these terms to illustrate the ambiguity inherent in their discussions.

Planning team members discussed over time the many different ways one could interpret what constitutes a portfolio. They struggled to interpret what the teachers said
and meant when they discussed a portfolio. They struggled with their own interpretations derived through experiences of working with children and teachers and engaging in professional reading.

Notably, early in the meeting of September 13, the planning team members attempted to align what they heard the teachers discuss (the use of portfolios), and how this form of assessment would fit if the Common Core of Learning was adopted as drafted. According to those standards, the topic "Habitat" was identified as a curriculum focus for primary grade children. The planning team was uncertain about what portfolios might mean in a study of "Habitat".

Jean: Habitat, closed systems, right, you could look to see what their understandings were and how they were evolving over time, which would be a different type of analysis of that child's work.

Julia: Yes, no, no that makes sense.

Clyde: So you are talking about ways of using this, the portfolio?

Jean: The material in the portfolio. Right, those are two ways that are sort of leaping out at me right now whether or not it is a working portfolio or an at-home portfolio. Regardless of the audience for the portfolio, and that is where the tools would come in.

Julia: Right.
Kathleen: Yes.

Jean: Looking at the processes. Are you looking at the concept development in the content?

Later, during the same meeting, they returned to a consideration of the meaning of portfolio. During their conversation they openly admitted their confusion.

Kathleen: I have no idea what people talk about when they talk about "Portfolio."

Julia: I don't think they do or we do.

Jean: No, because they keep throwing out so many different, working portfolios, and then what was the ...?

Julia: Go-home, take-home ...

Jean: And then the 'I can' kept coming up.

Discussions of unclear terms often occurred in the planning meetings. However, the focus on a particular term often faded as the year progressed. For example, after December the term portfolio was not prominent in the planning team's discussions. Their conversations turned, instead, to terms which were becoming a focus for the teachers, such as developmental levels.

Development of a Transactional Process

The planning team members, through observation, by listening, and interacting, tried to discern the knowledge, interests, and the concerns of the teachers as a starting point for learning. They thought that they should "facilitate (the
teachers) from where they were in the process of understanding assessment, through a process to develop the teachers' literacy of assessment and developmentally-appropriate practice." The process included modeling, discussion, reading, writing, sharing stories and doing classroom inquiry. Such a transactional approach is highly ambiguous and has a lack of definition or specificity.

When working within a transactional process consideration must be given for interactions. This fact provided the planning team with many options, but with these options came ambiguity. In particular, they struggled with grouping patterns which could enhance participation and enhance the dialogue between the teachers. Particularly, in the meeting of September 23, team members discussed the grouping options which reflected what they had learned so far about the preferences of the large group. Through observation of the teachers, and by listening to them, the planning team members discerned that the teachers liked to be together for whole group discussions and that they wanted to hear all the ideas and thoughts.

**Julia:** We'll break into small groups, we'll label that as sharing.

**Kathleen:** Have we decided, they're sharing what they've been doing since September 1?

**Julia:** Yes. They're bringing portfolios and whatever you asked them to bring.

**Kathleen:** So it's not by grade level; they might choose
to do that, but they decide how they want to do that and you can give them some options, for example, the grade levels or whatever.

Jean: It's possible that two people from one school group might want to get with other people from another school, so that it's actually sharing, as opposed to two people who have been doing the same thing sitting there talking about it.

Julia: I personally think they ought to get together in grade level groups since that's how they were before. Because then it would be a real sharing, if they stay with school groups, it's not sharing. So let's suggest grade level groups.

Ann: My only concern there is the fact that they [the teachers] mentioned last time we met that they [the teachers] want to know what everybody's doing in the groups. I'm just posing this, I think it will be fine, but will there be concerns that they don't know what the other group is doing.

Kathleen: So there needs to be a large group discussion.

Ann: A large group discussion just as a kind of overview of what they have collected and where they are right now.

The team members were willing to explore options and they knew the grouping patterns had to be flexible for the different activities. However, making decisions about the grouping
patterns for a particular activity was no easy task. A discussion over the issue of size of groups for sharing information led them to a consideration of the problem of deciding within what group situation teachers should share their stories.

The planning team members frequently (in the planning meetings) referred to how important it was that the teachers have plenty of opportunities to share their stories from practice. Jean emphasized in one meeting "But it's teachers telling those stories." Yet the planning team members worried that there would not be enough time for everyone to share in a large group setting. In a planning session where they discussed the dilemma of having the teachers share stories in the large group or in small groups, I acknowledged, "You will have the teachers who have experiences to relate." In the same conversation, Kathleen attempted to decide how to proceed to group the teachers. "I think it has to be in small groups." Then Kathleen reflected on what she knew about the teachers' preferences and commented, "But, then again, how do we do this in large groups if that's what the teachers want?" They continued this conversation and noted that some of the members of the large group were more vocal and would share. "Other members, however, have stories but may not feel comfortable sharing them in a large group of people." Accommodating the comfort levels of the teachers was important to the planning team as they continued with their discussion. After listening
intently to the other team members discuss the issue Julia stated, "There are times—do you struggle with this?—there are times that I want to say, just tell them, you know." This last statement by Julia, at the end of the meeting, revealed the continuing tension with the ambiguity of planning such professional development through a transactional process.

Related to the issue of providing the teachers with an environment within which to share stories from their practice was the issue of time. Planning team members were aware of the schedule provided by the State Department of Education and they knew the project was only for one school year. However, they were sensitive to the need of time for process. This time for process related to many different activities within the project. How much time could they allow the teachers to browse and read through professional texts in the work sessions, or to get together in small groups and share stories from their practice? How much time could they give for writing? As an indicator of their concern about the time for process, reading, writing and dialogue they frequently (in the planning meetings) emphasized the need for time. Kathleen opened the meeting on September 2 by stating, "But when we come together again there will be time for reading? Right!" This was reiterated many times in the planning meetings during the year. They believed that time for transactional processes was important to the project's success. The problem of time continued into the February meeting where a group of teachers began work on a math
profile. The group of nine teachers subdivided into two groups, browsed materials and engaged in conversation. Members of the planning team observed the teachers and discussed how they must trust that the teachers were engaged in conversation that was meaningful to the project. The same members shared their apprehension as they were not sure if the teachers were progressing. To intervene at this point would have related a message to the teachers that the planning team members did not trust the teachers use of time. The team members decided not to redirect the activity but to allow the teachers to continue with their discussions; the decision was consistent with the planning team's views on professional development.

**Accommodating Ambiguity**

In planning the project, members of the team had to develop a community within which they could develop ways to manage ambiguity. The interactions between the different members of the team, as they met in frequent meetings throughout the project year, became an important forum for the accommodating of ambiguity. As a part of this process the planning team engaged in intensive planning in the September, October and November meetings as they struggled with concepts and attempted to develop activities which would be meaningful for the teachers. The collecting of tangible materials to validate and support the teachers work was important to the team. The team developed a variety of written records that revealed their concerns and questions about the project.
The following account emphasizes the interactive processes the planning team members developed, the intensive way they planned and the tangibles they accumulated. I think the implementation of all these processes helped the planning team manage the ambiguous nature of the project.

**Interactions Within a Community Exploring Possibilities.**

In the meeting with the faculty at Riverview, the supervisors discussed the possibilities which could occur within the project. In another school, Bardon, a teacher, reported in an interview that Kathleen and Jean said "anything is possible." In meetings in September, the planning team members kept the idea of exploring possibilities a focus in their discussions. On reflection, and during a meeting of the planning team in March, they discussed the importance of maintaining a language of possibilities as they worked to construct assessment strategies and materials. To accommodate the exploring of possibilities within the planning team, they established a practice which was open, risk-free and supportive of all ideas, but one which was critical of the decisions they made and the understandings they constructed.

How the planning team members interacted with each other was crucial if the project was to be successful; as they had to be able to question, challenge, affirm, and explore their understandings on many different concepts and issues.

**Joint Construction, Reiteration and Questioning**

The members of the planning team knew and respected how
they all had different stories to tell and had a wide variety of experiences to relate as they came together to plan the project. Allowing each other space for the retelling and the reconstruction of experiences would enhance the understanding of the planning team. They often engaged in a process of joint construction. That is, they explored together the meaning of a concept or an issue. This was particularly noticeable in the meetings in September, October and November where they hoped that such joint constructions would clarify and expand their understanding on issues such as assessment, developmentally appropriate practice, instruction, collaboration, skills and learning.

In the meeting of October 18, many of the same issues the planning team had discussed in other meetings emerged. However, on that day, they acknowledged that in the sessions with the teachers and in developing their understandings within the planning team they were coming up against a "barrier." The barrier was how to move beyond the rubric or checklist as a form of assessment. They engaged in a process of trying to articulate what the barrier was in the following conversation.

Jean: Can someone here help me verbalize what this barrier is? Can someone put it into words for me? Or as a group, let's try to articulate what this barrier is because it is a barrier.

Julia: Let me try (Tentatively, in almost a whisper). Trying to come up with criteria that is relating back to
the instruction. Isn't that it? And the criteria to be more holistic as opposed to becoming something separated from the instruction.

Kathleen: And the criteria that are holistic, developmental that reflect development as opposed to what we were saying earlier--benchmarks.

Julia: Or, like you were saying, everybody's developing these assessments and these rubrics to assess learning, but it's kind of in a void, a vacuum almost, because it's not connected. Where the difficulty lies is when we try to connect it back to what's happening in the classroom and keep it holistic. How do you do that?

Jean: That's where the difference is. They've (other site) developed these things outside, and now they're trying to situate them in and make those connections with the kids, whereas, we're trying to build from what we're already doing with the kids. Right?

In this conversation Julia tentatively attempted to define the barrier. Her thoughts were then clarified by Kathleen. Opening up the conversation for joint construction was important. It was only when multiple perspectives were shared that they could begin to develop a coherent understanding for what they were trying to accomplish in their work with the teachers on assessment. The conversation on October 18 was not a resolution to a problem, but the planning team members recognized a perceived potential barrier in the progress of the
project. In this conversation, Kathleen also recognized a conceptual shift the group was making between their understanding of the term "benchmark" and "development." Having this community in which to construct understandings helped reduce the tensions that emerged when they explored alternatives that were problematic. There must be ambiguity in order to explore options and alternatives. However, there also needs to be a process in place that will help to reduce uncertainty but not to eradicate it.

Within the effort to construct understandings, the planning team members engaged in other processes which often included reiteration and questioning. They frequently, in the cyclical process of constructing, reiterated their understandings to one another. For example, Jean asked the team, "Let me do it one more time just to hear myself say it." Or, "Wait a minute, let me, let me just try to articulate." They maintained this repetitive process throughout the project, and members of the planning team reminded one another about the important aspects of the project as Kathleen did in the following comment, "And we are situated, I know we know this, but we have to keep saying, we are situating this in the classroom and the purposes for classroom instruction and we just have to help people understand ..." The need to repeat their central values to one another was necessary because there were so many factors that might cause them to overlook their values. The reiteration of their understandings and beliefs
about the process of assessment and professional development was essential if they were to remain with the values they had established.

Besides reiterating they also raised questions which helped them focus on their central values. This was evident in Kathleen's conversation on September 13, "Why are we doing this, developing assessment tools?" Or, "How much do we guide the teachers thinking? How much modeling do we do?"

The team members recognized the importance of constructing an environment where questions would lead the teachers to think about the developing of tools. Through listening and observing the participants during the first days together Jean related that:

I could see a process of refinement starting to occur across time ... where material is going to start to accumulate, in those portfolios. And we need to raise these questions. What do we look for? How do we know what to look for? What questions do we ask?"

They continually questioned their purpose but tried to keep in focus their reason for the project; they frequently in Kathleen's terms, became "convoluted." Although they did warn one another that they were going to be convoluted, I think this helped them to realize that however ambiguous their convolutions were, they trusted these discussions would help them in the long run. They realized it was okay to play with ideas, and that the process of joint construction, reiteration
or questioning provided possibilities to address issues. The Undulating Process of Addressing Abstract and Concrete Issues.

During planning meetings the members interspersed their discussions on abstract topics such as assessment and the transactional process of professional development, with other topics which were more concrete for them. For example, they discussed refreshments. On September 23, they took time in the planning session to decide that the teachers would donate money to purchase pizza for the session on September 28. They decided to provide the salad, dessert and fruit. They discussed texts they could use in the sessions with the teachers. On September 13, they discussed texts which would help them explore portfolios. They also frequently related stories of experiences in teaching or professional development. Kathleen opened the planning meeting on September 2 by relating her experience in another professional development setting. She related how the teachers found that having time to read alone and with others was beneficial to the furthering of their knowledge.

Sometimes, if several of the team members became mired in the consideration of an issue, as happened in the following discussion, one of the team members (in this scenario, Kathleen) interrupted the conversation and attempted to lower the level of abstraction by focusing the conversation on the session to be planned for the teachers.  

241
Julia: Well, you see that's the thing that I feel really kind of frustrated about, because I listen to the conversation we have here, you know, as the support team or whatever ... but then how do we go about facilitating their gaining of that understanding without it being prescriptive?

Ann: Well, then too is our understanding going to be the same as their understanding?

Julia: Right.

Ann: Can we impose our understanding?

Julia: Well yes, I see.

Ann: The whole issue is their development. Can we say that our opinions are what should be?

Julia: Oh! I know. What I am concerned about is that in talking to the teachers, I feel, I'm feeling like we are just kind of muddling along. I don't feel like we are you know I am looking at December 17 (Due date to the state department for the deliverable). You know what I am saying?

Kathleen: Well, I think, yes now we have to. I think maybe one of our purposes if we contextualize this within a demonstration lesson, and we talk then, and it won't be easy, but we talk about ... I think it will be easy for them to identify the content things like standards and things. I think they will be more familiar with those and they will be able to identify them. But then there
comes the whole issue of, okay, so we identify them within the lesson, then what are the skills or strategies we need for documenting them?

Through lowering the level of abstraction in this way, Kathleen revealed her sensitivity to the issue and emphasized how the tolerance of ambiguity within the project varied between the team members, for many different reasons, and at different times. They had to help one another in the process of accommodating the ebb and flow of ambiguity levels.

**Reflection without Resolution**

As the team planned, the members often revisited issues they felt to be crucial to the project. Such a cyclical process is difficult to maintain as it requires time and it also requires that the people within the process accept the ambiguity within the lack of resolve. The reflection on portfolio that frequently arose in the September meetings and continued into the November meetings is one example. Even after many hours of discussion, and after brainstorming during several meetings, they still were uncertain about the portfolio issue and were willing to remain open and explore all the variations.

*Julia:* What did you say portraits were?

*Kathleen:* Portrait portfolio, and again this is my understanding, is a child’s construction of himself/herself through that portfolio. So you bring in, you bring in the ribbons that you have won.
It's Margaret's kind of portfolio and that's different from a developmental portfolio, or from a best work. Now you might take a best work and put it in a portrait, yes.

Ann: She called it an autobiographical portfolio; it's another term for it.

Jean: So then we get back to Denny Taylor material.

Clyde: If we are looking at individual things right now, different kinds of portfolios. As they (the teachers) look at it, they are looking at whether it's developmentally appropriate. It's content, right! Then what we are doing basically is a portrait of self ... and how it fits developmentally and with the content, that's what we are saying, right!

Julia: (smiling) Now we have that figured out.

Clyde: We don't have anything figured out.

Multiple conversation: No, NO!

Ann: It's just an important step I think.

Kathleen: You know we always have to, yes, we have to teach ourselves.

Ann: That's what's nice about last week (referring to a previous planning meeting) because we go through this whole day of trying to understand some concept for ourselves before we can even begin to plan for others.

Kathleen: Yes.

Ann: You would really want them to come to (an
understanding), and you know, that might not happen.

*Kathleen:* Yes, Right.

*Clyde:* I have to grab hold of something so that I know
we have something to come back to.

Clyde's statement revealed that they knew they would revisit
the same issues again. This process was not viewed as being
redundant by the planning team members, on the contrary, it
provided a means for them to review concepts and to elaborate
on their understandings over time. The conversation also
revealed the openness that is essential for such interactions;
insofar as they were able to admit to each other that they were
struggling to understand concepts.

**Intensive Planning**

The planning team members planned intensively for the
project. The process included the planning of activities for
the teachers, and the planning of presentations to outside
groups in order to share knowledge gained from the project.

On September 20, as a part of the intensive planning
process, Julia explained in detail the activity she planned to
engage teachers in on September 28.

*Julia:* ... you could almost do the activity, which is
called "50 Green Doors," it's a pattern activity.
That could be the model, and then the process break would
be, where was the math in this? Where is the content?
Then you can talk about where there's pattern, there's
number sense.
Kathleen: I don't know this activity, but wouldn't observation be a part of it too?
Jean: Is it something we could actually do?
Julia: Yes, I have the materials and everything.
Process is critical.
Kathleen: It's part of the concept development.

Julia explained the activity to the team members by using math manipulatives she had brought with her. The manipulatives consisted of triangular, white and green, wooden blocks. She proceeded to use the blocks as she questioned team members about what they observed in the activity.

Julia: The activity is, for instance, that this is a wall and has one green door. With one green door, how many total blocks do you use? This is a green door.
Clyde: Three.
Julia: With two green doors, how many total blocks?
All Together: Five.
Kathryn: Then you add another one--three green doors?
How many?
All Together: Seven.
Julia: You explore this, the problem you have, and they can work in pairs, and (I don't have enough blocks to do it) if you have fifty green doors how many total blocks do you have? Basically, the algebra, it's 2x+1, so if you have got a kid that comes up with 2x+1, look at what you know about that kid and math. You can look at the
patterns ... The worksheet is basically just this, where you put the number of green doors, how many total blocks, number of green doors, total blocks, and then it has a place for you to write about the answer. So you have got writing too ... Then afterwards, you can say, 'Where was the math in this activity? It was fun but where's the math in this?'

Planning team members attempted to predict how such an activity with the teachers would lead to appreciation of the content and the process for assessment of the child. Would the process (hopefully it would) lead the teachers to ways of developing tools which would facilitate both content and process?

Kathleen: What we can assess is content.

Jean: But it's also process.

Kathleen: Not only what can we assess, but now how do we assess it? What are the tools that we use?

They returned to planning Julia's part of the session, in detail, in the September 23 planning meeting. Towards the end of this planning meeting, Kathleen stated "I'm feeling the need to rethink the whole thing again. Go back over what it is we think and record it in some way." This comment revealed the cyclical process they journeyed through to plan the sessions. Julia stated at the end of this meeting "We keep cycling through, but it's (a plan developed earlier) basically the same thing. It's not as good as what we have come up with now, but it was hitting the same issues."
Besides the sessions with the teachers, the planning team also took time to plan intensively about other important aspects of the project. Kathleen and Julia made frequent presentations to officials of the State Department of Education. A presentation on assessment was also made to the members of the local School Board. In addition, Julia made presentations to various faculties in the school district who were not a part of the project. To disseminate information about the teachers' work to a broader audience, presentations were made at two conferences. The planning team and the teachers spent many hours working on the proposals and two presentations; one for the State Association for the Education of the Young Child, and the other for the National Reading Conference.

Support

The planning team members planned for the different aspects of the project and, through their interactions, developed a supportive environment. However, they also sought support from outside sources to validate their move towards alternative practices in the assessment of children and professional development. The outside support evolved from the exploring of professional texts and the sharing of stories from their prior experiences in practice.

Exploring Texts

In the planning sessions, the team members frequently explored texts to specify and clarify concepts. For example,
at the planning meeting on November 23, they met at the School Board office in the executive board room where they had ample space to spread out their accumulated resources on assessment. Team members brought texts to the planning meetings that they felt were relevant to assessment and professional development. At this planning meeting, they took time to read silently, or occasionally broke the silence by reading to one another. Jean read extensively from a text she brought Evaluating Literacy: A Perspective for Change (Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson, & Preece, 1991). As Jean read the text, she highlighted what she believed to be important points which could extend their thinking or reaffirm their thoughts. The following is one of several that Jean read out loud. "Thus, rather than attempting to record one moment in time, the teacher attempts to capture the child's shifting patterns of growth and development" (p. 9). Kathleen's response to Jean's reading, "And that's what we are going for," showed how the piece reinforced a discussion they had had earlier about the assessment, over time, of the child in the classroom. The reading frequently reinforced what they believed about professional development and assessment or, it raised issues which they needed to address. Finding professional texts on assessment and the professional development process, and reading these texts to one another, helped them to feel support in their work and provided validation to their constructions. This process helped them cope with ambiguity.
Sharing Stories

Sharing stories from their own experiences and observation of practice in teaching and professional development, helped the members of the planning team to ground their visions in practice. They were then able to place something more concrete on their constructions. Their ideas were not just things that were whimsical, they were based upon their observations of practice over time, and their understandings of how children develop concepts. On September 13, Ann related her story of observation in a kindergarten classroom and the problems of assessing all the children at the same time:

I observed in a classroom recently, where children were doing measurement activities. They had to record on a piece of paper their shoe length, as a measurement, against another child, you know, with the shoe lengths. And some wrote down eight, some whatever, the teacher then checked the skill off because she thought the child had done the skill. As we know, children measure in different ways. Some scooted the shoe length along like this [I demonstrated by moving my outstretched hand along the edge of the table, first in a scooting motion and then end to end, as if measuring] they didn't measure end to end. They don't yet have the concept of measurement. But I don't know that teachers, in a lot of situations, can observe and take that into account. When they are
making those assessments of children, they try to assess all the children at once and you can't do that. On occasion the team members shared stories from their variety of experiences in teaching. Julia and Kathleen shared their experiences from teaching together in a third grade classroom. Kathleen also related her experiences as a high school teacher. Jean occasionally shared her experiences from teaching upper elementary school children in what she described as a traditional approach. Then she described transformations that led her to understand learning as an interdisciplinary process during the teaching of undergraduate classes in reading at the local university. I occasionally discussed my practice in an alternative, multi-age classroom, in the public school system of another state. Often they returned to the stories they shared to reconfirm their convictions. For example Kathleen, on September 20, reiterated Ann's observation again in relation to development of concepts, how to assess, and the importance of observation in the assessment of the child.

Kathleen: How do we know that a child has developed this concept? Remember Ann with her example of measurement and how the kids were taking things and using them as lengths of measure, but if you observe the kids ...

The process of referring to the observations and stories they shared, helped the planning team members validate that their experiences were meaningful and that these stories were an important part of relating their knowledge.
Relating stories was an important aspect of the project particularly when accommodating the ambiguity in structuring the deliverable. The team members decided to use stories as a means of illustrating the assessment process knowing that this way of illustrating knowledge would be different. Jean related a prior conversation to accentuate what she felt was a good idea for the presentation of the assessment tools to the State Department of Education.

Jean: Somebody the other day, maybe Julia with Dana, talked about writing the vignettes, and I think that may be a powerful thing we could attribute to assessment. It might be that there are vignettes that play out that are instruction. It's like, I am thinking of Nora's, it's like a story, that would go with it of Nora talking about her instruction and how it led up to that conference of that child's, and the types of things the child told the parents, and what was in the portfolio. That could be a story that other teachers then could look to, read, and they would see the instructional style in that story. They could make their own connections to it as that type of narrative work needs to do for both instruction and assessment. And then if we had collections of those stories of instruction and assessment with the parent and child in there, and then the continuums (developmental profiles). I mean, I think those would be our deliverables, if that's what we are
talking about. Now we are talking about what our deliverables are going to be, and if we could pull, but that's definitely the vignettes like Julia said that's a very different kind of deliverable. That's something that could definitely be a deliverable and I think (it) would be more for the form of the deliverable.

The sharing of such ideas was important. As Jean claimed, "This format of constructing vignettes may be a very different kind of deliverable." They realized that it was important to reaffirm their mutual belief for what may be a different approach. The planning team placed value on their own stories as well as the stories the teachers related about practice, and team members believed in a narrative form of recording for such processes of assessment.

Tangibility

The planning team members engaged in practices that provided a variety of tangibles. This practice of the collecting and constructing tangible materials helped to accommodate the ambiguity of team members by giving them a written record of their progress.

Written records

Written records were important in order for the planning team members to maintain their focus and to have a visual of the progress of their questions and concerns about the project. The records were in a variety of forms: work plans, agenda, notes, and visual diagrams.
Plans

The planning team established a format for the work plans to be presented to the State Department of Education and this format was used throughout the year (see Figure 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Agenda:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What does the day look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Richmond Trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNOUNCEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. [Name] will address the group and discuss purpose and content of the focal group interview they will conduct during the year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will read a fable to set the tone of the day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNAL WRITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect back over the parent/teacher conferences and focus on what was discussed and what was (the process documents) brought to the conference. They might want to include who talked about what. Take between five to ten minutes to write silently. The reason for the silent writing is to help you focus on the content of both the conferences and the portfolios. What will evolve from this process are the assessment tools. To do this, we must look closely at what we are collecting and what we are assessing. What are some of the things that are in your journals and portfolios look through materials, give examples of some of the things that you know are in the portfolio list what is in there compile a list of the content. Write phrases or notes of what they find.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After giving time to look at their material, conduct a whole group list all the ideas on chart paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to the fable from the early part of the morning, the list is like the garden in the fable, it is beautiful yet lacks organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help facilitate organization all participants will read &quot;Assessment and Accountability in a Whole Literacy Curriculum.&quot; Before going to small groups discuss the article. Go to small group discussions with the purpose to pull out themes. If this list represents components of a portfolio/kite homeowners then how do we organize this information. The task in the small groups is to group the information and label. They should also be able to articulate the reason behind the grouping and the labeling. Each small group will create a visual of their groupings of the information and present it to the larger group. Then as a whole group we need to look and see if something is missing, (i.e. something we haven’t thought of or have not included).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LUNCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To begin our afternoon have the participants write about the information they would like us to communicate at the Conference Portfolio Assessment Promises and Penalties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHARE PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give the Participants the opportunity to share what happened during their parent/teacher conference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will have the opportunity to continue their work and study on portfolios.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLOSING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The day is over when the day is over.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Work plan designed by the planning team members for the November 4 session with the teachers.
Julia often used a portable computer to enter work plans as they were constructed in the planning meetings. From the work plan, Julia then constructed an agenda for the teachers (see Figure 9). She usually wrote the agenda on a large piece of chart paper and displayed it at the beginning of each teachers' session or, she typed an agenda and sent it to the teachers via the "pony" prior to the sessions.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT PROJECT MEETING**

January 13, 1994
as the
Center for Continuing Education
Conference Room

Opening

Talk about Trip
Set Future Dates: *(Bring Calendars)*
1. Focus group interviews with
2. Visits from County Teachers
3. Summer Workshop

**Review December Deliverable** *(Bring Personal Copy)*

**Continue to Revise Deliverable**

We will continue to develop the four areas from our December deliverable. Once again you may want to bring any related materials that would help you during the day. You may want to change from the area you worked in before.

The four areas are:
- Developmental Profiles
- Go-home Journals
- Parent Connection
- Instructional Tasks

**LUNCH** *(Provided by the CEC)*

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Where do we go from here?

**CONTINUE TO REVISE DECEMBER DELIVERABLE**

**CLOSING**

*Figure 9. Agenda for the teachers sent by Julia to the teachers prior to the January 13 meeting.*
As leader of the morning activities in the November 4 session, Jean constructed a more detailed plan for herself (see Figure 10).

**ORGANIZING ASSESSMENT—November 4, 1993**

**[BRINGING MEANING/MAKING SENSE]**

I. **Set Up**
   - Garden fable
   - Crowded bathtub
   - Begin to organize our assessment
   - Situated in your classroom work/continue that way
   - Work together this morning on generating descriptors of what you see in the children’s work be it portfolios, take-home journals, whatever. First steps in developing tools/toes in the water.

II. **Generating Descriptors—Large Group Sampling**
   - Large group (Thank you for trusting me & sharing work)
   - Using the writing portfolio sample and the take home journal sample look at individually and record on overhead, descriptors of what the teachers see.

III. **Generating Descriptors—Partners**
   - Study what you brought with a partner
   - Generate a list of descriptors from the work you both brought—as varied a list as possible.

IV. **Develop a Large Group Listing**
   - Write on chart paper AQAP and one person simultaneously type on computer to print out for group work.

V. **Read & Discuss the Au Article—Large Group**
   - Seek connections, themes, ways to organize, surprises, what makes sense?

VI. **Seeking Organization/Making Sense**
   - Group the items generated by the entire group
   - Add and delete items as the group desires
   - Label the groups and tell why the items are related
   - Make a visual that represents the sense you have made from this information to present to the large group.

VII. **So What?/What Questions Do We Have?/Where Do We Go from Here?**
   - What do we seem to be assessing?
   - What else needs to be included?
   - What purposes are we establishing?
   - For what audiences?
   - What are the criteria and benchmarks being used?

**Figure 10.** Detailed plan, constructed by Jean, for her own use, when leading the session with the teachers on November 4.
Note taking

Another planning team strategy devised for the accommodation of ambiguity was to summarize previous conversations through the taking of notes. In the following example, Jean challenged the group to become more specific by first highlighting important aspects and then questioning further their thoughts on particular issues.

Well I'm just going to stop us for a minute, okay? As I've listened to it, I've been sitting here thinking I've written down major assumptions, but I don't know what these things are, okay, how to help teachers to know what to look for; help teachers to know how to look; help teachers to know what questions to ask; and then how do we help nurture all of this? Those are four things that hit me immediately, and the other thought that's just come to me as we've been playing with this is, what is a tool? Is the tool the actual process, like the thinking you're involved in? Okay! Is the tool the actual process of evaluation, or is the tool something that stimulates the process of evaluation?

Such note taking, as illustrated above, helped the team members to focus on critical questions and encouraged them to explore alternatives. They all kept notes on different aspects of their meetings for their own information. In my notes, I made records of texts in my possession which could provide resources for the project. For example, Dancing with the Pen (New
Zealand Ministry of Education, 1992). I wrote down a word or statement that was important for me. Other members of the group made notes to remind them of pertinent information they discussed, or the need to collect materials, and schedules they needed to adhere to.

Visual Diagrams

During the year, some of the planning meetings were held in the executive board room of the local School Board office. This location provided access to a large white board that stretched along one wall. In meetings on September 23 and October 25, the team members spent the morning brainstorming and generating a diagram on the board of their understandings (see Figures 11 and 12).

![Visual Diagram]

Figure 11. Visual diagram constructed on the white board in the executive board room on September 23.
The diagram provided a visual for all the team members and helped them to clarify their understandings. The display of these understandings made them feel, by the end of the day, more comfortable with their progress.

**Organisation**

**Different purposes**

- Mirror images of instructional goals/processes/strands
- Instructional workshop
- Facilitate
- Reading/Writing/Spelling
- History/Computer

**Within Portfolios/show /developmental profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Portfolio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Portrait of Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Autobiographical Portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12.** Visual diagram constructed on the white board in the executive board room on October 25.

**Audio taping**

All the planning meetings were audiotaped as a part of my inquiry. However, the audiotapes were also used to aid the planning team members in the process of planning. Occasionally they would rewind the tape to listen to their conversation. Transcripts were made from the audiotapes that were available for the team members.
CHAPTER SIX

Ambiguity in a Transactional Environment Designed for Teachers' Professional Development

In writing the proposal for the project, Kathleen and Jean attempted to construct a process within which the understandings of assessment, developmentally appropriate practice and parent involvement would evolve from the practice of the teachers. Hopefully, the teachers would feel comfortable with the process of professional development because the intention was that the inquiry would be based upon their own practice. However, due to the lack of pre-stated ends, feelings of ambiguity within the project arose. In the following interpretations, I first explore the issues that created ambiguity, and then I discuss how the planning team members and the teachers developed strategies to accommodate their respective ambiguous feelings.

Sources of Ambiguity

Mismatches of Expectation and Experience

The teachers interacted with Kathleen, Jean, and Clyde before the project began, and they saw the supervisors as people who would work with them as they engaged in classroom inquiry. However, some of the teachers' perceptions about how the project would proceed were at odds with the kind of environment envisaged by the planning team members. The following comments from the teachers during reflective interviews reveal these differences.
Deanna: Well, at the beginning, I thought, they've got all the answers, and they're just going to tell them to us, and they're going to tell us what we need to do.
Lindsey: I kind of thought that too, and it wasn't that way at all.
Stephanie: But actually I found that very frustrating to start with ... you know they would always answer your question with a question.
Lindsey: It's like you know we [referring to the planning team members] didn't have an answer either!
Stephanie: But I think it really got us started off well.
Emily: Well, it was for me a whole different way of thinking and doing.

This conversation revealed the tensions and the frustrations the teachers felt because the expectation that they would be told what to do turned out to be inconsistent with their experience. The teachers had expected that the planning team members would have all the answers. Such a perception of the process was supported in other conversations with the teachers as they reflected on the beginning of the project. Dylan and Danielle, in an interview later in the project year, explained how they had felt:

Dylan: I think the structure was more radical than that, and I say radical in a good sense ... Instead of it being a pyramid structure, it was turned
sideways and we had as much "power" as the people who were running it and so the structure wasn't necessarily loose, it was just a totally different structure.

Danielle: And I think that's why I had a hard time with it at the beginning, because I'm so used to somebody standing up there telling me what to do, when to do it, how to do it, you know, here I am and I have the ability or power now, and that was hard for me.

Other teachers affirmed Dylan's and Danielle's perceptions, and Cathy added, "I don't think we knew what we were getting into. I think everybody had a perceived notion and certainly you came out with different ideas than what you went in with." There was a frustration for some of the teachers who wanted more direction. They expected a plan of what they were supposed to do, so they could begin the work.

As the process continued, however, the teachers began to enjoy having ownership in the process. They mentioned their sense of ownership frequently during the project. Their ownership in the process helped the teachers feel as though they were being treated as professionals. However, with their perceived ownership came the uncertainties of having to construct knowledge for themselves, and to collaborate to develop understandings. In reflection on "The First Days Together" the teachers explained their perceptions and uncertainties.
Myra: There was a lot of deep thinking going on during those four days.
Susan: Lots of reading.
Myra: Soul searching.
Betty: And very intense thinking and when it was over we were still thinking.
Liz: Because I don't think we were still sure what was going to happen ... lots of stuff to go through and try to get in some semblance of order that we could really understand and go with it.

While the teachers did not know what was going to happen within the project during the early stages, they were willing to tolerate that ambiguity and wanted to stay "with" the project.

Constructive Nature of the Process

In a transactional process, where decisions through dialogue are essential, a perceived feeling of security is necessary. If that perception of security is achieved, then the participants are more likely to share the more difficult aspects of their practice from the classroom. The environment has to be low risk so that disclosure and sharing can occur. The hope of the planning team members was that security would be achieved in the project if due respect was given to the teachers' practice, and if different perspectives were acknowledged. The teachers did perceive that the project was open-ended and they recognized the
project would be a learning experience. However, the following dialogue revealed the teachers' feelings of apprehension about the openness of the project.

Rachael: Because we knew it would be a learning experience. We knew we would come out of it feeling better.

Renee: But we just didn't know what, at the beginning, we still didn't know what to expect.

Rachael: We were real foggy; we were all sitting there going (made a facial gesture).

Renee: Especially that week in August.

Rachael: We were lost. We all were. We didn't know anything.

Joan: I think you know when something's really open-ended, our experience is not in something that is so open-ended, so you kind of feel uneasy, because you feel like, were they really going to tell us what to do.

The teachers acknowledged how open-minded the team members were and, as Kara stated,

It wasn't like they had a mind set and it [the project] was going to be done in one particular way. You know, they went in with open minds and let everyone contribute. I think sometimes we came up with things they hadn't thought of and sometimes they came up with things we hadn't thought of. It was always open, very open.
Although the perceived openness of the project could be seen to be positive, that same openness supported ambiguity insofar as multiple interpretations remained possible. The faculty at Riverview discussed problems related to openness with the planning team members before the work sessions began. A teacher at Riverview explained that she was concerned about the "ambiguity" of this open approach. Kathleen reassured this teacher and others that such openness was needed so that the teachers could interpret the project to fit their inquiry within their classrooms. Another teacher, Betty, also revealed her apprehension, "The magnitude of the whole undertaking. It seemed like a lot to us ..." Susan voiced similar concern in a reflective interview during the year. "I did have real reservations and was not even sure after we had decided to commit to it that I was really, really excited about it." Such apprehension revealed that the teachers were interested in the project but wanted to know the parameters. However, parameters were nebulous, as Kathleen explained from her experience to planning team members in a meeting,

It's (the transactional process) ambiguous, because if you're paying attention to the learners in any kind of context, you can't have everything already designed and figured out and know exactly where you're going. Because if you're following the lead of the learners it's going to be ambiguous.
This was an essential factor that planning team members adhered to as they planned the sessions with the teachers and they reminded themselves of it frequently.

The planning team members were aware of the ambiguity within the project and provided opportunities for the teachers to discuss their concerns and apprehensions. During "The First Days Together," in a brainstorming activity, the teachers raised the following questions for them, and the planning team members, to consider.

"What is my role as a teacher in this project?" "What's wrong with what we are doing and why change?" "Will there be only one way?" "Do we reinvent the wheel?" "Goal/ Role of the group?" "What does this (the project) mean to us?" "Will we really change?" "Are we sure we want to do this?"

These questions reflected the breadth of concern the teachers felt about the process they were being encouraged to pursue. Connecting to an Outside Frame or Making it Your Own.

The planning team members viewed the form of the deliverables as their responsibility, and they wanted the teachers to focus on exploration of practice. Even though the planning team members attempted to relate the message that the deliverable was not a major concern at that early stage of the project, some teachers wanted to know more about the form of the deliverable and what was to be expected. The teachers in "The First Days Together" raised questions such
as 'What are the deliverables to the state department? What will the deliverables look like?' and, "I am still concerned about the time needed to write the deliverables, whatever they are."

The form of the deliverable was not addressed in the four-day session; however, Julia did respond to the teachers' concerns. She reflected later in the year on her responses and stated,

I can remember telling participants, when they would ask, "What does the deliverable look like?" I'm like, "Don't worry about it, we're not worried about it."
But we kept telling them. "Let us worry about that. You don't have to worry about that."

Julia did attempt to alleviate concerns so the issue was not raised again in the four-day session. However, interviews later in the year revealed the teachers' underlying and continuing anxiety on this issue. Dauille's conversation was most revealing--she related her anxiety in an interview.

I went in thinking we would have the chance to study and talk about different kinds of assessment, but when I actually got in there the beginning of that week [during The First Days Together] I had this terrible need to know what the end product was and we talked about that a lot. I needed to know what I was working towards, and they couldn't exactly tell us because they didn't know themselves. I think that drove me crazy that whole
week. I kept thinking, maybe today they're going to
tell me what, what we need to do. What it's going to
look like and how it's going to be done, and each day
it, you know, they didn't know, so it never came. They
never really told me what to do."

Danielle was not alone in expressing her frustration about
the form of the deliverable, but the form remained nebulous
until the teachers began to construct assessment tools from
their practice.

Besides the concerns about the form of the deliverable,
the teachers raised questions about the assessment tools they
would develop for the core curriculum being developed by the
State Department of Education. The planning team members had
a brainstorming session about the teachers' concerns and
apprehensions about the project. Questions emerged, such as
"What is the Common Core?" and "How does this (what we
envision) fit with the state's direction?" Attempts to
ascertain the direction of the officials at the State
Department of Education became the focus of their discussion.

The teachers wanted to know how to connect their
practice with the Common Core of Learning. One teacher,
Dylan, was particularly sensitive to their anxiety and he
tried to reassure his peers by stating, "We can, as
teachers, develop assessment tools which are open-ended,
natural, holistic and which go along with the Common Core."
His comment suggested that he felt it was possible to

268
accommodate the teachers' practice within the framework of the Common Core. During this time, at the beginning of the project, there was media coverage about the Common Core of Learning. As several interest groups worked against its implementation, teachers' discussions of this uncertainty became less frequent. During an interview in March, Dylan stated that he and some of his peers considered that the officials of the Department of Education were indecisive.

Well, there is a problem with the state aspect of this because it was never very clear what the state expected of us and the whole debate on outcome-based education and all that aspect of, sort of mandated that our road be somewhat fuzzy. We didn't know exactly where we were headed, and I think it took a little time for us as a group to come to the notion. Well if they don't, we have to sort of ignore what they expect of us, and make something that's good for us [we can] make it our own rather than what the state wants from us.

The indecision of the officials at the State Department of Education, and the transactional approach taken by the planning team, impressed upon the teachers how they must focus on their own process. It became apparent to the teachers that the products for the deliverables would evolve from their practice.

**Uncertainty about the Pace of the Work.**

The development of tools for assessment contributed to
anxiety. A group of teachers at another site in Harristown were implementing some of the tools they had designed in their own classrooms. The project director of the group contacted Julia in September, because they wanted some of the teachers from the project in the county to go to Harristown in order to help evaluate the tools that had been developed there. The fact that the Harristown group was already testing out its tools raised anxiety. Such anxiety was revealed by Kara, a teacher in the project, in the following conversation.

Kara: Harristown. How are they feeling about their project? They are further along with their tools.

Kathleen: We talked in the summer about validity, objectivity, you will have to look at their tools. Others [project sites] are going for more in isolation as opposed to ongoing assessment.

Julia: Debra [other site project leader] was very positive, but she has worked with industry, she seems very efficient.

Kara: I wonder how the teachers [at Harristown] are feeling?

The discussion of the tools developed by participants at another location, and the fact that the participants at the other location were already testing their tools, prompted Joan to ask the following question: "Is the timeline different?" (Has the state changed the date for handing in
the first deliverable?). Even though Kathleen emphasized that the process for developing tools within each site may be different, the teachers still continued to air their uncertainties.

The Nature of Assessment: Concept Complexity

During their first week together the teachers raised questions related to the meaning of assessment. Their questions included: "What is authentic assessment?" "Is alternative assessment more than portfolios?" "What do we want assessment to do?" "What information do we want from the tool?" "Is the tool to be skills-based, concept-based, or both?" Such questions revealed that the teachers understood the many ways that an issue such as assessment could be interpreted.

Discrepancy between Teaching Practices and Linguistic Practices

Teachers' realizations about the different ways to assess emphasized the ambiguous nature of trying out new forms of assessment. Jane commented, "There are so many different parts to assessments that I think we are realizing now and finding out about ... and you have to adjust your assessment to the way you teach, and if you are told you have to do it a certain way [referring to the current report card process in the county] it doesn't fit into the way you teach, then you have a hard time." This faculty member, and others, came to the project frustrated with the reporting system that
was currently in place. They were trying to find alternatives. They were struggling to understand the fit between the holistic process they were trying to develop in their practice and the current practice of using the conventional tests that so often focussed on subskills. The dilemma of such a transition was reflected in the following comment made by Jane, "Because I think this whole language has come into its own and our ways of teaching have changed lately. I think we all felt very frustrated with the types of assessment tools that we had." The faculty of Bardon felt that current assessment processes were inadequate for their instructional practice, and they were beginning to question the purpose of the standardized testing process in place in the county. Deanna reflected on this problem as she struggled to understand the purpose of standardized testing.

Oh! I think it goes to show when you use a combination of assessment tools instead of just one way. Well, it is important that you have some sort of testing that you can compare yourself with other students in another part of the country. Or in other countries. If you don't have some sort of standardized test how do you? Or is it important? That is one question I have wondered.

The teachers often reflected on the purpose of standardized testing and their dissatisfaction with the process. However, the teachers recognized that the development of alternative
forms of assessment was not an easy task.

Jane: It is not easy you know. I think it's worth the effort. But I think it's very hard ... to collect all this information. I mean it's very hard.

Other teachers also found the process overwhelming.

Joan: You might use a different form of assessment, because it lends itself to that.

Renee: It's a little bit overwhelming sometimes because I'm trying to do observations and conferences, and portfolios, and journals and there are some days I think "Why in the world am I doing this?"

Joan: It's too much to start everything. It is too much.

As a part of their exploration of alternatives in assessment the teachers had to define the terms they frequently heard. This was not a practice that they felt comfortable with nor one they had previously been encouraged to consider, as Lynne explained:

And a lot of times you hear things, you know about the word portfolio ... and you have heard this for a couple of years. People say, "Oh, portfolio. There's a portfolio in that," and you're sitting there going "What's a portfolio?" You know, you sit there, everybody kind of, especially in education, sits there for about a year going, 'I ..., I really ... What is that? I really want to know what this is but I'm not
going to ask.'

The exploration of terms was a struggle, an ambiguous struggle, because of the multiple interpretations. However, it became an important part of the process of constructing knowledge, both for the teachers and the members of the planning team.

Involving Parents

The issue of how the teachers might relate alternative forms of assessment to parents created ambiguity. An important part of the project, and one reason some teachers wanted to join the project, was their concern about parent involvement. Stephanie (a teacher) explained, "You know one of our big things was how can we get parents involved, how can we get the community involved?" Though the concern was somewhat different across schools, the teachers wanted to find an adequate way to explain alternate forms of assessment and holistic practice to parents who experienced a different learning process in their own education. Vicki explained her frustration.

I found with this whole language it's really hard to explain to parents exactly what is going on in the classroom and the types of progress the child is making. The report card that we have certainly does not reflect that type of learning that's going on. So for me, communication with the parent was the biggest issue.

Vicki's comment captured the concern that was related by
several of the teachers as they reflected on their reasons for wanting to be a part of the project.

The teachers, in the beginning stages of the project, felt they needed a plan for relating the project and the development of alternative assessment tools to the parents. In the meeting on September 1 the teachers raised an issue with Julia, and Julia later related the need to the planning team members:

I mean they really did (want a plan) but then did you notice at the end, they said, 'You know, we really need to get our feet more firmly planted.' Several of them said 'We need to discuss today how we are going to tell parents about what we are doing' Then I said, 'Okay, I will give it some time.' When we gave a little bit of time to that, you know, people talked about, 'Well what are we going to do and how are we going to do it? ' At the end, it was Myra who had brought it up in the first place. She said, 'Well the only thing is, I feel that we need to be more, I think we need to know exactly what we are doing before we get the parents in.'

The indecision reflected by the teachers in this conversation emphasized the ambiguity of the issue. A major focus for the project was how to enhance parent involvement. Several difficult questions persisted. Teachers remained uncertain as to what stage in the process, and in what way, they should include parents.
Accommodating Ambiguity

Ambiguity, as revealed through the process of professional development and through the teachers' exploration of alternative forms of assessment, was accommodated by both the planning team and the participants. The following description is focused on the activities of the planning team and teachers engaged in the project. These activities helped to construct an environment that accommodated the ambiguity.

Actions

The environment constructed by the planning team members provided many processes that permitted the teachers to interact. Interactions were sustained through the activities of conversation, reading, writing and modeling. The combination of interactions through these activities provided an environment that accommodated teachers' exploration, understandings and construction of knowledge.

Conversations

In order to alleviate ambiguity and to permit the joint construction of knowledge, the teachers were given continual opportunities for conversation. The conversations developed into compilations of storytelling, questioning, descriptions of practice, and interludes where they were candid with one another.

The teachers realized that ambiguous as the situation might be, they had to be an active part of the process, and
dialogue was vital for the exploration and interpretation of practice.

To be able to engage in dialogue, and to explore the terms related to the issues within the project, an environment was necessary which would facilitate the teachers' discussions. One issue in the development of an environment for conversation is how conducive is the environment for the participants to reveal their ideas and thoughts about practice? Although the project appeared to be low-risk for some participants, the planning team members judged that this was not so for all the participants. A teacher, Joan, alluded to the fact that teachers needed to be in a low risk environment before they were going to explore terms and concepts. She commented, during the initial session, "One thing I appreciate about our discussion together is that a low-risk environment has been established." After this comment, there were many nods in agreement from the teachers. From their experiences, the teachers expressed their feeling that such an opportunity was not usually provided. Joan elaborated how the teachers needed a community in which to come together and to explore such terms:

That's one thing to come out of this, too, is that there are a lot of different words floating around for different things. And I think when we got together, if somebody just talked to one school at a time about
the terms, perhaps we wouldn't have had the same language and wouldn't really be understanding the same thing, but I think we all have the same scheme and so that when we talk ...

Rachael: ... We're on the same wavelength.

Though a sustained process of conversation seemed complex and difficult, the teachers did see its value. Danielle reflected on her past experiences and her experience in the project with the following comment,

Well, and I think time is an issue ... where in this [the project] we actually have time to sit down and discuss and if you're interested in something, you find somebody else who is, and you can get into a lengthy discussion about it and do some research on it. Where, you don't have time to do that if it is just an after school kind of meeting. And I think it has helped because we have always tried to fit our meetings during the summer or after school or seven o'clock in the morning. This [the project] gives us time to do it during the day and not in addition to everything else, and I think it's helped to build some real good common understandings for us.

Being involved in sustained dialogue with others was important for many of the participants. Kara also perceived that dialogue and listening were essential components of the professional development process. "Yes, we are involved and
participating, listening to each other and discussing, therefore our understanding will be more meaningful."

For the planning team, it was a struggle to attempt to understand the complexity of the low-risk, high-risk issue and the fact that the same environment could be perceived in different ways by members of a community. The planning team reflected on their experiences as teachers in former staff development processes as they tried to define what constituted a low-risk or high-risk environment within which to encourage conversation. The planning team also recognized that not all the teachers in the project felt the same way as Nora, Joan, Danielle or Kara.

Ann: Well, that can [referring to prior staff development experience when a teacher] be low-risk because you just really have to regurgitate. And I think when you implement this type of staff development, although we perceive the group work and our interactions as low risk, it's very high risk for some people.

Kathleen: Well I think that's why there were so many problems that first week ... there were lots of tensions that first week. People were uncomfortable and a principal came up to Julia and said "Give us more structure, you know."

Jean: But at the same time as that occurred, we had people coming up to us and saying "This is great, you
guys are modeling what we need to be doing."

The planning team wanted teachers to engage in conversations that would help them define terms such as assessment, portfolio, developmental levels, but they recognized that the teachers needed an environment conducive to such conversation.

Storytelling.

Many stories were related by the teachers about their experiences as they began to try different assessment practices in the classroom. The stories involved children or teachers' interactions with parents. Often the stories reemerged, as the year progressed, with an update or solution to the problem related in the initial story. One story revealed a teacher's struggle to include a parent in the education of that parent's child. The story was first related by Betty in the November session. Betty implemented the use of the go-home journal in her classroom, and the children wrote in the journal once a week. The journal was then sent home for the parent to read and to respond to. Betty related how a parent, in this case the father, said he did not have the time to write in the journal. Betty asked the principal of the school if he might like to write in the journal for the child, and he did so. In the February session, Betty updated the teachers with the developing story of the go-home journal. She related how the parent had asked Betty to ask the principal to stop writing in his place and
that he now wanted to write in the journal. Other stories included the teachers' experiences with including children in teacher-parent conferences, and how the children developed increased ability and interest in different areas of the curriculum because of teachers' changes in practice.

Other stories were more personal interpretations of the teachers' transformation in understanding the learning process. A story by Nora described the underestimation of her daughter's abilities as a reader, and about her own move to more holistic practice in her classroom.

Four years ago, I was beginning to rethink the way I was teaching, how I read my classroom. My daughter was in a whole language classroom at another school. And I had a lot of conversations with the principal about whether or not skills were being taught. I saw how excited my daughter was at the end of each day. But what really brought it home happened one day when my daughter and I went to the bookstore. I will never forget it. She picked out this book, a Ramona book. And I said, "No, Honey, that's too hard for you," and she said "I can too read it, Mamma! Teacher lets me read it at school." "But, Honey, your teacher reads it to you. It's too hard for you." Well she kept on insisting that she could read it. So I finally said, "All right, you read the first page of this book and if you miss five words, it's too hard for you." You'all
remember that old five-finger rule! And she read the first five pages and had not missed ten words. So I said. "All right, you can have it." And when we got home, I was embarrassed. I realized that I was not a good judge of what my daughter was capable of. I began to think that, maybe, the children in my room could do more too. And that's what really made me want to try something new.

The intermingling of stories within the environment highlighted the problems and the successes of the teachers and revealed their philosophical stances on learning.

The relating of stories became an important source of knowledge for the teachers. It alleviated ambiguity, because the stories related new ideas and concepts which could be explored in the classroom, and it subsequently allowed the writing of topics for the deliverables.

Questioning for Clarification and to Increase Explicitness.

The teachers helped one another cope with the ambiguity of constructing knowledge by questioning each other. In large-group conversations the teachers asked questions in order to clarify or to expand their thoughts. As they wrote, read or discussed issues the teachers continually questioned each other through the process of constructing ideas. Through questioning one another's tacit knowledge from practice, the teachers began to address the deeper issues related to assessment. Whitney, a kindergarten teacher,
emphasized this issue at the September 28 session. Her concern was how documentation of the progression of a child's work would make sense to the teacher, parent, and child. Whitney felt comfortable raising the question, "Can we find a way that makes sense to the child, parent and the teachers which is manageable?" After a few seconds' pause, she offered "Portfolio?" as an idea. Julia felt comfortable in not answering the question for Whitney; rather, she reiterated the question for the whole group, and then added, "How do we manage the crucial pieces that may not be crucial at the time? Can we put them in a portfolio? What is a portfolio?" The conversation that evolved from this question ended in silence and with no resolution. However, I think because of the process the planning team established in "The First Days Together" the teachers at this point were comfortable both with questions which did not elicit immediate answers, and with silences which emphasized how we were all in the process together. Through this questioning process, the planning team members reflected on Whitney's concern in a planning meeting and found the article One School's Adventure into Portfolio Assessment (Lamme & Hysmith, 1991) that might aid Whitney in her exploration of the problem she shared.

The teachers, when in groups for constructing the deliverable, continually questioned each other. The developmental profile group, which consisted of eight
teachers, from kindergarten through third grade, two Chapter One teachers, and a special education teacher, revealed an example of the process they used. On December 7, this group of teachers spent four hours working and reworking what they produced in the October and November meetings. Through a process where they continually questioned their former constructions of the profile, and through adding new thoughts and insights from their reading and discussion of practice, they slowly began to address the parts of the profile which were problematic to them. The following conversation emphasized that fact:

Danielle: Do we need to address comprehension?

Lynne: I have been worried the whole time that we never said that; I guess we said ...

Kara: What, about plot and setting and character?

Jane: Is that response to literature?

Lynne: Yes, but I mean understanding of reading or making sense of what they are reading. I feel like we have never said they read for understanding. I guess I am just worried that we never said that they read and it has meaning.

Danielle: Well, that's kind of basic; it needs to go up in the beginning.

Lynne: I just feel like we have never said that before.

Kara: Look under level four (Kara reads from the
profile) participates in reading while supplying possible plot alternatives. I mean that's starting to use, isn't it?

Lynne: But that's more of a prediction thing but it's starting, but I kind of feel we need more.

Louise: In level three we talk about the child talks about each picture, we are getting some meaning there, and then the next one we added in. Uses pictures for clues to meaning of text. We are kind of hitting it there as a meaning. We have never flatly said but then when we talk about contextual clues and all that that's hitting on meaning also. Don't you think so?

Multiple voices: Yes, Yes that's true.

Kara commented that the group needed to go back and check the document for levels associated with meaning.

Kara: Look at sixteen, that goes into some specifics about reading and retelling, doesn't it?

Lynne: Well I don't even know if we need it, I am just throwing it out. It, may be something we just want to ... 

Danielle: I think we do.

Lynne: Somehow it kind of bothers me that we haven't said ...

Louise: Well could that go in either writing or oral language?

Kara: Well, when they read for information could we
not add something in there? Reads for information with an understanding.

Dylan: It's implied though.

Kara: I think it is too, there, and I think when they read familiar stories fluently that they ...

Danielle: But sometimes a child can read fluently but there is little understanding.

Kara: Then maybe under level seven, add. "They can restate the story." Do you think?

Lynne: I don't know, maybe; that's a response.

Dylan: So let's put in an oral part of that and a written and a reading part.

Lynne: We could do that.

Dylan: Level four put in: Child orally retells story. And then level nine: Child reads and retells story.

Danielle: Well you see on the earlier one you could say Child understands that print tells a story. Maybe that's even before. They [the children] have to make a connection.

Dylan: Isn't that getting into writing, though?

Lynne: Well, we may hit it somewhere else.

Dylan: But not the retelling--it isn't hitting--that's what we need.

Lynne: That's an important thing, it's important for us in kindergarten.

Kara: And it's important the older they get. But
telling is not really reading, it's a reading response. Isn't it?

Danielle: So you want them to read and comprehend the story because a lot of times you could read but don't understand.

Louise: But reading for meaning is comprehension.

Dylan: And reading for pleasure is reading for comprehension.

Lynne: I think we have done it--probably I'll leave that (laughs).

Jane: Do we need to mention it in the statement before the profile? Because people are going to look at this and say "But they don't deal with comprehension." It's implied in many places but not explicitly stated.

Ina: Well, can we deal with that statement now? I think that maybe will help.

The process was long and arduous. However, through questioning, and the clarifying of one another's understandings, the profile began to take form (see Appendix H for a draft of the profile). Having the time to construct the deliverable in this way alleviated the ambiguity of what seemed, initially, to be an overwhelming task. The teachers were willing to work and rework their understandings, and they were willing to make sure that each statement on the profile related exactly to what was intended.
Descriptions of Practice

Some of the teachers’ conversations consisted of explicit discussions about a process they were trying to adapt to their classroom practice. There were many examples of how the teachers explained their processes. For example, frequent conversations evolved around keeping record of anecdotal notes from observations of children. Pam shared her process, in the September session, by describing her process for collecting anecdotal notes in the classroom. "As the children are working, I make notes on index cards which I have on a large ring, so that I can just flip the cards to the child’s name. Then I just make a few brief notes. Using the ring makes it easy as I can just flip the cards over like this." (as she talked she demonstrated, in the air, how she did it). After her explanation was elicited, there were smiles, nods of approval, and responses such as, "That’s a good idea" and "I like that idea." Some teachers noted the idea by writing it down. Another example of sharing practice was from Danielle who described, in the September session, the go-home journal. This process of developing teacher/child/parent interaction became an important component of the deliverable as the idea spread in the project. Danielle explained how she read the article From Teacher to Parent to Child (Ramsaur, 1992) that described a process for encouraging parent/teacher/child communication. She decided to implement the go-home journal.
in her classroom in the year prior to the project. She explained the process she used and how children, and the parents, reacted positively to the journal. Although she was pleased with the response from parents and children alike, Danielle also explained her perceived inadequacies in presenting the go-home journal to the children. She claimed that she did not spend enough time in the initial stages in helping the children with the writing process. She emphasized, "You really need to spend time, a lot of time, introducing the journal, its purpose, and the writing process." Danielle gave the article to Julia, who made a copy for each teacher in the project.

The teachers brought many samples of children's work from their classroom to illustrate their description of practice. These samples provided tangible materials to work with in order to explore the assessment issue, and to aid in the development of meaningful assessment tools. The materials included collections of children's writing recorded in journals (for example, the kindergarten journal) or folders, go-home journals, audiotapes of children reading, and portfolios. These materials provided multiple starting points and a foundation for discussion.

Teachers alleviated the ambiguity for themselves and for the planning team members by bringing such materials from the classroom. The materials provided a basis for the teachers to write about their practice.
Being Candid

On the final day of "The First Days Together" Julia was explicit when she addressed the ambiguity of the project and talked about the value of "gut feeling" and "formalizing the informal" in the development of assessment tools. Julia recognized that by the fourth day of being together with the participants, there would be varying levels of comfort with the process. She attempted, as she had during the previous days, to acknowledge the participants' concerns about the process by stating, "We are just beginning conversations about the assessment issue. The answers are not easy." Julia also openly talked about the cognitive dissonance associated with such inquiry.

Another example of a candid response occurred during the September session when, towards the end of a discussion, Julia openly admitted "I don't have an answer." At the time Julia shared her concern with me about her response. Julia's response enabled the teachers to see that the planning team members also struggled to understand assessment issues. They ascertained the planning team did not have all the answers to problems that were raised. The teachers did not appear as concerned as Julia was. By September, after the intensive four days together, it seemed that the teachers perceived it was the intention of the planning team for the teachers to lead the direction, to raise questions and to construct answers together.
The teachers and the planning team recognized that there were times when the sharing of apprehensions about the project needed to be facilitated. Therefore, the teachers had many opportunities to discuss such feelings. For example, in the closing activity on September 28, the teachers were invited to comment on the project and to relate what they were going to focus on in their practice before the next session. The teachers spent five minutes writing reflections in their composition books. They were then asked to share their reflections with the whole group. The procedure was that any person could follow a speaker until those participants who wished to participate had done so. The responses were candid and revealed some apprehensions about the process. Responses included, "We don't want to move too fast." "I'm barely getting my feet on the ground." "Overwhelming!" Some comments recognized the kinds of practices that helped alleviate the overwhelming nature of the project such as, "Talking helps, the overwhelming process." "We are sharing, really sharing ideas and becoming a community." "Sharing is the best part of the project."

The teachers, in their conversations, recognized those qualities which were necessary to be able to deal with the ambiguity of constructing knowledge together during "The First Days Together." In a conversation about classroom practice Dylan and Danielle noted that in order for the affective qualities of "respect, mutuality, and trust" to
evolve, one had to be "open-minded," and to "value all the participants and their background knowledge." Dylan perceived that the planning team provided such an environment when he added, "Just as you are doing here."

The provision of many opportunities for conversation, and the engaging of the teachers in many activities which involved working together to confirm understandings, helped to accommodate the tensions of working in such a process. However, ensuring that the inquiry was not overwhelming presented a continual challenge, and both the teachers and the planning team members were encouraged to be candid with one another.

**Reading**

The planning team members designed several reading activities. These included: reading alone, reading in groups, or being read to by a planning team member. Teachers' reading activities focused on assessment and developmentally-appropriate practice. Occasionally, to provide release from mounting tension from the ambiguity within the inquiry, the planning team members designed an activity to address the process of professional development. One approach of the planning team is described in "The First Days Together." Kathleen read the fable, *The Lobster and the Crab*. The reading of this story, and other stories, helped the participants acknowledge that the task before them was not easy and that the planning team was sensitive to their
feelings of apprehension. Like the teachers, the planning team members also felt the nature of the project to be problematic, and they, too, experienced similar feelings of ambiguity.

The teachers also had numerous opportunities throughout the year to read those materials on assessment and developmentally appropriate practice that were provided by the planning team. In addition, teachers also brought materials to share. For example, Danielle brought an article entitled, *From Teacher to Parent to Child* (Ramsaur, 1992); it proved to be beneficial to many of the teachers.

A balance between the use of professional texts and the development of the teachers' understandings about practice was necessary and something the planning team wanted to maintain. As the team members listened to the teachers' discussions, they continued to seek professional texts which they felt would be pertinent to the teachers' inquiry. Team members discussed frequently the kinds of texts and articles that would be useful for teachers (see Appendix I for reference list). Members did not want to overwhelm the teachers with too much reading and yet, wanted to maintain the value attached to the teachers' own practice as a means of constructing knowledge with others. The planning team members emphasized that the teachers should bring artifacts from their classroom, such as children's work, or assessment tools they were developing.
Teachers read the materials provided by the planning team. For example, Whitney and Myra, two kindergarten teachers, read the article *One School's Adventure into Portfolio Assessment* (Lamme & Hysmith, 1991). The article contained a list of the developmental stages of the writing process. Whitney took the list and formed a pictograph of stages in the development of the writing process (Figure 13). Whitney then encouraged the children to use the pictograph to identify where they were located with respect to their writing development. During the school year children used the pictograph to relate their progress to the parent in conferences.

With time the teachers brought in samples of children's work, and the planning team members expressed less concern about finding professional literature.

The reading of professional texts provided the teachers with validation for their own work as they began to critique the work of others. Some of the teachers' reflections are included in the following dialogue about the article, *Assessment and Accountability in a Whole Language Literacy Curriculum* (Au, Scheu, Kawakami & Herman, 1990).

*Rachael:* It was excellent the things that they (teachers in the article) were doing and the way they were trying to value what this child was doing.

*Jean:* What do you see as a framework in there?

*Rachael:* Benchmarks.
Cathy: Standardized tests.
Rachael: They used the conference time, at reading time, to look at those benchmarks and see how that child fits in those benchmarks.
Dylan: The profile in the end had no basis in any reality ... it didn't refer to anything. They talk about the wonderful complexity of the process, then all of sudden, as an ending, came up with 1,2,3.
Nora: And a checksheet.
Rachael: They left so much out.
Nora: I don't like the checksheet. I would use anecdotal notes.
Joan: Some of the benchmarks, where they got their benchmarks, was from the current States Language Arts Curriculum Guide, and Standardized Achievement Tests, that's why I think that looked like that at the end because in effect they took the new idea and fit to an old paradigm ... 
Kara: Their assessment didn't match their teaching at all. They (those other teachers in the article) were doing some wonderful things with Reading Logs with all these other things and then they didn't put it all together.
Jean: One of the comments I am hearing then, is that there was this rich look at the instruction that was going on, but then it got reduced into something that
looks more or less like a report card with an ABC except they are using numbers.

Lynne: But my impression of the whole thing when they first started is that, that was what they were trying to do, they were just getting into whole language. They were trying to find a way to assess, which is pretty much what we are all doing ... They were having a lot of fears, a lot of questions. How are we going to assess this? You know, how are we going to do this?

Dylan: But the assessment has to reflect the curriculum.

Lynne: I got the impression they [the teachers in the article] were making a baby step. Here we [teachers in the article] are kind of scared, so we are going to have to come up with an assessment tool that we can look at and we can say we assessed something. I mean that was just kind of my impression.

The reductivist approach in the article was inconsistent with the teachers' understandings of assessment and learning. The teachers recognized the value of the practice described in the article by this other group of teachers. In particular, Kara commented on the teachers' use of the Learning Logs, and emphasized how they had struggled to develop assessment tools which would be meaningful. The teachers in the assessment project perceived that they had achieved more than the teachers described in the article with respect to the understanding of the assessment issue. Nevertheless the
teachers in the project struggled to develop tools and to keep away from the report card, ABC, or 123, as designations of children's learning.

Being given the opportunity to read, discuss and critique professional texts reassured the teachers that their work was important. The teachers in the project recognized the limitations of such assessments and they felt there was something else to be discovered. The reading of professional literature, such as the article described above, helped accommodate ambiguity because the teachers perceived that other communities were struggling with the same issues of assessment. The article confirmed that the questions they were raising were important and that the answers were not easy to construct.

**Writing**

The teachers were encouraged to write about their practice and processes of professional development in their composition books handed to them on the first day of the project. The teachers were given numerous opportunities, such as after the reading of an article, to take the time to make notes and to share notes with others in a variety of grouping patterns: pair share, groups of four or five, school groups or grade level groups. After writing and discussion, the teachers, in small groups, typically created visuals with overheads, poster board or chart paper, and used markers or scrap materials. The process of discussion, writing, and
then re-representation of knowledge through visuals, helped teachers share their understandings and helped them to gain perspectives from other members of their group. Such a transactional process helped reduce the ambiguity of the task at hand by revealing multiple perspectives.

The revealing of these perspectives was respected by both the planning team and the teachers. The processes of reading and writing, discussion, re-representation revealed how the teachers were developing knowledge about assessment and developmentally-appropriate practice. The processes helped teachers to build and embody a knowledge base, that alleviated their tensions. For example, in one session the teachers wrote down their thoughts and ideas about an article by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child, entitled *NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades Serving 5-through 8-Year-Olds* (1987). After the teachers wrote down ideas on a predesigned response guide (provided by Julia) they discussed the key points. It was intended that the responses should be questions or observations of what they thought to be important after having read the article. The following responses emerged:

* Current education practices have narrowed the curriculum and there has to be a connection between life and education in the schools.

* Recognize that curriculum should develop from the
child, the content and the society, in order to involve social, physical and emotional and cognitive development.

* The curriculum, when it evolves from the child, becomes much richer and more meaningful. They [children] are full of ideas that are relevant to their own lives.

* Education has become broken into parts.

* In an integrated curriculum that combines and considers the whole process, the children make connections to prior experiences.

* Recognize that children in the early years do not separate domains.

Some of the teachers read out loud what they had written. Others read and then continued to add more of their thoughts, and constructed as they spoke. The writing stimulated their thinking and, as they heard other teachers' interpretations, they began to add more notes to their own response guide.

Writing to construct and share knowledge was an important part of the project for the teachers. The teachers began to accumulate ideas about assessment tools and they tried them out in the classroom. The knowledge that they gained from trying out the assessment tools in their practice, and the description of the instruction that led to the assessment, became the deliverables. However, to accommodate the writing process, the teachers needed more
time to work.

To produce a deliverable according to the timeline provided by the State Department of Education, the planning team assessed the time available. After the November session (with the teachers) the teachers and the planning-team members had one more session on December 7, before the deliverables were due (December 17). The planning team members discerned that they needed to be more explicit with the teachers about the December 7 session so that the teachers would be prepared to write. Kathleen, in the following conversation with the planning team, accentuated the need for teachers to know what to bring to the session.

Well, I think to let them know ahead of time so that, I mean if you told me the day I was here and you help me think back about doing "recall stories" I would say, oh yes! I did that with such and such, but I may not remember the book I used. So to help, we send out in a memo, and Ann and I talked that maybe before we meet the next time Julia even needs to go around and talk at each school to help people understand what it is they need to bring after we figure it out.

Jean: So they really bring it.

Kathleen: Yes, so they don't feel they have to bring everything but they bring something in depth and that they select.

Jean: So Nora might bring the original book, plus the
big book that they have done and whatever else goes along with it.

They discussed the importance of the teachers' verbal stories and how the stories needed to be a part of the written document for the State Department of Education.

Jean: Nicole, if we could get her to write about the go-home journal.

Ann: The one with the Indian feather.

Jean: Yes, that's a very powerful story, that needs to be documented.

After this discussion the planning team decided that they did need Julia to visit each faculty in order to alleviate their apprehension about the time frame and the readiness of the teachers (to write). Julia went to the schools, either in the morning before school began, or after school, which ever the teachers preferred. At the meeting she made sure the teachers knew which area (developmental profile, go-home journals, parent involvement, or instructional tasks) they were working in, and reminded and encouraged them to bring materials from their instruction. The planning team hoped Julia's visit would help alleviate the ambiguity involved in beginning to construct the deliverables.

As a consequence of Julia's requests, the teachers brought to the session a variety of materials from their classrooms. The teachers organized themselves into pairs or groups. They quickly set to work using the laptop computers.
provided, and engaged in lively conversations as they brainstormed ideas, shared stories, and edited drafts; a process that continued throughout the day, with just a break for lunch.

Seeing such enthusiasm gave the planning team the hope that this was not going to be as arduous a task as they had first envisioned. At the end of the work day they had much material from the teachers to read and their task was then to edit and compile the document for December 17. The materials included a draft of the developmental profile, including sections dealing with emergent writing; emergent reading; response to literature and socialization; a description of the process of Reading Workshop used in a second grade classroom, with all the assessment processes implemented; a description of the process of using audiotapes for assessment of emergent oral reading in a first grade classroom; and the instructional task "The Popcorn Dragon." Other materials included some stories and strategies for the development of communication between teacher and parent. The latter stories included teachers' use of the go-home journal, along with samples from the go-home journals; a description of the use of big books made at school and then taken home for the children to read to the parents; and a description of the changes teachers were making in how they organized the parent teacher conferences by involving the child.

Planning team members scheduled a meeting at the School
Board Office, on December 10, to read the pieces. Each member of the planning team took home parts of a particular teacher's text to read and edit; they contacted a teacher/author if they had questions about a particular piece. This process was continued during the project year as the teachers produced additional materials for the deliverables. Through these actions, the planning team members established that they were responsible for the editing and the compiling of the document and, in doing so, they alleviated some of the ambiguity involved in the writing process.

There were some teachers who saw the writing of the deliverables as a help in reducing ambiguity.

Renee: They [Julia went to each school to talk to the faculty] had a little meeting and they said "Guess what?" You're going to be writing this when you get there.

Rachael: But it was good because we had a little time to think about it.

Renee: A couple of days.

Rachael: To think about what you wanted to write. Work on because we had been working on all these things.

Renee: Right.

Rachael: It was so nebulous and it was nice to really zero in on something, and say how this benefited my classroom. You know and we came up with some really
neat ideas. I think it went great and I think the end result was wonderful. I hope the state department does. Though I think we'd be farther along if we had started writing earlier.

Another faculty related similar views.

*Whitney:* But I thought the most productive meeting was when we actually sat down ... we had to put it all together in four hours (*laughter*) and we had to get it down on paper and I think that made us bring it all together a little quicker ...  

*Liz:* Put something concrete on paper I think. So it was good. That was a good day.

Some of the teachers felt the need to write, yet others were more apprehensive about the process. Such apprehension is evident in the following conversation from a meeting in February.

*Betty:* We were also stuck on the writing, well I don't like to write.  

*Nora:* We don't like to write because we didn't, because we were not taught how to.

The balancing of the teachers' need to write something down, with their acceptance of the apprehensions involved in the activity of writing, created tension. However, after the first intensive writing session on December 7, it was evident that to see something tangible was a comfort for some of the teachers and a way of accommodating the ambiguous nature of
the project. For other teachers the process made them anxious until they began to write in pairs or in small groups and to produce a product. It became evident to these teachers that writing would not be a one-person act. For editing, the teachers had the support of other teachers and the planning team members.

In the process of writing the instructional tasks, the teachers spent time explaining to each other, in great detail, the practices they used in the classroom. From these detailed descriptions evolved an appreciation of the extent of their knowledge and its importance for the success of the project. Over time, as the teachers became more confident and secure with the processes of writing and relating their practice to each other, the ambiguity of the project seemed to be less overwhelming and less a topic of conversation. Eventually, the teachers became quite engrossed in writing, interacting and reading processes; ambiguity did not appear to interfere with their work.

**Visuals**

The culmination of reading, writing and conversation often led to the construction of visuals. The process included the writing of reflections, and the discussing of ideas from practice or professional texts which were constructed alone and then in groups. The groups then constructed a visual to relate their cumulative representations to the whole group. The planning team,
during the first session with the teachers, made sure that all those visuals created were displayed. The visuals, which covered the four gray walls of the meeting room, had multiple purposes. The teachers added more thoughts and ideas as the week progressed. The visuals were reminders of past conversations and ideas, and they related the journey of the activities and the connections between those activities. They personalized the environment, and they revealed the philosophies of the teachers. In particular, evidence of group construction was apparent through the completion of representations on August 11. The visuals were displayed in the form of a quilt and they provided re-representation of a culmination of understandings constructed from reading, writing and the discussion of experiences. It was a tangible; a product of the teachers' thinking. The teachers claimed ownership by signing the quilt. The construction of the quilt gave the teachers confidence in their own ability to move towards the construction of a deliverable. It was a beacon for future work together.

**Modeling and other Means of Support**

The teachers recognized that the strategies implemented by the planning team could be used in many different learning environments. Such a source of ideas helped alleviate the tension for the teachers, and aided them in making changes in their practice so they could create changes in the way they assessed the children. The planning team hoped that the
teachers would discern how the professional development process, which was used in the project to encourage the construction of knowledge through reading, writing and discussion, applied to any learner, regardless of age. The planning team did not mention explicitly the strategies used to create interaction, such as flexible grouping patterns; reading to the teachers as a supportive process; brainstorming activities; group work; and the use of a variety of media to present knowledge constructed together; they hoped their actions would be noticed.

The teachers soon perceived the value of the activities as Myra commented on day two of "The First Days Together." "Are we not doing the kinds of activities here and doing them in a way that could be done with children?" This comment by Myra, supported with signs of agreement from other teachers, emphasized how the teachers valued the activities they had been engaged in. They saw the activities as a means of constructing knowledge. This issue was acknowledged by Dylan and Danielle in the October meeting. They commented on the motivation aspect of such activities in relation to the children in the classroom.

Dylan: We are looking at developing external to internal motivation. But what does this do for assessment? Do we assess the child when they are excited about a project as opposed to when they are not?

Lynne: It says a lot about our practice.
Danielle: We need to change our practice, like brainstorming in whole group, whole group share, we do that all the time here [in the project], and it is motivating. There are a lot of strategies we could use for stimulating the sharing of knowledge in the classroom, just as we do in the project.

Modeling also took on the form of finding materials that could be used as a guide for the teachers. However, the planning team struggled over this issue as they didn’t want to restrict the teachers' constructions but wanted to provide support and encouragement. Their struggle is illustrated in the following conversation as they deliberated as to whether a model would help the teachers.

Kathleen: I think they are going to need encouragement both ways, both at the telling and the writing of these stories, because I don’t think it’s the way people write. I don’t think it is what they are accustomed to doing and even writing a more direct kind of task description, you know instructional description, I think we are going to have to do some thinking about what do ... we are going to have to help them with that, without models to look at they are going to be at a little bit of a loss, so even at this time not that we are going to use the word vignette, even at this time if we could find, and I know we can, a story you know a teacher's story of something like what we are talking
about.

Planning team members brainstormed texts they thought would facilitate a model. They mentioned texts such as, *Special Voices* (Cora Lee Five, 1992), *Listening In* (Newkirk & McClure, 1992), *Reclaiming the Classroom* (Gotswani & Stillman, 1987) *Embracing Contraries* (Elbow, 1986). After these discussions the team members were dissatisfied with their choices of models. They felt that the use of a professional text, at this point, would be overly authoritative and might silence the teachers. The planning team wanted a model to evoke ideas and provide encouragement. After much deliberation, they recognized how the teachers shared their own stories and asked whether they could make one of these stories available in a draft format. The decision to use the teacher's example would show the value the planning team placed on teachers' stories as a part of the deliverable. Such a decision would not overwhelm the teachers. They chose Nora's description about an instructional task called the "Popcorn Dragon"—an activity in which the children construct a big book of dragon stories—because the planning team heard Nora describe the activity to a group of teachers in the October session. Before the session, Kathleen met with Nora, and audiotaped her discussion as she related how she set up the task for the children. She explained how to stimulate the children's writing through a sensory experience; the process she used
for writing, editing and constructing the book; closure; and the items to be placed in the children’s portfolio. Kathleen and Julia then wrote an outline of this instructional task for the teachers. (see Appendix J for the instructional task). At the session with the teachers, on December 7, Kathleen and Julia explained the purpose of the outline of the instructional task, but emphasized that the teachers did not have to follow its format. Julia stated “You can make it your own.”

Such modeling practices helped alleviate ambiguity by providing support through the offering of tangible ideas; not that they had to be adhered to, they were just options to be considered.

**Construction over time**

Another way the planning team designed the beginning four-day session was to plan activities and to build on each activity slowly, from day to day. Through this process the teachers had time to read alone, in order to construct personal meaning before they joined with others in flexible groups to construct further understandings. This slow and gradual process helped alleviate tensions that arose from the perceived overwhelming nature of the project. However, it took time for the teachers to realize the benefits of developing ideas and concepts about such a process. For example Laura, in an interview in February, related.

The uncertainty every time we would have a meeting.
It's like, well what's our goal? What are we supposed to do in this meeting? And now as I look back I can see how that one piece led to another, and another, and how we built up to where we are now. And, you know, for anybody coming into the project or, being involved in a project like this, the very beginning they're just, your so concerned and you worry and it's like anything else you do in life though. Oh, I guess once it's happened, it's occurred and you're glad that you had the opportunity to go through that, but I think that was one thing, for me, I am just glad to see that there has definitely been growth. And I think we've come up with some really good ideas, and still got some ways to go, but I think it's [the deliverable] something that teachers can use.

Laura was unsure about the process initially, however, she saw the value of the building of activities in order to enhance understandings and to accommodate ambiguity.

Decision Making

The planning team members designed the first days together but there were certain aspects of the project they wanted to keep flexible in order to accommodate the input of the teachers. The teachers had the responsibility to organize the structure of how they would work together and they organized the groups to meet after "The First Days Together." Through an extensive whole-group discussion, the
teachers considered how they would be more comfortable working in grade-level groups. They felt this would enhance their expertise.

The planning team provided flexibility in the plans for the project. Renee, a teacher, reflected on this aspect.

I mean, the thing that they [planning team members] came with, you know the agenda for each day, a lot of times it changed, got tossed out because that was not what we wanted to do and that's not where we were going and I think that's happened all along. They have had to be real flexible.

Rachael: Well the key from what you said too, is that they listened and they did change it.

The teachers knew they could make decisions, not only about the structure of the activities but the kinds of inquiry the teachers were to explore in their classrooms; they were aware of the flexibility of the project. It was a teacher's decision which of the ideas that were heard would be taken back to the classroom to be tried out.

The decision making, and the sharing of opinions, reduced the tension caused by ambiguity because the teachers felt as though they had ownership in the process. Emily stated, "This is one of the first times that I felt like I had been treated as a professional, and that my experience and my opinions had been valued." By being treated as a professional Emily claimed that she was more self-motivated.
It makes me willing to do a lot more and willing to take the risk to do something new ... They (the planning team) have been really good about you choose what you feel like you can handle ... and that has really meant a lot.

Their ownership in the decisions to be made within the inquiry helped the teachers feel more comfortable. The teachers decided on what they might try out in the classroom from the ideas they heard from other teachers; they could change the strategies to fit their own practice. Jane, in her discussion, explained how the use of go-home journal had expanded within the project.

I mean, we all call them go-home journals but everybody's I bet is different.

*Stephanie:* And that's what makes it so nice and I think that's how people get ownership of it. They take it and change a little something, sort of like a recipe ...

The teachers in this faculty perceived that having the choice of what ideas to implement, and how to implement those ideas in their practice, were important. Nora perceived that providing a mandate for teachers to do portfolios or go-home journals would, in a certain way, be detrimental, "Oh, it would just kill it, you know, it would not work." Allowing the teachers to make decisions alleviated ambiguity because the teachers felt as though they had control over the important aspects of the project.
PART FOUR: ENVISIONMENT
CHAPTER SEVEN

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Looking Back

On the final day of the assessment project in June, the teachers met at a small lakeside house. The house was nestled in the mountains and was owned by the proprietors of a large hotel that was located close by. All the participants in the project were invited there to spend the day, to reflect on the process of teacher learning they had engaged in, and to reflect on that learning as it related to assessment. Jean wrote the following description of the scene:

A community of thirty-two educators from Montford County sat in quiet reflection at the Lake, sheltered within a secluded home at the water's edge. This was a time purposefully set aside to write and reflect about our time together as members of the alternative assessment project. Some people chose to write alone, needing solitude at the end of the dock. Others worked together in pairs or small groups. Three of the women sat with their feet propped on the railings of a side porch writing about their experiences. As these three young women wrote, they would stop and read aloud to one another the thoughts they were pulling together. When the first thunderstorm rolled across us and the rain began it seemed somehow less threatening to me
than normal. Instead, the periodic storms seemed to further envelop us in our solitude and intimacy with one another. There are instances when a group comes to be so comfortable with one another that quiet times, in the midst of gathering storm clouds, are valued, treasured moments.

In their final reflections (written at the Lake) many of the teachers shared their appreciation for the experience in teacher learning. They wrote of the "empowering experience" of being treated as a "professional" and how they could "learn and grow as a professional." They appreciated the "resources" and the "time" to reflect on their practice within a "community." The teachers talked of a sense of "renewal" and "excitement about teaching" because of the sharing of new ideas, and how the ideas had spread naturally not through being "mandated." Many teachers commented that participation in such a project was essential for their professional growth. Dylan captured the essence of the project in his final reflection at the lake setting. Dylan's words reflected the teachers' feelings:

The assessment project has been a time for professional growth and recognition. It has allowed us as professionals to participate in a shared learning experience with others who have a common interest. This interaction with other teachers and central office personnel has elevated us to a new level of respect from
working together to achieve a common goal and a finished product. Instead of viewing the administrators from a distance, we have had the opportunity to work alongside them with an open and even exchange of ideas. Intimidation by rank and status has become a thing of the past!

During the year the teachers talked about sitting side-by-side with children as they engaged in the assessment of children’s learning. In fact, the instructional supervisors hoped that their role, within the environment they created for teacher learning, would be perceived by the teachers to be one where teachers and supervisors worked side-by-side. Dylan's final appraisal confirmed the supervisors’ best hopes.

Some of the teachers drew comparisons between their former experiences in professional development contexts. As they did so they reinforced their appreciation for this process they had recently experienced. Myra related a story to emphasize her feelings in a prior project, in another state:

As I reflect upon our involvement with the authentic assessment project, growth experimentation are words that play in my mind.... However, I am most grateful for being given the opportunity to make decisions and judgments as a professional in the field of education. Often I have recalled when I was involved in another
school system in a different state.

It was my second year of teaching and ... it was the first work day to begin the school year and I sat down with four other teachers on my grade level. Patti, the chairperson began talking as she handed out large binders full of paper with writing on the front and back of each page. She stated "I had to go to a two-day conference this summer where I was told by the state department we had to do this type of assessment this year. We do not have a choice--it is mandatory.... This packet includes the assessment profile in the areas of communication studies and math. You will see there are various strands under each heading.... With each strand there are three letters that represent the child's progress ... I have a videotape here, provided from the state department, which will help you understand everything. We were frustrated, confused and angry.... I have compared this incident to my experience in this county.... We spent days at the beginning of this project laying our foundation for our philosophy. We did much soul searching and deep thinking. From day one the entire project was handled so differently from my previous experience. We were allowed to make choices and try things we felt comfortable doing. By being treated as a professional totally affected my attitude and my understanding.
Myra's story, and other reflections shared on the final day of the project, emphasized how the teachers had had a different experience through their participation in the project.

Before the implementation of the assessment project it was usual for teachers to experience such "top down" activities. The expectations of the teachers for contexts in professional development have now changed in a way that is analogous to that described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990):

When groups of teachers have the opportunity to work together as highly professionalized teacher-researchers, they become increasingly articulate about issues of equity, hierarchy, and autonomy and increasingly critical of the technocratic model that dominates much of school practice (p. 9).

As the project developed the teachers became increasingly more vocal by relating their experiences, through the telling of stories about hierarchal processes, and by repeating how they respected the autonomy they were given.

On this last day together some of the teachers also reflected, and wrote candidly, about their initial experiences and perceptions of the project and how their perceptions had changed over time. Carolyn's words provide an example of these views:

When the staff development process began last summer
I was very disappointed. I felt that we were spinning our wheels as we met together for the first week. As I look back on that time, I now understand the part that week played in the process. We came to a common ground and began the journey together.

Another teacher, Susan, also reflected on her apprehensions at the beginning of the project and how her views had changed.

...I will admit I began the project with some skepticism but I do believe I've gained much professionally. I feel with certainty there will be parts of the assessment project that I will continue to use in my classroom. This has been a beneficial year and I wish all Montford County teachers could have the opportunity to participate in a project like this.

Susan began her reflection emphasizing that "time" was an important aspect of the project because of the time allocated for teachers to "question, discuss and reflect"; she felt there was a sense of importance to the project that encouraged her initial views to change.

The principals involved in the project were able to experience the advantages of allowing teachers to work together. The principal who wrote the following reflection at the final session, is working to develop more interactions between teachers in her school.

It has been a joyful experience to see teachers being
treated and treating one another as professionals. From the initial surprise, confusion, and chaos surrounding the beginning workshop days, the group has begun to realize that within themselves they have the answers. I think that there was surprise in being asked for their views and that what is happening in the county has many common threads. This assessment project opportunity was not something done to teachers and teaching, but rather growth in professionalism of unknown amounts. The project to me represents teachers gaining control of the process. As an administrator, I have an even greater appreciation for teachers and the fundamental job that they perform. With conversations and study, teachers are locking within themselves and their colleagues to gain value with what they do each day in a classroom of youngsters ... Treat professionals with the respect and honor that they deserve and they will rise to the occasion.

The planning team questioned how to maintain interactions established within this group of teachers. How would it be possible to incorporate new school faculties into the process of looking at alternative assessment? The planning team now knew a core group of teachers who had explored alternatives in assessment practice, and they thought it would be beneficial for these teachers to work with others. The planning team was confident that a new
group of teachers could first look at the materials constructed by the project group, and then expand on the developing concepts, through the implementation of these concepts in the teachers' practice. However, such positive visions for the future were unattainable--funding for the assessment project, beyond the first year, was not forthcoming.

Even though the project came to an end, in a physical sense, some two years ago, the project lives on in the actions of the participants. Since I began to write this dissertation, and through informal contacts with teachers involved in the project, I heard of happenings which I can't help feel were related directly to the project. These happenings were varied. A group of teachers made a presentation on the inquiry of the project at both a national conference, and at a conference in the State. The teachers held a conference on alternative assessment practices at the local university where they shared their new found knowledge and invited teachers from other grade levels to make presentations. Members of one faculty are currently engaged in furthering their inquiry on the use of portfolios as a form of assessment in their school. A kindergarten teacher gave a joint presentation with one of the instructional supervisors at a state reading conference. The go-home journal has now spread far-and-wide in other schools in Montford County. In fact, I recently visited schools in a
neighboring county where the teachers were beginning to implement go-home journals.

**Looking Forward**

I spent one school year as a participant in the assessment project; the experience provided validation for some of my beliefs as well as questions about how to support transactional processes for teacher learning. In the introduction to this dissertation I described three environments that helped me to better understand the process of learning; in the classroom with elementary-aged children; my experience working with pre-service teachers; and my experiences of a professional development context as a classroom teacher.

The assessment project provided me with another story to add to my experiences. The experience in the assessment project provided me with a context where a community of people believed that collaboration, through the sharing of stories about their practice, was an important way of understanding our world as teachers and our actions within our world.

Through the sharing of stories with others I have come to better understand myself as a facilitator of the learning process. I gained insight from those I shared my stories with by listening to their questions, their affirmations and their different perspectives.

Through my interactions in the project I was able to
rethink my own perspective on teacher learning and ponder those aspects of my developing practice that I felt to be problematic. I came to appreciate the "complicated tangle of ironies and ambiguities we create for ourselves, and that are created for us, as we craft ourselves and our lives within shifting fields of power" (Kondo, 1990, p. 308). I took the time, in this year as an intern instructional supervisor, and in the year following as I wrote this dissertation, to make connections with my past. Mahibar (1993) suggested that, "We rarely emphasize the importance of studying our own past to gain a better understanding of who we are as individual members of society. Reflection allows me to analyze my past experiences of education" (p. 19). Through rethinking the use of transactional processes within teacher learning and by considering how these processes related to my former experiences, I was able to rethink my stance on the process of learning. It became possible to achieve an understanding of a process that was theoretically sound and more connected to my developing practice.

In the rest of this chapter I explain my understanding of two central issues that became important to me as the project developed. One issue was the importance of action in the social construction of knowledge; the other was the paradoxical nature of ambiguity in the contexts designed for socially-constructed knowledge. This chapter ends my dissertation with an envisionment of what I believe my
practice would look like if, in the future, I engage in contexts designed for teacher learning.

**Action and the Social Construction of Knowledge**

On many occasions in conversations with the other planning team members, I explored issues which related to professional development. In these conversations the planning team members referred to theoretical stances of learning they believed were important, such as social interaction as a viable means for the construction of knowledge. Knowledge was constructed in these meetings through the explaining and illustrating of actions from prior experiences and through the reading of professional texts. As I related my understanding of my own action to the listeners, my understanding was transformed. As Jean, Kathleen, Clyde or Julia asked me questions, or made observations about comments I made, then again the knowledge was reconstructed as I responded. As I took this socially-constructed knowledge into the field, to work with teachers, the knowledge was reconstructed. Again, however the reconstructions depended on the context and the participants who were involved. I saw this process as a cyclical one where knowledge, through action, was in a continual process of change. As the cyclical process occurred I found that I was better informed and able to make more reasoned decisions about my practice.

I saw that experience within the community of the
planning team was analogous to the experiences of the teachers in the project. The teachers had had the opportunity to construct knowledge together on assessment practices. On return to the classroom with these new or elaborated ideas the teachers implemented their reconstructions to the classroom context and reflected on the effects of the changes. When the teachers came together at subsequent sessions they were able to share the ideas again, and to discuss how they had transformed the ideas for their individual context; a cyclical process was maintained throughout the project.

It is crucial to reflect on theoretical understanding through action. I am able to read and think about theory as it relates to practice. However, it is through the actions within practice that theory is internalized, transformed and understood. To develop my understandings about teacher learning I engaged in a reciprocal process where theory and practice were applied within the action. Reciprocal means "mutual action" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964). Through my experience within the project I realized the importance of action in relating one's theoretical stance and how to "Make the road by walking" (Horton & Freire, 1990). This point is best illustrated through a consideration of a meeting of the planning team members on March 6th.

The intention of the meeting was to discuss the writing of a proposal for a presentation at a national conference;
the teachers would participate in the presentation. The planning team members wanted the presentation to be a blending of theory and practice. The team members spent five hours discussing their theoretical stances about the process of teacher learning and literacy. They were engaged in the practice of constructing the environment for teachers and, occasionally in these meetings, made reference to theory. However, on this day team members extended their understandings of the theory behind their practice and reinforced how theory was inherent in their practice. Theory from graduate classes at the local university was blended with experiences of practice and in the reading of professional texts; this blending formed the basis of our knowledge. However, it was the action of working with the teachers that caused team members to question the theory and the practice as it developed over time; they transformed the practice in each of the contexts they engaged in with the teachers. Such discussions as the one on March 6 furthered my theoretical understandings and my appreciation of the importance of action in the work of teacher educators.

**The Paradoxical Nature of Ambiguity within a Transactional Process.**

The transactional process that the teachers engaged in created ambiguity: ambiguity derived from openness; the space for self direction by the participants; the need to take risks through the sharing of knowledge and writing; the
revealing of one's practice to a community; and joining in conversations and raising questions about elusive concepts. I realized that the process of transforming practice includes, as Fullan (1991) stated, "a certain amount of ambiguity, ambivalence and uncertainty for the individual about the meaning of change" (p. 106). Placing oneself within the dissonance of ambiguity is a part of the growing process but it can be problematic. Communication between the participants, and their interactions, fostered the development of a transactional process which helped them accommodate the ambiguity. The teachers grew to see the project as a space in which they could share their stories from practice without rejection—a space in which their views and practices would receive close and respectful consideration. They wrote together and edited each others' work; they questioned each other openly in large groups to extend their knowledge and to share their ideas. They became friends who cared for each other because they were working together toward a common goal; to transform practice in a way that is good for children. Clift, Veal, Holland, Johnson, & McCarthy (1995) proposed that such friendships are valued as a process for change. "Change is not something that one group prescribes and another enacts. Rather change is a result of collaboration among people who see themselves as critical friends who care passionately about one another's well-being" (p. 150); friendship developed through interactions which
evolved from "real talk"; the teachers discussed, listened, questioned and shared information (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986).

I found the same friendship within the planning team's context; constructing knowledge together; talking about my theoretical stance and my understandings from practice. Many of our discussions together were, as Gadamer describes (1975), in a conversational method like the "art of testing" (p. 330). Van Manen (1990) explained this process and commented that,

The art of testing consists of the art of questioning-meaning. To lay open, to place in the open the subject matter of the conversation ..." The structure of the conversational relation much more resembles the dialogic relation of what Socrates called the situation of "talking together like friends." Friends do not try to make each other weak rather, friends try to bring out the strength (Van Manen, 1990, p. 100).

During their conversations the planning team continually questioned each other, or clarified their understandings through the analysis of actions and through reflections on previous experiences. In fact, they were developing the kind of environment for themselves that they envisioned would be useful for teachers to develop when exploring their own practice; this had to include friendship.

330
The transactional process developed an environment for the construction of knowledge that would inform practice. Time was taken to develop such interactions, and these sustained interactions developed positive affective qualities within the community. As the project unfolded a transactional process that had originally created ambiguity slowly permitted accommodation of the ambiguity because of the support, care, mutuality, openness and trust developed through the actions inherent in such a process.

Ambiguity pertained to the writing of this dissertation and still pertains to my own developing practice. Even though ambiguity is very difficult to accommodate I have been able, through a transactional process of reading and writing, and through engaging in conversations with others who were willing to support my endeavor, to develop strategies to accommodate the ambiguity and thus improve my practice.

The knowledge I gained from the project is applicable to work with teachers in classrooms and with pre-service teachers. I envision that I will continue to work side-by-side with teachers in formal and informal contexts. As I learned from this context I became more aware of the tensions within an environment that creates ownership for the participants. In the future I will carefully attend to many of the issues the teachers raised in this project, particularly those they found initially to be problematic. I
value the transactional process of reading, writing, conversation and modeling, within a supportive environment and I consider it to be important for teacher learning. For transformation of practice to occur the changes must be initiated by the teacher through inquiry on practice, and the engagement in the context for teacher learning has to be voluntary; meaningful change does not occur if the changes are mandatory. Therefore, I would always provide invitations for teachers to engage in such contexts. However, I must also realize that the process of maintaining collaborative communities is a constant process of negotiation and renegotiation. Little (1987) observed that collegial relations and structures prove relatively fragile "... and may unravel in a matter of weeks" (p. 489). However, Nias (1989) and Hargreaves (1994) claim that the reason collegial relations disintegrate is because the collegial environments constructed are artificial in that they do not pay attention to the dense social interactions among the teachers.

I value the providing of resources for teachers. With the time constraints associated with teaching, teachers do not have the time or the funding to collect current professional literature. I see my role as also being a provider of resources, such as articles, current professional texts, and information from other school districts (for example assessment practices implemented). However, in providing resources I recognize the teachers' need to have
time in which to read the resources alone and within a community in which to share their growing understandings.

If transformation of practice is to occur, then teachers need support in order to work in an environment which is open and conducive to conversation. I will continue to encourage the development of environments where teachers can come together to discuss practice and to share materials. For example, such environments should provide opportunities for discussion groups to come together on teacher workdays as opposed to the implementation of county-wide in-service activities. With pre-service teachers I will continue to strive to reinforce the idea that teaching is a continual process of inquiry and it involves critical thinking about practice. If pre-service teachers have the opportunity to see the value in observation in practice, if they are able to interpret for themselves what they see, and if they can share their observations with others in a collaborative environment, then they will be able to continue the process in the teaching context. If pre-service teachers experience a transactional process during the course of their university studies, and if they experience the problems and possibilities of such a process, then they may be more willing and more able to attempt such social construction of knowledge in their own classroom; just as the teachers in the project recognized.

I began this dissertation with a story from my own
classroom teaching of the ways I interacted with children. Engaging in this project and study brought to the fore my beliefs about the learning process and I was able to reaffirm my stance. I can now take this story and can reconstruct the knowledge of this story in another context for teacher learning. As I do so I know my knowledge will transform again; learning is an endless process.
Literature Cited


Supervision and Curriculum Development.


Wildman, T. M., Niles, J. A., Magliaro, S. G. &


Appendix A

Proposal, letter of application and acceptance response from
Dr. Simmons

SUPERVISION AS SUPPORT AND FACILITATION:

A study of practice

Ann D. Potts.

A proposal submitted to the Office of the School Board of M
County, , in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Ph.D. in Education, at .
Table of Contents

1. Summary ................................................................. 3

2. Purpose and Significance ........................................... 4

3. Methods ................................................................. 5

4. References ............................................................. 7
Summary

The purpose of this qualitative analysis is my learning and development as a supervisory intern working in a public school setting. By immersing myself in a community of practice together with teachers and other public school supervisors, I will relate my study to emerging theories of supervision. In particular, I use theories that emphasize the notion of supervision as a nurturing process. The analysis of these interactions will provide a better understanding of the complexity and issues relevant to supervisors’ efforts to provide support and facilitation.
**Purpose and Significance**

The role of the teacher is changing. Teachers are becoming teacher researchers in curriculum development, rather than passive recipients of established curriculum. As teacher researchers they are being encouraged to construct their own professional knowledge (Kincheloe, 1991). Teachers are more likely to engage in purposeful conversations with others in order to reflect on practice within a community (Hollingsworth, 1992).

Traditionally, supervision has been a practice whereby supervisors monitored practice. They provided a quality control function. Supervisors also acted as agents of change by encouraging teachers to adopt the designated curriculum selected by administrators and others.

As the role of the teacher changes, the role of the supervisor must change also. The supervisor's role is moving in the direction of support and facilitation. For example, supervisors need to facilitate the creation of ideas and establish low risk environments where teachers can probe problems, and use the language of possibility (Giroux, 1985). As Goodman (1992) explains:

Rather than just to criticize schools, society, and each other, the language of possibility calls upon critical scholars to create a discourse that is at first accessible and then provides others with a vision of hope and promise grounded in principles of empowerment, equality, and democracy (p. 169).

Besides assisting teachers in envisionment, supervisors also provide support and other resources to enable teachers to enact their envisionments. These processes encourage teacher self-efficacy or empowerment. In this process the emphasis is on empowerment not as individual gain but as a cultural experience where the good of the community is of central concern. With support from supervisors, teachers raise and
perceive new relationships (Giroux, 1992).

Theories of supervisory support and facilitation provide the framework for a
different form of supervision. From this perspective, this study will examine the
process and outcomes of one effort to develop such a supervisory practice.

Research Questions
1. How does my supervisory praxis evolve as I participate in the community of
   supervisors?
2. To what extent, and in what ways, does a sense of community develop?
3. How do participants construct opportunities to accommodate differences in
   educational philosophies?

Methods

Methodological significance

Currently there are numerous surveys of opinions and attitudes that focus on the
content and structure of supervision (Feiman-Nemser and Buchman, 1985; Pajak and
Glickman, 1989; Richardson and Koehler, 1984, 1988). In contrast, this study will be
an in-depth qualitative analysis of the practice of one doctoral student’s internship with
a team of supervisors.

Background of the Intern supervisor/ researcher

I have taught for a total of eleven years in several different cultural settings and
with students whose ages range from preschool to adult English as a foreign language.
After owning and directing my own private preschool and kindergarten, I decided to
enter graduate school. My decision to do this was based largely on my recognition that
my holistic views on instruction often differed from the instructional practice typical of
practice in public school settings. I needed to have a better understanding of the
theoretical background to support what was considered, by many people to be a
different approach to education. As a full time graduate student, I supervised students in kindergarten through seventh grades. Most recently, I was given the opportunity to examine my instructional practices while teaching an assessment course to pre-service teachers as part of an undergraduate program. This gave me the opportunity to examine where my new found theoretical basis would fit into practice. I have also facilitated many workshops that centered on my evolving practice as a teacher.

**Collection of Data**

Participant observation will be the primary process for data collection. The primary artifacts of data collection will be field notes, audio and video recordings, journals and other documents. Data will derive from projects and activities in which the intern becomes involved. Appropriate permission is to be obtained from the participants before any data will be gathered. Prior to starting this study approval will be requested by the researcher from the Human Subjects Committee and the Institutional Review Board at .
References


April 25, 1993

Dr. [Name], Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services.

Dear [Name],

I am a doctoral student in curriculum and instruction in the College of Education. As a teacher and a graduate student, I have developed a long standing interest in supervision and staff development. To further my professional growth, I find that I am in need of practical experience with staff development within a public school setting. To accomplish this goal, I am seeking a position as an intern with your instructional supervisory staff for the academic year 1993-1994.

If approved as an intern I would work closely with the instructional supervisors to support their efforts toward long-term staff development. Dr. [Name] would be the field director for this internship, Dr. [Name] will be the university director.

In addition, I am also requesting permission to conduct a study that would lead to the completion of my doctoral dissertation. My intent is to study my own learning as an intern working with supervisors who strive to support and facilitate teacher learning. I have enclosed a summary of the research proposal for your review.

Please consider my requests and advise me of your decisions. I will contact you soon to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Ann D. Potts
(Tel. [Number])

c. Ms. D.
Dr.
May 7, 1993

Ms. Ann D. Potts
College of Education
Div. of Curriculum & Instruction

Dear Ms. Potts:

Your request for permission to participate as an intern in Montgomery County Public Schools has been reviewed. Permission is granted to contact Dr. ( ), Supervisor of Elementary Education, who will be the contact person for your request. Also, the requested study has been approved as outlined in your summary. Strict adherence to the policies of the County School Board require that the following conditions be met during this project:

1) No student names, school names or identifiers should be used without prior WRITTEN permission from the parents, students and the superintendent of schools.

2) Any publication, announcement, or use of the results of this visitation beyond those described in your written request for permission will require additional WRITTEN permission from the superintendent of schools PRIOR to use.

3) All visitations must be planned and conducted in an effort to MINIMIZE lost instructional time for the students involved.

I am pleased that you will be working with teachers and supervisors in County and appreciate your interest in the school division. If I can be of further service during your project, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services

cc: Dr. , Superintendent of Schools
     Dr. , Director of Secondary Education
     Mrs. , Director of Elementary Education
     Dr. , Supervisor of Elementary Education
Appendix B

Detailed schedule of the meetings and professional development contexts in March.

Monday February 28

8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Meeting with the Director of Elementary Education the instructional supervisors and the assessment project director.

1:00 p.m. Planning meeting with the project director for the assessment project.

2:30 p.m. Carlton High school meet with the Vocational Ed group of teachers.

Tuesday March 1.

7:30 a.m.-8:15 a.m. Meeting with the k-1 grade teachers at High Ford.

9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Instructional Supervisors meeting at the school board office.

12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Worked in the first grade classroom whilst the teachers were interviewed by Dr. J Nelson for the assessment project.

4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Carlton Middle school for the Reading to Learn project.

7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. School board meeting, at the school board office.

Wednesday March 2

8:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. "All staff" meeting at the school board office.

353
12:45 p.m. Meet with Kara at High Ford elementary school.
3:40 p.m. Meet with the project director at an elementary
school not involved in the project, to inform the
teachers about the kinds of assessment tools being
developed.

Thursday March 3
8:30 a.m. All day meeting with planning team members and
teachers from the project who would be presenting
at the conference of the Virginia Association for
the Education of the Young Child.
4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Meeting of the whole language support
group for teachers.

Friday March 4
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Worked with First Grade teacher in her
classroom.
12:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Planning session for the proposal for
the National Reading Conference (N.R.C.) paper.

Sunday March 6
1:00 p.m.-4:00p.m. Planning team writing the proposal
for NRC.

Monday March 7
9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Planning meeting for the session with
the teachers in the assessment project.

March 8
9.00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Worked with the project director for the
assessment project photocopying and preparing all

354
the materials for the teachers presentation for V.A.E.Y.C.

March 10

9:00 a.m.—Prepared fliers and placed them in the "pony" for the next whole language support group meeting.

2:00 p.m. Traveled for four hours with Jean and two teachers to the location of the V.A.E.Y.C. conference.

March 11

3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. Presentation at V.A.E.Y.C.

March 14

9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Planning meeting for the assessment project.

11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Prepared letter and flier for the Reading to Learn project.

2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m. Worked with the teachers at Carlton High School.

March 15

8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Assessment project session with the teachers at the Continuing Education Center on the local university campus.

7:00 p.m.—10:30 p.m. School, Board meeting, presentation on the assessment project.

March 17

8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Elementary school principals meeting at Mary Brevard Elementary School.
12:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. Chapter one meeting for all the chapter one teachers in the county.

7:15 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Planning meeting for the Reading To Learn project.

Friday 18

8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Went with K–2 grade teachers in the county to the Wright Group workshop held in a nearby city.

Saturday 19

8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Went with K–2 grade teachers in the county to the Wright Group workshop held in a nearby city.

March 21

2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Carlton High School to work with the groups of teachers.

March 22

9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Photocopied resources for the meeting of the whole language support group.

11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Worked in the office updating the book list for the county language arts program.

4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Reading To learn meeting at the Carlton middle school.

Wednesday March 23

7:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m. Met with the group of teachers at High Ford.
Thursday March 24

4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. I facilitated whole language support group meeting on assessment.

Friday March 25

9:00 a.m.- Worked with two first grade teachers in their classroom.

Monday March 28

8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Meeting with the Director of elementary schools.

Tuesday March 29

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. worked on updating the childrens' literature list for the teachers.

Wednesday March 30

8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. Met at Gullies to plan the Reading to Learn meeting.

Thursday March 31

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. worked with two first grade teachers in their classroom. Made a video of the teachers and children working together.
Appendix C

Assessment Project schedule for the planning meetings and the sessions with the teachers.

August 9-13. Intensive four day workshop for the participants in the Assessment Project, held at the Continuing Education Center on the local university campus.

August 26. I met with the first grade teachers at the Old City Deli.

August 30. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

September 1. Meeting at the open sessions of teacher orientation, prior to the beginning of the school year.


September 13. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

September 20. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

September 23. Planning meeting in executive board room at the School Board Office.

September 28. Assessment project session with the teachers at the school board office.

October 12. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

October 18. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

October 25. Planning meeting in executive board room at the school board office.

October 29. Planning meeting in executive board room at the school board office.

358
November 4. Assessment project session at the school board office.

November 29. Planning session in Julia's office.

December 7. Assessment project session at the school board office.

December 10. Planning meeting at executive board room at the school board office

January 13. Assessment Project session at the Continuing Education center on the local university campus.

February 7. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

February 10. Assessment Project session at the at the Continuing Education center on the local university campus.

February 28. Planning meeting in Julia's office.

March 4. Planning for presentation at the National Reading Conference.

March 15. Assessment Project session with the teachers at the Continuing Education Center on a local university campus.

April 14. Assessment project session with the teachers at the Marriott Hotel.

April 26. Assessment project session at the Marriott Hotel.

June 2. Planning session for the final day of the project.
June 21. Final day of the project at Hillside Lake Hotel.
Appendix D

List of questions constructed by the teachers in the Assessment Project, Day 1.

1. What is my role as a teacher in this project?
2. What is authentic assessment?
3. Is alternative assessment more than portfolios?
4. What about assessment vs. portfolios? - What type of assessment is more appropriate for the parents?
5. What is wrong with what we are doing and why change?
7. Will we really change?
8. Will we be able to change by school?
9. We will change—a positive view—looking at strengths of the child rather than a deficit model.
10. Shared understanding—what is whole language?
11. How does it all fit together?
   
   inclusion
   
   class size
   
   fully integrated
12. Common core?
13. Will there be only one way?
   
   - will we use the same recording devices i.e. report cards?
14. Do we reinvent the wheel?
15. Time it takes the teachers to do and develop the assessment tools? - we need time that is manageable.
16. Is our role to instruct or assess?

17. How much time?
   - instructional time
   - personal time

18. What do we want assessment to do?
   - What information do we want from the tool?

19. Reliability?

20. Talking the same thing - developing understandings,

21. Bookkeeping questions - recertification points, pay, etc.

22. Goal/role of the group.

23. What are the deliverables to the state and site?

24. How to train new people?

25. Are we sure we want to do this?

26. Role of the parent and the student in self assessment?

27. Reading Recovery/ Writing to Read. How do these fit in?

28. What is right that we already do?

29. Look at preexisting programs and curriculum. What is our curriculum?

30. What about regular Ed., IEP's? Need a tool that is understandable to others.

31. A tool that is living.

32. Skill-based, concept - based or both?

33. Recognize the subjectivity.

34. Visible political entity:
   - small classes
   - early release for planning one day a week
state tests for state mandates only
eliminate state mandated tests

35. What we do is dependent on class size.

36. Do we have school board support because this tool or
tools have to live in our reality.

37. Opportunities to practice, try out this year and get
parents reactions.

38. How does this fit with the states direction?

39. What does this mean to us?

40. Why do we assess and who does the assessing?

41. Why the state test and why compare?

42. What do other teachers and different grade levels
perceive developmentally appropriate practice to be?

43. Keeping an open mind as to what we choose as a tool

44. What's going on across the country?

45. What we have been doing fits ... and the logical next
step for Montford County.

46. Need to move beyond second and third grade.

47. Will we have the opportunity to continue this project
next year?

48. What do we value?

49. Periodic presentation to the board—who else will we
have to present to?

50. Need to be very careful and conscious.

51. What are the implication for "gifted" assessment from
what we learn and do?

363
Provide justification.
NAEYC Position: Do you support the personal experience with or without external evidence and/or your position?
Position taken by Evidence in text that evidence from.

Supports position. Personal experience
Judging/After Reading Activity

Evaluating the NAEYC Position Statement on
Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades

Appendix C
Response guide used by the teachers
Appendix F

Description of the math task: Fifty Green Doors

Introducing the problem

You may have seen walls built out of stones or bricks, but we are going to build a wall out of Pattern Blocks. We are going to build a special wall and find out how many blocks it will take.

Exploring with Pattern Blocks

1. Tell the students to make a wall with the red and green pattern blocks. A wall with one green door takes three blocks to build.
2. Tell the students to put out more blocks so that the wall grows. A wall with two green doors takes five blocks to build.
3. Tell the students that the wall will continue with the same pattern. Challenge them to figure out the total number of blocks in the wall when there are fifty green doors. (Students will not have enough blocks to actually build the long wall. They will need to use the pattern they see in order to generalize the number pattern and the rule the wall represents.)

Recording the Connection

1. Help the students complete the first few examples of the pattern on their recording sheet, as they add to the wall in their groups.
2. Have students continue filling out the chart. When they
have run out of blocks, tell them to find a way to answer the question even though they cannot actually build the wall.

3. Have the student write their answers on the recording sheets, and write about what they did to find out.
Appendix G
The Feather Boy

There he stood with the bluest eyes I'd ever seen. He was staring at me and sizing me up. I likewise was staring—my first encounter with a first grader. I noticed a string around his neck with a feather tied on it. I smiled, he smiled, and we talked of feathers and Indians. Thus began our year of "Communication with Feathers".

He was the new boy in school, and I was the new teacher. I made him feel included, and he made me feel accepted. One morning he brought me a gift—a string with a feather tied on it. I beamed! His blue eyes twinkled! He wrote in his Take Home Journal about "Good Luck and Feathers". His mother responded and wrote to him about "feathers and the Spirit of Happiness".

Throughout the year various feather art objects have appeared on my desk; a bow with eagle feathers, a rock with Indian drawings, and pieces of leather decorated with invented Indian language symbols. I respond by reading books about feathers. Magic moments occur when teacher's and student's eyes connect and communicate.

He continues to write in his Take Home Journal about feathers. His parents support his inquiry and aid him in his quest.

He brought every student a wild turkey feather. He explained about the "down" at the base of the larger feather. His classmates were now ready to begin their "Communication with Feathers". Their Take Home Journal entry that week was...

Matt gave me a feather...

Communication-soft as a feather.
Parents, this is your very own page to write a letter to your child. Remember to read your letter to your child. The more you write, the more your child will love writing.

My Dearest,

I see you through the eyes of a feather.
Your spirit free floating through everyone who knows you.
You adorn those around you with gifts made of feather for good luck, good health, and just pure love.
I so treasure the special gift you made for me, called "the dream catcher," made to protect your mom from bad dreams that are caught in the feathers and strings at night, but disappear in the first rays of the morning sun, as you so carefully explained.
Matt, your feather filled spirit gives me happiness, you fill me with pride.

Know I love you very much,

Mom.
Feb. 4, 1994,

Dear Parents,

I like my feathers and
the Indian spirit feathers.
They bring you good luck
feathers. They bring you good health.

I give away my feathers
to show that I love people.

Love.
Appendix H

This developmental profile reflects the growth of an individual toward becoming a productive member of a learning community.

Level 1
Child's independent work/play is random and unstructured.
Child's play is mostly solitary.
Child often exhibits selfishness, anger, violence and/or withdrawal in group play.
Child has difficulty sharing and taking turns.
Child has difficulty following directions.

Level 2
One-on-one with adult, child can remain on-task only for short periods of time.
Child is either mostly dominant or mostly submissive in group play.
Child engages in parallel play with peers.
Child engages in individual role-play.

Level 3
Child's independent work/play lasts for moderate periods of time.
One-on-one with adult, child can remain on-task for longer periods of time.
With adult, child can remain on-task in a small group (6 or less) only for a short time.
Child begins to understand the "why" of sharing and taking turns.
Child begins to understand the "why" of following directions.
Child engages in cooperative play.

Level 4
Child has developed some friendships.
Child's play is in small, often changing groups.
Child's play sometimes involves cooperative role-play.
With adult, child can remain on-task in a small group for longer periods of time.
With adult, child can remain on-task in a large group only for a short time.
Level 5
Child has developed positive, long lasting friendships.
With adult, child can remain on-task in a large group for longer periods of time.
In play, child easily merges into group activities.
Child is willing to "take risks" and "make mistakes" in learning.
Child willingly follows directions.

Level 6
Child readily makes and keeps new friends.
Child willingly shares and takes turns.
Child's play involves creativity, planning, role-play, mediation and fairness.
Child participates with peers in non-violent problem solving.

Level 7
Child exhibits compassion, sensitivity, and empathy toward others.
Child exhibits tolerance and understanding toward people's differences.
Child can form and express her/his own opinions and beliefs.
Child can function as a productive member of a co-operative learning group.

Reading
This developmental profile is a reflection of how a child evolves into a fluent reader. Implicit in its structure is the need for the child to comprehend, internalize, and respond in an informed manner to what has been read. The ultimate goal is that reading for pleasure, information, and enlightenment will become an integral part of the child's life.

Level 1
Child looks at books
Child listens to story, but does not actively look at pages.
Level 2
Child looks at pictures as story is read.

Level 3
Child pretends to read.
Child talks about each picture (not necessarily in relation to story).
Child uses picture for clues to the meaning of story.

Level 4
Child participates in reading using some rhyming words and filling
in predictable text.
Child participates in reading by supplying possible plot alternatives.
Child demonstrates directionality in "reading" (front to back, left to
right).

Level 5
Child memorizes text and can pretend to "read" story.

Level 6
Child reads word-for-word.
Child recognizes words in new context.
Child uses picture and contextual clues to recognize new or
troublesome words.

Level 7
Child reads familiar stories fluently.

Level 8
Child reads unfamiliar stories haltingly, with little adult
assistance.

Level 9
Child can read easy books.
Child uses context clues, sentence structure, structural analysis,
and phonetic analysis to read new passages.
Child reads for information.
Child reads for pleasure.

Level 10
Child seeks out new sources of information including independent
use of the library.
Child voluntarily shares information with other children.

Level 11
Child reads fluently from books and other materials.

Response to Literature

Level 1
Child shows no interest in listening to stories.

Level 2
Child listens, but shows no reaction to story.
Child offers no verbal response to literature voluntarily.

Level 3
Child shows reactions to story, but cannot verbalize a response.

Level 4
Child tells whether she/he liked the story.

Level 5
Child explains why she/he likes or dislikes the story.

Level 6
Child relates the story to her/his experiences or to other books.

Level 7
Child analyzes a facet of the book (plot, setting, characters, illustrations).

Level 8
Child generalizes about the book with comments about the theme, type of books, or authors purpose in writing it.

Level 9
Child develops criteria to evaluate the book.
Child offers review of the book to peers.
Writing

This developmental profile is a reflection of how a child evolves into a fluent writer. The ultimate goal is that the child will develop the ability to communicate effectively through writing. Implicit in this goal is the need for the child to gain satisfaction and confidence writing for different purposes in a variety of subject areas and genres.

Level 1
Child attempts to write in scribbles or draws patterns.
Child dictates simple sentences.

Level 2
Child pretends to write.
Child writes in mock letters.
Child writes alphabet and mock letters scattered around the page.
Child illustrates dictated sentences.

Level 3
Child copies words he/she sees around the room.
Alphabet letters and mock letters are in a line across the page.
Child "rereads" dictated sentence.

Level 4
Child writes alphabet letter strings.
Written letters don't match sounds.
Child orally repeats and understands a simple sentence (message).
Child dictates and illustrates prompted story (cloze).

Level 5
Child labels drawings.
Letters have some connection to sounds.
Child writes lists.
Child separates words with a space.
Child writes a message.
Child writes familiar words.

Level 6
Child invents spelling.
Story is a single, factual, understandable statement.
Child dictates, illustrates, and "rereads" own story (with prompts).

Level 7
Child writes the start of a story.
Child uses both phonic and sight strategies to spell words.
Child writes several short sentences.
Child dictates, illustrates, and "rereads" own story (no prompts).

Level 8
Child writes a short story with a beginning, middle, and end.
Child writes for several different purposes (narrative, fantasy, expository)
Revision involves adding to the story.
Child begins to use punctuation.

Level 9
Writing includes descriptive details and dialog.
Writing expresses sense of humor or other emotions.
Child rewrites or follows the pattern of a familiar story or poem.
Spelling becomes more conventional.
Child willingly revises.

Level 10
Child participates in pre-writing activities.
Child writes creatively and imaginatively.
Child writes clearly. The message makes sense.
Child writes original poetry.
Child uses commas, quotation marks, and apostrophes.
Child willingly revises and edits.

Level 11
Child willingly collaborates in pre-writing activities.
Child uses writing techniques to build suspense, create humor, etc.
Child uses a variety of strategies for revision and editing.

CREDITS:

Appendix I

References of texts used in the project with the planning team and the teachers.


developmentally appropriate programs. Young Children, May, 17-23.


School Programs Division, Ministry of education and


Appendix J

Preparation for Writing Task

Introduction

The teacher introduces the task by using a hot air popper to pop corn for the students to eat. While the popcorn is popping the teacher tells the students to close their eyes and think about what they smell and hear. As the popcorn continues to pop the class begins a sensory semantic map that describes the sound and smell of popping corn. (See attachment 1) After the corn has been popped the students are given a paper cup full of popcorn to eat. After eating the popcorn, the class extends the semantic map to include touch, taste, and appearance. (See attachment 2) Students are told now they will read a book called The Popcorn Dragon written by Jane Thyer and illustrated by Lisa McCue.

Reading The Popcorn Dragon

Before reading, the class orally brainstorms what they know about dragons. After they complete their brainstorm, the teacher tells them that the class is going to read a story about Dexter the Dragon.

The teacher begins reading the story, The Popcorn Dragon, aloud to the class. After reading several pages, she asks the class if anyone would like to continue reading. Then children volunteer to take turns reading aloud.

After finishing the book the teacher asks the students, "Describe what kind of dragon Dexter was?" (See attachment 3 for possible student responses.) She lists all responses on a piece of chart paper (or on the chalk board).

Writing Task

Before Drafting

The teacher tells the class they are going to make a big book about food dragons. She tells them that each students will write a short story about any food dragon she/he chooses. She asks the class, "What are some possible food dragons?" Accept all responses.
After the students have finished making suggestions, the teacher tells the students to each get their specific type of food dragon in mind. The teacher then has the students close their eyes and imagine the food that their dragon eats. She prompts the students to think about what it smells, feels, tastes, looks, and sounds like. After prompting them to imagine their food, the students are given a blank semantic map to record their food and the sensory words that describe it (Attachment 4). Once the maps are completed, the students use them to help add description to their stories.

**During Drafting**

The teacher passes out the computer paper to be used for first draft writing. The students are instructed to write on the green lines, so the teacher can edit on the white. (If computer paper is not available, use handwriting paper and simply ask the children to skip lines.) As the students begin writing, the teacher circulates around the room to assist students in developing their stories. Students are encouraged to use invented spelling as they write.

**After Drafting**

Once a student completes his/her first draft, s/he asks the teacher to help in editing the piece. The teacher edits by having the student read the story as the teacher points to the words. The teacher helps the student edit for standard English. They discuss spelling, punctuation, and capitalization within the context of the student’s story. The teacher records the standard spelling of the words directly above the student’s writing, and student and teacher edit appropriately for capitalization and punctuation. If the meaning of a sentence is not clear, the teacher prompts the student to orally clarify and helps him/her record the revision. If the student has trouble clarifying on his/her own, the other students sitting at the table are encouraged to make suggestions. The student author then chooses what sentence to include in the story.

After editing with the teacher, the student is given clean sheets of language experience paper, which has blank space at the top for illustrations and lines at the bottom for writing. If the teacher has a pattern for creating a dragon big book, this can be used instead. The students copy their stories from their edited pieces and illustrate their stories.
Closure for Writing Task

Once all the students have finished drafting and editing their individual stories, they gather in groups of four where each author reads his/her story to the small group. After the stories are read, the class must decide on a title for their big book that reflects all the stories. The teacher lists student generated titles on the board. Students discuss the merits of each title and then vote. Additionally, the class decides on an appropriate adjective for the following blank: Written by those ______ authors in (teacher’s name) room. Next, the students write a dedication for the dedication page.

Students have time to finish copying, illustrating, and signing their stories. Several students collaborate to make the title and dedication pages.

Finally, the teacher compiles the book of dragon short stories, adding to the end of the book a page to record the names of readers and their responses. The teacher binds the book and places it in the classroom library.

Assessment Portfolio Entry: Writing

Each student’s food sensory semantic map, first draft writing, and a photocopy of his/her completed story is stapled together and entered in the student’s portfolio. Each piece should be dated and signed by the student.
Popcorn Dragon Semantic Map

smell

Popcorn

hearing
Popcorn Dragon Semantic Map 2

- smell
- hearing
- taste
- touch
- appearance
Possible Student Responses
To The Question:
What kind of dragon was Dexter?

Dexter was a green, scaly dragon with a long, twisty tail.

He was a friendly dragon.

Dexter was a show-off.

He liked blowing smoke.

Dexter was kind of nice because he popped popcorn for his friends.

He was like a kid because he likes to play.

He can pop popcorn.

Dexter was a kid dragon; you know, he's not an adult.
Blank Sensory Semantic Map
Curriculum Vitae

Ann D. Potts
112 Primrose Drive,
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Tel: (540) 551 - 0833

EDUCATION

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Major: Teaching and Learning
Cognate: Family Child Development
Advisor: Dr. Rosary Lalik
Dissertation: Teacher learning within a Transactional Process
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Teaching and Learning (1996)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Major: Reading Specialist Certification
Degree: Master of Arts (1989)

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL (1981-1982)

Major: M.A., Elementary Education (18 hours of course work completed)
Advisor: Dr. Carolyn Schluck

University of Kent, Canterbury, England (1976)

Major: Teaching English as a Foreign Language


Major: Elementary Education and Early Childhood Development
Degree: C. Ed., 1974

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewer of proposals for the National Reading Conference, Chicago, IL (1995-1996)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Intern, Montgomery County School Board, VA (1993-1994)
Working with instructional supervisors in staff development; interacting with teachers in the classroom as they reflect on their practice. Member of the support team for teachers engaged in a state-funded project in Montgomery County that was focused on alternative assessment practices.

Facilitator and founding member (1991-present)
Local chapter of the national Whole Language Umbrella. Organization of discussion groups with teachers in Montgomery County, VA.
Lead Teacher, Hartsfield Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL (1980-1982)
Alternative education program for elementary school children. Implementing the integrated curriculum, non-graded and multi-age grouping of children.

Director/Owner, Ann's Preschool & Kindergarten, Tallahassee, FL


University Teaching:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Blacksburg, VA

Reading Assessment (EDCI 4204) (1991-92)

Professional Seminar for Preservice Teachers (EDCI 4964 /4754) (1991-92)

Teacher:


Developmental Pilot Program, Hartsfield Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL
Multiage classroom (ages 5-9 yr) (1979-1982)

St. John's Primary School, Radcliffe, England (ages 5-7yr) (1978-1979)

Taught English as a Foreign Language
Elat, Israel.
Private tuition to students, and teaching students in a high school setting (ages 7-30 yr) (1977-1978)

Hörgerate Fiebing GmbH, Oldenburg, Germany.
Teaching English as a foreign language to (ages 13-18 yr) (1977-1978)

International Society, University of Durham, England
Taught English as a foreign language to (adults) (1975-1976)

Wharrier Street Primary School, Walker, Newcastle, England
Taught children ages 6-8yr in an Education Priority School (1974-1976)

PRESENTATIONS

Parents of Chapter One Students, Montgomery County Schools, VA
"The role of phonics in whole language" (1994)

University of North Carolina at Asheville, NC
"Holistic practice in the classroom" (1994)

VPI&SU, EDCI 3504,

Concord Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL
"Thematic approach to children's learning" (1983)

Hartsfield Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL
"The metric system" (1982)

Leonard Wesson School, Tallahassee, FL
Visitation and working alongside the teachers to establish classrooms for a thematic approach to learning (1983)

Astoria Park Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL
"Thematic approach to children's learning" (1983)

Sealey Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL
"The developmental approach to teaching" (1982)

Florida State University, Department of Education, Tallahassee, FL
"The British Primary School"
"Interest centers and thematic units" (1981)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR INSERVICE AND PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Average of two workshops per year for teachers in elementary grades and preschool in the Leon County school system, Florida. With continued interaction after the workshop.

The developmental approach to teaching children: thematic and emergent reading,
Held at Ann's Preschool. Tallahassee, FL (1982-85)

All day workshop for students of Dr S. Hewit:
Early Childhood Program, Wesleyan College, Macon, GA (1983)

All day interactive workshop for Dr J.B.Taylor:
Director of Curriculum and Teaching, Haley Center, Auburn University, AL.

Presentations for M.S. and Ph.D. students of Drs C. Schluck, C. Wolfgang and J.
Brudenell, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL (1979-1985)

Presentation to students in Education Multidisciplinary units and thematic cycles
Radford University, Radford, VA (1992-1994)

Presentation to teachers K-3 in Wythe County Schools VA with Dr. S. Moore
Creating literate rich environments for five-eight year olds (1994 & 1995)

CONSULTANT

Florida State University Preschool, Tallahassee, FL
Consultant for two semesters (1982-1983)
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL  Consultant and teacher for the summer reading program for children ages 8 - 11. (1980 and 1981)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Blacksburg, VA  Staff development for whole language language philosophy; three-day day seminar for classroom teachers (1993)

Montgomery County School Board, VA  Interdisciplinary units. For kindergarten teachers, Montgomery County,VA (1993)

SUPERVISORY DUTIES

Intern preservice teachers from Florida State University at Hartsfield Elementary School Tallahassee, FL (1980, 81, 82)

Undergraduate students in Early Childhood Education, Florida State University. (approximately 15 students each semester for 3 years; students of Dr. Brudenell) (1982-1985)

Teachers (5) and aids (3) at Ann's Preschool, Tallahassee, FL (1982-1985)

Student-teachers in the Roanoke County Model, Curriculum and Instruction, VPI&SU. (14 students ) (1987-1988)

Student teachers in the Montgomery County Model, Curriculum & Instruction, VPI&SU. (22 students) (1990-1992)

RESEARCH

Ph.D. dissertation research:  
Collaboration in Teacher learning  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
College of Education  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University  
Research was conducted through an internship as an instructional supervisor  
Montgomery County School Board Office

PUBLICATIONS


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Moore, S. Potts, A., (1994). Creating literate environments for five-eight year olds. Fall meeting of the New River Valley Reading Council, University of Radford, VA.


AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

1994 Honor member of Phi Delta Kappa
1989-1992 Instructional Fee scholarships
1981-1982 Florida Council on Elementary Education. Creative teaching grant for science instruction in the classroom
1982 & 1984 Andrew Jackson Award-Chamber of Commerce, Tallahassee, Florida

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Education Research Association
National Reading Council
National Association for the Education of Young Children
New River Valley Reading Council
International Reading Association
New River Valley Whole Language Support Group. Affiliated to the Whole Language Umbrella

[Signature: J. Potts]

391