

**Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia English Language Arts
Curriculum Outcomes**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to Harry, Kara, my parents, family, and friends:

To Harry for his constant support, both emotionally and on a practical basis as I attempted to run a household, work, and write my thesis; to Kara for her sacrifice of our time together and her recognition and appreciation of my love for learning; to my parents for their support, encouragement, and steadfast faith in me for which I am forever grateful, and to my family and friends who, through their endless listening, learned more about outcomes-based planning than they ever wanted to know.

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with the analysis of the curriculum outcomes strengthened my knowledge and level of comfort with the outcomes and subsequently strengthened this study. Finally, I want to thank Fraser, who relentlessly cured the technological disasters that I created.

Abstract

The purpose of this educational microethnography was to explore and describe the experiences of six English Language Arts teachers at Valley Woods Middle School, in Nova Scotia. The onus for orchestrating the outcomes-based English Language Arts curriculum mandated by the Nova Scotia Department of Education in 1989 belongs, according to the law, with individual teachers. To comply, however, teachers must first understand and feel comfortable with the outcomes in order to reshape curriculum and future instruction. Attempting this in isolation has proven to be too arduous a task and few collaborative opportunities have been available. This study describes and explores the collaborative professional development sessions that the ELA curriculum team, in one school, undertook to develop specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (S.M.A.R.T.) learning targets for all forty-one ELA outcomes and to create an individual assessment rubric for each. Specifically, the study addressed the following question: “Within the framework of a professional learning community, is it possible to create teacher-led professional development sessions which would facilitate the change necessary for collaborative teacher interaction with the Nova Scotia English Language Arts curriculum outcomes, in order to articulate and assist student learning?” This study describes and explores the following questions:

1. Did participation in the professional development sessions result in changes in teacher understanding of the ELA outcomes?

2. Did participation in the PD sessions result in changes in teacher comfort level while interacting with the ELA outcomes?
3. What was the nature of the collaborative group and did this group experience change over time?

This educational microethnography revealed, in the experiences of six teachers, a deeper understanding and level of comfort in interacting with the mandated Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes to articulate and assist student learning.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Mannequins, wardrobe metaphors, and a magic hat set the stage for my thesis adventure to understand the shift in emphasis from what teachers teach to what students learn, known as Outcomes-Based Education. The journey to design and implement an outcomes-based English Language Arts program that will produce specific and lasting results in students, reminds me of a 1980's children's program called, *Today's Special* (VanderBurg, 1987) in which a department store mannequin receives a magic hat by accident. At night, when the store closes and all the customers have gone home, someone places a hat on the mannequin's head, says the magic words, "hocus pocus alimagocus" and he comes to life. The powers in the hat, however, are limited; if it comes off or if "Jeff" were to go outside the store, he would immediately return to being a mannequin. The taste of real life has instilled the desire for the mannequin to venture out into the world beyond the store and has created for him an appreciation of his world within the store.

Similarly, when Nova Scotia English Language Arts teachers received the anticipated curriculum document containing the mandated outcomes, not by accident but by design, they were supposed to make them come to life in order to improve student learning. Initially, they were surprised and a bit shocked with the number of outcomes, the non-prescriptive language of the outcomes, and the complexity of the written language. Nevertheless, all too quickly, the top-down professional development ended and teachers, who had not been a part of the discussions to implement or assess the outcomes were expected to take ownership of them.

After the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture completed the arduous task of developing the English Language Arts outcomes, teachers were ultimately responsible for their implementation. The primary mandate of the public schools system in Nova Scotia is “to provide education programs and services for students to enable them to develop their potential and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy” (Province of Nova Scotia, 2003, p. A-3).

In Nova Scotia, it is a requirement that all teachers plan using their subject area’s provincially mandated outcomes, and develop and assess the performance tasks. They will be required in 2009 to report the results on an outcomes-based report card. According to Nova Scotia’s Education Act (2006), it is the duty of a teacher in a public school “to implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes and to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching strategies by analyzing outcomes achieved” (Office of the Legislative Counsel, 2006, 26c,e). By law, the onus for acquiring professional development to orchestrate Outcomes-Based Education belongs with individual teachers. Professional development to show teachers how to complete this onerous task has been virtually nonexistent. Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) suggest that, “We must commit our energies to studying our programs, our courses, our teaching, and our expectations and requirements. In short, it means consenting to be the subject of study ourselves” (p. 734).

Unfortunately, there are no magic words to bring the implementation of the outcomes to life and as Burns and Purcell say, “the majority of teachers haven’t had

enough opportunity to discuss standards (outcomes) – to own them, breathe life into them, and incorporate them into the curriculum” (Burns & Purcell, 2001, p. 50).

Rationale for the Study

Although some teachers have attempted to embrace this challenge on their own, the process has stagnated because the initiative is far too great to tackle in isolation. Collaboration is necessary within the framework of a professional learning community to gain the basic understanding of Outcomes-Based Education and the tools necessary to undertake it to improve student learning.

It is not easy to interpret the convoluted outcomes and many teachers feel intimidated and unsure of what they must do with them to improve student learning. Ironically, not being overly prescriptive is the nature of outcomes. This allows the outcomes to be readily adaptable and it provides a great deal of latitude for teachers; within their learning community, teachers are able to assume leadership roles in determining what the students need to learn and how they are going to teach and adapt the curriculum for individual student success. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding of the outcomes and the absence of a collaborative working milieu leaves teachers feeling frustrated, blaming the outcomes for not giving the necessary direction. They state that outcomes are so broad that you can teach anything, but, they do not realize that teachers must work together to develop a substantive plan for their students’ learning.

It is easy, under these circumstances, for teachers to step outside and revert to what and how they have always taught and simply slot the outcomes in where they might fit. To make matters worse, when the outcomes were presented, very little literature

existed to inform teachers how to determine exactly what the students are to learn and how they will know when they have learned it.

Teachers need more substantive guidance and support than has been provided for them. It is my belief that collaboratively we can provide this guidance and support for each other. Schmoker (2005, p. 141) affirmed, “Teachers do not learn best from outside experts or by attending conferences or implementing ‘programs’ installed by outsiders.” This situation is precisely why I want to combine teacher-led professional development with collaborative work to improve student learning in a microethnographic study in one school.

While working with Outcomes-Based Education and countless educators, Evans and King (1994) have become convinced that “traditional studies are simply not rich enough to portray the changes that an OBE system may inspire” (p. 16). In fact, the literature on outcomes-based planning is encouraging, telling teachers what they ought to do to improve student learning, but how one actually does it had received very little attention. This research is therefore essential. The challenge is to design a rich, yet rigorous study that will invoke positive change. Classroom teachers have a legal responsibility to ground classroom practice in the course outcomes. McKeown (2006) makes the analogy that just as it is a police officer’s sworn duty to maintain and enforce provincial laws, it is a classroom teacher’s duty to uphold and enforce the curricular outcomes mandated by the province.

In schools where our curricular framework is largely unseen in the classroom and often non-existent at planning tables, teachers need guidance, research, professional development, and collaboration to fulfill this obligation and to realize that their

outcomes-based English Language Arts program possesses the educational magic to guide students into the 21st century.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

My thesis is entitled, *Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes*. This study addresses the gap between theory and practice for a community of English Language Arts teachers. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were explored in the research literature and educationally recognized trade journals, and then, a framework was developed within which a community of teachers worked collaboratively to interact with the curriculum outcomes to improve student learning.

This study began with the following question: “Within the framework of a professional learning community, is it possible to create teacher led professional development sessions which would facilitate the change necessary for collaborative teacher interaction with the Nova Scotia English Language Arts curriculum outcomes, in order to articulate and assist student learning?” In response to this question, the purpose of this study was to explore the storied experiences of myself and five other colleagues in our attempts to collaboratively interact with the outcomes to gain understanding and an increased level of comfort with them. The six members of the English Language Arts curriculum team who participated in the study formed the data source that explored the following questions:

1. Did participation in the professional development sessions result in changes in teacher understanding of the ELA outcomes?

2. Did participation in the professional development sessions result in changes in teacher comfort level while interacting with the ELA outcomes?
3. What was the nature of the collaborative group and did this group experience change over time?

Qualitative Inquiry

Through personal interviews and collaborative professional development sessions, the researcher selected a qualitative design to answer the research questions posed in this study. Ethnographic theory, applied to an analysis of the perspectives of individual teachers, revealed their increased understanding and comfort level with the outcomes-based curriculum, secured through the professional development sessions.

To measure changes in teacher understanding and comfort level with the outcomes-based curriculum planning the researcher collected observational data, perception data, and teacher interview data to build a descriptive picture of practices before and after the collaborative working sessions. Scrutiny of the session transcripts revealed that team building occurred as the teachers collaboratively engaged with each other. Discussion revealed the implications that this collaboration holds for teacher practice, for team building in schools, and ultimately for enhancing student learning.

This inquiry was partly autobiographical and based on conversational interviews with six colleagues who joined me in this collaborative effort. The autobiographical part will contain reflections on the literature and from my personal experiences, while the interviews will summarize what I am trying to find out and how analyzing the ELA outcomes will impact teachers' understanding and level of comfort.

Significance of the Problem

Conducting the literature review on Outcomes-Based Education revealed several gaps in the literature. First, the research – or lack of it – suggests an acute need for more research. It is evident though that finding a research base to guide a study will be difficult. It is true that thorough, current research in assessment is available in trade literature and books including such original texts as Grant Wiggins' (1999) *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits of Testing*, but many of these are over a decade old. Although assessment has become a publisher's panacea, finding gems like Richard Stiggins' (2004) award winning, *Student Involved Assessment FOR Learning* amidst hundreds of titles, is not easy.

This process is worth exploring for a thesis, because in the informal and formal conversations that I have had with teachers, they strongly support and desire professional development initiated at the grass roots and supported from the top. They think that OBE has been imposed upon us with no consultation, debate, or professional development to see it come to fruition. Spady (as cited in Brandt, 1993) warns, "You cannot mandate OBE and hope to have it successfully implemented." Even though Spady and other educational researchers frown upon the mandating of outcomes, the fact remains that outcomes have been mandated by the province of Nova Scotia (Spady 1994a; Brandt, 1994). McKeown (2006) emphasizes that it is our legal responsibility to engage professionally with the outcomes and the outcomes-based report card, looming on the horizon, demands it.

Limitations to the Study

This study presented challenges and limitations. The consumption of time was a critical factor in determining the breadth of the study. Any time a researcher attempts to connect staff development to anticipated student learning, there are many perplexing contingencies that need to be considered both now and in future professional development sessions. Clearly, a change in teacher understanding and comfort level with the ELA outcomes that drives student learning is evident. With the use of an ethnographic approach, a researcher can build a comprehensive picture of the increase in knowledge and level of comfort and of the effectiveness of professional development in a collaborative setting. In a future study, it will be important to see whether professional development connects with student learning. This study is not an experimental design and a researcher cannot assume that these improvements will result in improved student learning. As stated in the conclusion of the study, in one school, there has been an observable change in teacher understanding and level of comfort with the English Language Arts Curriculum outcomes.

When the researcher developed this project, ethnography was chosen to be able to observe, capture, and record the changes and growth that occurred in teacher understanding and level of comfort with the outcomes and in their interactions with each other. Outcomes-Based Education reformers have long advocated for research to document its success in schools (Evans & King, 1994), but the research provides little solid evidence. Professional Learning Communities reformers, on the other hand, have been recording their successes maintaining that a collaborative culture is the single most important factor for successful school improvement (Murphy & Lick, 2001; Eaker,

Dufour & Dufour, 2002; Burnette, 2002). Combining the two may be the avenue to provide the necessary evidence to validate Outcomes-Based Education.

Unfortunately, by selecting this ethnographic method, the researcher is confining the results of the study to a single case and this would make it difficult to establish inferences about other similar cases or school sites going through the same process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002).

Overview of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter Two contains a review of the literature that will situate this study in the areas of Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities. The research methodology and methods are detailed in Chapter Three and results are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five provides conclusions, discussion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This educational microethnography will adopt Professional Learning Communities as its framework and Outcomes-Based Education as the theory that surrounds the proposed changes to take place in teachers' practice and ultimately in the improvement of student learning. For this reason, it was necessary to complete a review of the literature for both, to acknowledge each as a separate entity and to show how they will fit together in the proposed plan. Overall, the review of the literature is designed to build a foundation to answer the central research question for this study: "Within the framework of a professional learning community, is it possible to create teacher led professional development sessions that would facilitate the change necessary for collaborative teacher interaction with the Nova Scotia English Language Arts curriculum outcomes, in order to articulate and assist student learning?"

Outcomes-Based Education

Few paradigms in the history of education have ignited the amount of interest, excitement, confusion, and controversy that Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) has generated in the past few years.

In this review, I explain the theoretical premises of Outcomes-Based Education, the range of OBE models, and its global context followed by an exploration into its historical development. Next, I scrutinize research undertaken in two Canadian schools that have attempted to implement Outcomes-Based Education. Finally, the criticisms of Outcomes-Based Education that abound in research and in the popular media are addressed.

Theoretical Premises of Outcomes-Based Education

Outcomes-Based Education could be nicknamed, “the Paradigm of a Thousand Faces” because of the wide variety of very different models. At one end of the spectrum, Outcomes-Based Education means that curriculum planning and instruction should focus on the outcomes that the school wants its students to demonstrate at the end of their educational experience. At the other end of the spectrum are whole education systems that are driven by outcomes (O’Neil, 1994). This vast spectrum forced me to narrow my review to pertinent information and models regarding outcomes-based planning and instruction for my study.

Dr. William Spady (1994a), an internationally known theorist, change leader, and developer of Outcomes-Based Education believed that, in order for students to be successful in any school and then in life after school, they must have an educational program which is planned with clearly set goals centered on student outcomes. When an education system determines what is essential for its students to be able to do at the culmination of their school experience and clearly focuses and organizes curriculum, instruction, and assessment to guarantee that this learning happens, they are modeling Outcomes Based Education (Spady, 1994a).

The “culminating demonstration of learning” (Brandt, 1993, p. 66), called outcomes, are tangible evidence of what students can do, what they know, and what they have learned. A student’s achievement is continuously determined by the highest level of performance that has been reached at any given time. Outcomes are “actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas, and tools successfully” (Spady, 1994a, p. 13). Unfortunately, when implemented,

some schools were forced to address fundamental issues such as what is worth knowing and what is the purpose of schooling. This deliberation invited criticism and religious opponents to charge that outcomes “concern values, attitudes, opinions and relationships rather than objective information” and that the goals of OBE are “affective (concerned with emotions and feelings) rather than academic” (Schlafley cited in McNeir, 1993, p. 3). Spady stressed that outcomes were never intended to be values, beliefs, or attitudes.

The theory of Outcomes Based Education is based on three main premises; that all students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way, that successful learning promotes even more successful learning, and schools control the conditions which directly affect successful school learning.

Four underlying principles of Outcomes-Based Education are:

1. Clarity of Focus on the culminating exit outcomes of significance helps educators paint a clear picture of the learning that needs to be demonstrated by the student. Instructional plans and student assessments are designed with the demonstration being given top priority. Curriculum, instruction, assessment development, and implementation begins with the clear picture of the desired outcome to which they all must match up or align. The clarity of focus must be for all. Students must be continually reminded of the outcome so that students and teachers are working together to realize the same goal (Spady, 1994a).
2. Expanded Opportunities and support for learning success permit students to have more than one opportunity to learn important things and to demonstrate that learning. It offers every student the opportunity to work at her/his own pace with the necessary constructs in place, such as extension of time and resources to permit all students to

successfully complete the exit outcomes. The teacher determines which assignments are developing ultimate performance capabilities and which ones are assignments leading to them. Knowing that these assignments will eventually be connected to grading, Spady suggests that OBE encourages having “pencil” grades that can be changed with improved learning and performance and “ink” grades that are permanent and unchangeable. Standards are defined and put in place for all performances, and the criteria to gain expanded opportunity must be outlined at the beginning of the learning experience. Students earn the privilege to have expanded opportunities, but students do not have a free rein on chances and procrastination does not reduce high expectations (Spady, 1994a). This explanation is very different from the way that this idea has unfolded in our school where expanded opportunity is designed so that students may complete work that wasn’t completed well or at all, in order to obtain a higher mark. As soon as a test is written, someone will ask when the rewrite is, because they did not study.

3. High Expectations for all to succeed involves raising standards of acceptable performance, believing that all students will be successful, and offering an educationally challenging curriculum that breeds success. This aligns nicely with one of our school improvement goals to have all of our students perform at higher levels (Spady, 1994a).
4. Designing Down from your ultimate, culminating outcomes requires educators to begin their planning with the end outcome in mind and it always focuses on how to get back to the outcome. Curriculum materials, assessments, and evaluations are designed to reinforce the chosen outcome (Spady, 1994a).

Demands for accountability, accessibility, and consistency have caused countries all over the world to look to Outcomes-Based Education to restore the public's faith in their education system. A great number of research articles have been written in respect to South Africa's educational development in the aftermath of apartheid. Their national government directs its journey as it is in the United Kingdom whereas, similar to Canada, state or provincial bodies have proposed OBE in Australia and the United States. In other places, local jurisdictions and institutions determine the outcomes. The many faces of Outcomes-Based Education are evident as we realize that the outcomes-based changes that are being made to the traditional education systems on virtually every continent vary as much as the conditions under which they were created. This variety is beneficial in order to influence student learning, the concept of Outcomes-Based Education can and should be moulded to the needs of the students.

Historical Account of Outcomes-Based Education

Concerns that the education system cannot adequately prepare students for life and work in the 21st Century coupled with cries for accountability, accessibility, and uniformity and consistency in curriculum, paved the way for the development of the educational theory known as Outcomes-Based Education.

Philosopher George Santayana's famous words, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," speak volumes when studying the development of OBE in the United States. Not unlike the present day social climate, Eisner (1994) notes that during the efficiency movement which dates between 1903 and 1925, schools were being accused of slackness and not giving the tax payers a fair return for the money that they

had invested. In response, goals were specified and the methods through which they could be attained were announced (Eisner, 1994).

Some say that Outcomes-Based Education was born in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Thomas Guskey (1994), however, argues that Ralph W. Tyler put forth its driving principles in his classic 1949 book, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* which promoted that learning is the result of the student's actions, "It is through what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does" (Tyler, 1949, p. 63). From this notion, he defined the building blocks of curriculum, "educational objectives" as the realization of what we want students to learn and what they should be able to do because of the learning.

Tyler articulated four questions that must be satisfied during the development of any curriculum and plan of instruction referred to as the Tyler Rationale:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to accomplish these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Guskey, 1994, p. 3).

Not only was Ralph Tyler one of the most influential men in American education, he was a great teacher as well. One of his students, Benjamin Bloom, took his innovative approach to curriculum design and evaluation to greater heights. It was he who first coined the term "outcomes" which he explained as the desirable end to any teaching and

learning process and in the late 1970's and early 1980's the label Outcomes-Based Education was born (Guskey, 1994).

Although Bloom recognized the curriculum issues evident in Tyler's first fundamental question and the evaluation issues in the fourth question, he set aside curriculum issues to focus his research on the second and third questions. The educational theory that resulted, called Mastery Learning, was mainly an instructional strategy designed to help teachers improve their teaching so that their students could learn in the best way possible (Guskey, 1994).

Later, Outcomes-Based Education would focus mainly on curriculum and minimally on assessment, utilizing Tyler's second and third questions. Interestingly, David Andrich (2002), a former student of Bloom's (cited in Andrich, 2002) muses that although differences are distinct, a synthesis of Mastery Learning and Outcomes-Based Education might be a viable possibility worthy of further research.

Paralleled in time with the promotion of Bloom's Mastery Learning, the "back to basics" movement which monopolized American education in the 1960's and early 1970's, adopted Tyler's idea of "educational objectives," linked them to behavioral approaches to teaching, and labeled their approach, Objective-Based Education (Guskey, 1994).

The robot-like disposition of these behavioral approaches quickly lost popularity with mainstream educators who moved it aside for Competency-Based Education and Goal-Based Education as educators jumped from one "promising" educational theory to another. Within Competency-Based Education's short duration, William Spady was able to introduce the notion that competencies must indicate successful performance in real

life activities; a concept that was carried on to Outcomes-Based Education. Certainly, competency testing and other forms of criterion-referenced measurement was the greatest legacy that this initiative bestowed upon the progress of education. The creation of mandatory curriculum standards was the response to the growing demands for accountability in the education system (Guskey, 1994).

Jenny Reeves and Christine Forde (2004) reveal that “changing practice always represents a challenge to the status quo and involves argument, questioning, and debate about why the new way is desirable or can be considered proper and therefore acceptable” (p. 89-90). They also explain that professional development for teachers already established in the field raises different questions from those proposed by newcomers to the profession (Reeves & Forde, 2004).

Nova Scotia’s educational changes have traditionally modeled American initiatives, often when the reports from the United States relay that they are moving on to something new. It was an educational experience for me to read the research first hand and realize how different American systems are from ours, how societal demands seem to have a greater influence on their educational decisions, and how dominant a role economics and politics play in their education systems.

Unfortunately, every new initiative, no matter how sound, is met with a great deal of skepticism from veteran teachers who say, “This too shall pass.” This attitude prevails because history proves it to be likely. In twenty-two years of teaching, I have been introduced to what James H. Block and others (1995) refer to in their book, *School Improvement Programs: A Handbook for Educational Leaders* as some of the best and most popular school and classroom improvement programs in America. These include:

Curriculum Objectives, Mastery Learning, Open-Classrooms, Effective Schools: The Evolving Research and Practices, Cooperative Learning, Critical Thinking, Mastery Learning, Cooperative Learning, Critical Thinking, Assessment as a School Improvement Innovation, Instructional Alignment, Mastery Teaching, Peer Coaching, Teaching for Literacy, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Outcomes-Based Education. Each one of these was a blip on our school's professional development radar and each one moved to the side of the screen to allow room for the next "new and improved" initiative. There has been an insufficient allotment of professional development and time to see these programs come to fruition and the remnants do not serve as a strong enough foundation for building teachers' confidence.

Beginning in the early 1980's, dramatic societal changes caused the Atlantic provinces' departments of education to realize that they must work collaboratively to rethink the education that students receive in Atlantic Canada: advances in technology, the information explosion, new research on learning styles and brain development, the need to develop lifelong learners, changes in the patterns and character of today's student population, increased emphasis on accountability, and globalization. Under the auspices of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF), the departments of education wanted to develop an outcomes-based curriculum that would clearly articulate what the students are to know and be able to do by the time they graduate, to design curriculums that reflect these requirements, and to allow the provinces to know if the students have achieved their expectations (APEF, n.d.).

An interprovincial project committee made up of representatives (consultants and teachers) from each province was brought together to provide input, reaction, and

approval. Then, a lead province, following the direction and decisions of the project committee, undertook the drafting and revising of the specified curriculum elements. Each province had the responsibility to coordinate and implement the new curriculum including the piloting/field test phases, the inservicing, the ongoing support, and putting in place the procedures and mechanisms for communicating and consulting with its educational partners (APEF, n.d.).

The statements developed and consensually agreed upon by the project committee reflected constructivist pedagogy and described student learning in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout the curriculum. The Essential Graduation Learnings, often referred to as EaGLes, are cross-curricular and provide the framework for the development of curriculum outcomes: Aesthetic Expression, Citizenship, Communication, Technical Competence, Personal Development, and Problem-Solving.

The result was the development of a common core curriculum based on consensus among the provinces for Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The document produced for English Language Arts (1998) by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture identifies the General Curriculum Outcomes (GCOs) and ties them to the Essential Graduation Learnings. It also identifies the key-stage curriculum outcome statements that define what students need to know and be able to do by the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. Specific Curriculum Outcomes (SCOs) for each grade level are located in the curriculum document.

Within the English Language Arts curriculum (1998), teachers will find three strands: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing, which are to be taught in an integrated manner so that students will see

how language processes are interconnected and be able to apply them. The curriculum contains three GCOs for Speaking and Listening broken down into twelve SCOs, four GCOs and fourteen SCOs comprise the Reading and Viewing strand, and three GCOs and fourteen SCOs state the intended learning for Writing and Other Ways of Representing.

Implementation in Various Schools

Even though in 1996, forty-eight states in the United States had some form of Outcomes-Based Education being practiced within its borders, research to document their progress or to compare various models of OBE is slim at best (Gandal cited in Marzano & Kendall, 1997). Karen Evans and Jean King (1994) rightfully think that, “Testimonials, speeches, and narrative descriptions may be inspirational and helpful, but they provide little solid ground on which to build a reform movement” (Evans & King, 1994, p. 16).

More than ten years after Evans and King acknowledged the lack of research on Outcomes-Based Education, it is still very rare. Only a small number of studies are available to discuss the effects of Outcomes-Based Education, despite its growing popularity (Evans & King, 1994). Glatthorn (1993) noted, “Only a few systematic research efforts have studied the implementation and effect of the OBE model as a comprehensive reform strategy” (p. 355).

Fortunately, Canadian research on Outcomes-Based Education is becoming available mainly from Alberta and from Ontario where William Spady collaborated with many educators during his employment with the Ontario Institute for Studies in

Education (Spady, 1994b). Out of three studies that show how OBE is unfolding in Canada, I have chosen to review two contrasting studies from the province of Alberta.

The first is a case study in which Babiuk (1993) explained the process that a team of three teachers undertook to attempt an Outcomes-Based Education model at Jubilee Junior High School in Edson, Alberta, which Babiuk referred to as “humanistic and progressive” (Babiuk, 1999, ¶ 1).

In the fall of 1993, three teachers became a team and implemented large group instruction which would see them having the same students for three years. Instead of having individual classes, they all shared sixty students who were taught by any of the three at any given time. This integration would allow all teachers to respond to all students’ needs, provide them with daily professional support and a collaborative team to develop curriculum, maintain consistency if one were to be absent, and would eliminate the “getting to know you” period that is necessary every September.

In addition, there was no need for bells or timetables because the subjects were integrated, and the students weren’t moving from class to class. They were, however, moving into the community and the community was joining them in the classroom. Authentic assessment tools such as portfolios, student-led conferences, public presentations and other demonstrations of learning replaced the traditional marks for assessment. A community focus group worked with the school to develop exit outcomes as part of the division’s five-year plan. They were: competent problem solver, effective communicator, critical and creative thinker, collaborative team participant, and socially responsible student (Babiuk, 1999).

Alarm bells went off when I was reading this account. From the literature that I have read and will discuss later, I immediately recognized that this attempt to implement an Outcomes-Based Education model is an example of, “too much, too fast.” No bells, no marks, no change of classes, no parent-teacher, no division between classes, no change in the class personalities for three years, the move to outcomes-based assessment, and to add to all that, the students involved watched the rest of the student body operate under the traditional system and have “life as usual.” All of the preparation for this massive undertaking took place over the course of one school year and Babiuk emphasized, “a summer of hard work” (Babiuk, 1999, ¶ 3). This did not seem adequate because it is not unusual for me to invest a summer, working hard on one item that I want to implement in my classroom, such as Literature Circles.

Inevitably, problems developed. The students wanted a traditional schedule, the parents wanted marks, interpersonal problems occurred within the team, and the rest of the staff was not supportive. In addition, the extra time and work necessary to facilitate collaborative daily planning, to create performance assessments, and to develop the whole program from scratch, proved to be extremely stressful and overwhelming.

Despite the stresses and the message from some parents and educators that change was not necessary, the team felt that the positives strongly outweighed the negatives and in each of the next two years they voluntarily formed two new teams (Babiuk, 1999).

“Ready, fire, aim!” became their mantra associating with a view of the change process where you plan, take action, evaluate, plan and act again. From the viewpoint of an outside observer, the vast amount of change proposed for such a short period of time suggests that this may not have been the most effective change model to follow. Lobby

groups were set up in the community to attack the large-group instruction approach with no opportunity for dialogue. Sadly, these town-hall style meetings where opinions could be voiced somewhat anonymously and without corroboration got out of control; the school was discredited and blamed for all students' problems, teachers were accused of ruining children, teachers were disturbed by parental mistrust, community members believed that the school had derailed, and the students repeatedly heard how bad their teachers were (Babiuk, 1999).

Eventually, the demand to return to marks and the traditional-style school, or to have a choice, led to a compromise. A dual-track system and the return to marks brought a sense of calm and rebirth. The passing of time permitted healing to take place. Open communication enabled the school to mend relationships within the staff, with their students, and with the community.

In the sixth year, the vision of having an Outcomes-Based Education system temporarily stalled because not enough students signed up to offer the alternative. Promoters looked for ways to mimic their approaches in the traditional classroom, such as portfolio assessment, but division among the teachers made it difficult and less effective.

The vision of Jubilee Junior High to become an outcomes-based system is vulnerable, but the vision to provide students with the opportunities to become critical and creative thinkers and to possess the environmental social attitudes necessary when they exit school is alive and well (Babiuk, 1999).

The other study involves two schools in Fort McMurray, Alberta who accepted the challenge to become involved in the district Outcomes-Based Education pilot project.

Geddert (1993) explains how teachers, administrators, central office staff, and a parent representative all joined together as the OBE team to develop a process to implement the four principles of Outcomes-Based Education.

The pilot involved an Early Childhood ECS to grade nine school with 636 students and a high school with 760 students. Thirty grade 2 to 10 mathematics classes per year were used to implement the pilot which included twelve to fifteen teachers and six to seven hundred students annually. The purpose of the pilot was to “determine what effects, if any, the implementation of the OBE beliefs and principles might have on student achievement, attitudes, and responsibility” (Geddert, 1993, p. 206).

The team began their process by completing a literature review on Outcomes-Based Education and then one on indicator systems to ascertain their research base. It was invaluable during the planning sessions, not only providing insight into OBE, but also, showing them the most effective practices to promote student achievement. Through synthesizing their research, they realized that positive results could be obtained by combining OBE practices with a collaborative planning process.

A three-year Outcomes-Based Education action research project was created. The first year was spent determining and defining the desired exit outcomes, which all students should demonstrate, and in choosing the measures to be used in the research process. The second year was spent field testing the planned instructional processes and measures. In year three, collaborative improvements were made based on the field study. It is obvious that this team did not use the maxim, “Ready, fire, aim!” Three years were used to develop and field test the study before implementation (Geddert, 1993).

The team examined future trends to see what students would need in order to demonstrate success in the 21st century, determined the outcomes of significance or exit outcomes and then designed down to specific program outcomes.

Feedback from the teachers revealed that they credited the principle of high expectations for having a definite impact on student achievement. The expectation of 80% mastery or higher was required on selected math outcomes to obtain credit for the skill and for some less important skills a checklist was used to imply 100% mastery. During the pilot process, it was realized that averaging or compressing a lot of learning did not sufficiently describe what the student could do. All of the mastered mathematical concepts and the ones in progress had to be recorded on an individual student progress report (Geddert, 1993).

The teachers recognized that time or the methods used in initial instruction often limited student-learning opportunities so they began to offer expanded opportunities. These included the ability to choose from a variety of activities during the introduction of the concept, being re-taught the concept if necessary either by the teacher, a peer tutor, or in a group. Collaborative and creative decision making was necessary to provide for the students whose need for expanded opportunities extended past a semester and for the students who mastered concepts quickly.

According to the findings of the study, implementing the Outcomes-Based Education principles caused a significant number of students to achieve higher mastery levels in mathematics classes than were previously recorded. For example, "In Math 13, 5% of the 1990 (Pre-OBE) students were achieving 80% or higher in the course. Following the implementation of the OBE principles, 81% (1991) and 74% (1992) of the

students were achieving 80% or higher in Math 13 (Geddert, 1993, p. 209). OBE students were also more successful on externally designed measures such as the provincial mathematics achievement tests (Geddert, 1993).

Survey results recorded that gains in student achievement, responsibility, and attitudes were perceived by parents and students. Parental perception of the change in student responsibility was significant and all indicators showed strong parental support for the outcomes-based process especially at the junior high levels.

Undoubtedly, the stakeholders in this research project regard it as a success and rightfully so. The feeling of satisfaction for a job well done is evident in the study and in the plans to further the Outcomes-Based Education implementation in the future.

O'Neil (1994) cautioned that assessment experts know how to measure basic levels of skills and knowledge, have less experience measuring higher order outcomes, and have no experience with the transformational. It will be interesting to follow their quest to require students to demonstrate transformational outcomes, the cross disciplinary outcomes that Outcomes-Based Education envisions (O'Neil, 1994).

Criticisms and Concerns to Monitor

In its simplest form, Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) clarifies the outcomes that students are expected to achieve; teaching and assessing are then adjusted to make sure that everyone meets with success. Grant Wiggins (as cited in O'Neil, 1994, p. 7). made the assertion, that "viewed that way, nobody in their right mind would have an objection to it," Nonetheless, criticism abounds both of OBE philosophy and its implementation. Robert Marzano, senior program director at the Mid-continent Regional

Education Laboratory jokingly pointed out, “Now, nobody can use the O-word” (O’Neil, 1994, p. 6).

In Lewis Carroll’s (1943, p. 124) *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice argues with Humpty Dumpty over the meaning of a word. He replies scornfully, “When *I* use a word, ...it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.” This symbolizes not only the dispute over the word “outcome” but also over the war of words surrounding Outcomes-Based Education. The battle rages over the variety of names that are used to refer to OBE in the literature: Outcomes-Based Learning, Competency Learning, Standards-Based Education, Goals-Based Education, and frequent references to Mastery Learning. The variety of models and school implementations, the multitude of definitions used to define OBE, and even the difference in spelling from text to text are concerns for both supporters and critics. Susan M. Markle, educational psychology professor at Chicago’s University of Illinois suggests that Outcomes-Based Education sounds a lot like criterion-referenced instruction, which is a synonym for competency-based training. “The educational establishment continues to make up new words for old concepts, just so they can drown us in a new curriculum,” she charges. “Why do we feel compelled to rename old concepts when we have perfectly good terms already?” (in Thompson, 1991, p. 52). It is understandable that teachers are overwhelmed by the frequently changing bandwagons, each with its own terminology.

What outcomes are is the first and most important of the concerns because all others stem from it. Spady (as cited in Brandt, 1993, p.66) defines an outcome as “the culminating demonstration of learning. It is a demonstration: what it is the kids will actually do ... Outcomes are not content, they’re performances.” Tavner (2005)

suggested that this was a feasible definition until multiple, often conflicting, sources used the term “outcome” interchangeably with “objective” and “goal.” McKernan (1993, p. 343) disagrees, stating that “OBE serves as a limited model for curriculum ... it is not compatible with a liberal notion of education. He contends that too much focus is placed on the outcomes, to the detriment of teaching and learning and proposes instead a procedural-inquiry model of education. “To define outcomes education as a set of outcomes decided in advance of teaching and learning conflicts with the wonderful, unpredictable voyages of exploration that characterize learning through discovery and inquiry” (McKernan, 1993, p. 347). This model of education may have been good for Socrates in Ancient Greece and some tertiary education but, in practice, it is only one of the many models of instruction used in primary and secondary education.

Without a doubt, McKernan (1993) minimizes the strengths and possibilities of an outcomes-based curriculum planning model which offers far more to public education than McKernan acknowledges. Simply because the OBE model begins its planning with outcomes does not mean that methods, materials, and or learning experiences are not important. Teachers, as he suggests, do many complex things and outcomes-based planning provides the necessary structure for teachers and students to do them well.

Critics question whether outcomes have any real substance or whether they are merely symbolic “fluff.” OBE implementers respond by citing *The Five Great Illusions of Achievement* practiced in traditional school systems: 1. Everything is worth 100 points, 2. All points are created equally, 3. If students don’t perform successfully, take points off, 4. Seventy (or eighty, or ninety) points is good enough, 5. The more points you accumulate, the more achievement you have (Spady, 1994a, p. 45). Then they sum up by

saying, “As substance, grades mean nothing! As symbols, grades mean everything!” (Spady, 1994a, p. 150). OBE does not confuse substance with grades and offers students, parents, and teachers a more accurate picture of student learning than our present system can provide (Spady, 1994a).

Even OBE advocates struggle with the concept of one set of outcomes for all. It has been expressed that in some schools outcomes are not rigorous enough or appropriate for the requirements of life and that equity issues arise when the students of schools with low or unclear outcomes are being held in equal standing with those who obtained their diploma by taking advanced placement courses. They question if a university bound scholar can thrive on the same outcomes expected of a department store worker (O’Neil, 1994). My understanding of the Nova Scotia English Language Arts outcomes leads me to suggest that the outcomes are designed to permit teachers to challenge those who are continually meeting the basic requirements and to provide more time and extra instruction for those who experience difficulty.

In their accusations of OBE “dumbing down” the curriculum, critics may be romanticizing the status quo. Elmore (as cited in Schmoker, 2000, p. 52) reveals that “standards expose what really happens (or does not happen) in the average classroom.” Although the use of standards has begun to heal the cracks in the fractured curriculum, many inconsistencies occur. DataWorks Educational Research (cited in Schmoker, 2000, p.56) reported that “slippage starts early; by fifth grade, student assignments were mostly second and third grade material.” Researchers charge that the actual amount of time spent reading and writing in most public schools is deplorable and at all levels, the time wasted on colouring, cutting, pasting, and chatting was phenomenal (Schmoker, 2000).

For example, Haycock (cited in Schmoker, 2000) found that, “Kids are given more coloring assignments than mathematics and writing assignments” (p. 56). More importantly, Haycock’s research revealed that in schools where students were not spending their time on the “crayola curriculum,” those schools “had systematically embraced standards” (Barth et al. as cited in Schmoker, 2000, p. 56).

OBE on the contrary, focuses on the substance of a learning demonstration. According to Baron and Boschee (1996) any OBE program should: “clearly identify what an individual is to learn; base each learner’s progress on demonstrated achievement; accommodate each learner’s needs through multiple instructional strategies and assessment techniques; and provide sufficient time and assistance for each learner to realize his or her potential” (§ 2). Consistency and clarity are distinguishing characteristics of an outcomes-based approach with which it defines what is substantial and necessary for learning. OBE can provide structure and focus to the way schools are organized, having the curriculum more aligned and focused, and diminishing the opportunity for items to randomly be added to the curriculum without aligning them to the outcomes. Even McKernan (1993, p. 343) concedes that Outcomes-Based Education’s “greatest successes may lie in designing training and instruction.”

As criticism mounted, opponents and critics charged that some outcomes developed in the field objectified personal values and psychological states. “OBE has been heavily criticized by the far Right (religious and nonreligious) for its supposed vague outcomes regarding ‘appreciating and understanding others’, ‘tolerance of difference’, and ‘respect for diversity’” (McQuaide & Pliska, 1994, p. 17). There is confusion here between teaching certain values such as self-esteem rather than realizing

that self-esteem is the end result developed through carefully selected activities. The far left, on the other hand, believe that reform in education has traditionally intensified a one-sided power-based capitalistic initiative (Apple, 1988; Shapiro, 1985). Despite this criticism, Kanpol (1995) believes that OBE has the potential to be the domain in which democracy can unfold and alienation, oppression, and subordination can finally be confronted. Capper and Jamison (1993) agree when they say, OBE “positions itself as a means of ‘emancipating’ students and teachers from traditional practices which lead to educational inequity” (p. 427).

Outcomes-Based Education is a philosophy rather than a regime of practices. The application of the theory must be like a chameleon; adaptable to all school settings and situations. It is the methods and the tools that are used to achieve the outcomes that must vary according to the unique culture in which they are being used. Wien (1998) wonders how a society decides which (or whose) knowledge and skills will be privileged in the implementation of OBE and suggests that school scheduling can deprive students in the same way that its curriculum can. Shields (2004, p.39) however, stresses that “educators must promote academic excellence, defined not simply in terms of scores on standardized tests, but by high quality performance indicators on a wide range of outcomes.”

Government control and accountability have been in the forefront of the criticism of OBE. State and federal government attempts to jumpstart school reform have been heavily criticized and even though few governmental reform initiatives meet true OBE criteria, it has received the brunt of the critics’ ire (Spady, 19994a). Objectionable substance and perceived government interference into local and family matters, which involve values and beliefs, are at the core of their discontent. The government’s

requirement that students learn and demonstrate specific requirements in order to graduate was not only viewed by critics as overstepping their authority, but it was also touted as part of the OBE “problem” (Spady, 1994a, p. 152).

An observer of the OBE movement who directs the Maryland Assessment Consortium suggests, “If outcomes are too ‘global’ critics ask, “Where’s the beef?” But if a state specifies dozens or hundreds of outcomes, it is attacked for ‘prescribing the curriculum’ and treading on local initiative” (O’Neil, 1994, p. 9). Outcomes developed at the local level help to address problems facing schools by requiring students to display the outcomes society holds important. As Lee Iaccoca said at an Association for School and Curriculum Development (ASCD) convention, “when Mr. and Mrs. America get up in the morning and go out into the world, they do not do social studies, they do life” (in Brandt, 1993, p.70).

With the OBE implementation that took place throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there was the local community input and support that are essential for the successful implementation of OBE. When this was removed, distrust and dislike for the federal government created many problems. Paradoxically, the government removed the control of OBE from the hands of local expertise and left boards of education to execute an initiative that was legally impossible to implement.

One way in which the government has seriously impeded the implementation of authentic OBE is that all state policies regarding the certification of schools and the credentialing of students are required by law to be measured by time (Spady, 1994a). Capper and Jamison (1993) suggest that it is contradictory for OBE advocates to require the removal of time barriers, while operating within a time-based system: 50-

minute periods, three terms per year, and curriculum outcomes for specific grades. Unfortunately, schools circumvented this problem by ignoring basic OBE rules such as reorganizing so that outcomes are fixed, and time and other resources needed to achieve the outcomes are variable. The OBE philosophy was distorted by this situation as many schools dissected and extracted the parts that they were willing to embrace such as placing the emphasis on the outcomes that schools are expected to achieve (Spady, 1994a).

Criticism of Outcomes-Based Education, for the most part, is not as prolific in Canada as it is in the United States. This is possibly due to the fact that many American models involve whole systems and high stakes tests that determine funding. Despite the lack of high stakes testing, however, government criticism over the implementation of OBE has been heard across the country. In Ontario, the recurrence of the phrase, “students will” in *The Common Curriculum* not only drastically changed the educational policy that has been influencing education in the province for over thirty years, but has also imposed autocratic mandates for school boards, teachers, and ultimately, for students (Wien, 1988). Wien (1998) explains that the wording, “students will” is absolute and is intended for all students. It doesn’t say, “students should, might, could, can, or may, or even ‘it is expected that students will’ (¶ 7). Apprehension pervades over the apparent lack of concern for the “unintended outcomes of schooling” (Wien, 1998, ¶ 14).

Wien (1998) asserts that the multitude of expectations and performance criteria forces Ontario teachers to become efficiency experts instead of teacher. She worries that this is leading to the “de-skilling of teachers,” a term Apple (1988) used to describe how OBE has impacted some teachers in the United States. The outcomes, or what to teach,

are predetermined; when to teach regulates the time of day that subjects will be taught, and most disturbing is the fact that some are told how to teach, often with archaic resources like basal readers. Wien (1998) contends that the management of cumbersome binders full of outcomes and the magnitude of paperwork required to document every student's progress for every outcome adds to teacher de-skilling. One Ontario teacher told her in an interview, "It's just that it makes me weep. I feel I'm drowning in paper. It's incredibly overwhelmingly time consuming in terms of paper. I'm wondering how I'm ever going to get all this stuff I've got now in heaps and piles, folders, and files in the right place. Checked off. I've got to do it for every child for every criterion (Wien, 1998, p 411)." This alludes to one of the many challenges that we will face as we work to understand and implement an outcomes-based program.

As in the United States, criticism in Nova Scotia stems mainly from the government underestimating the degree of public confusion and disagreement with Outcomes-Based Education. Lack of communication with administrators, teachers, parents, and students has left many questions unanswered and a general feeling of apprehension pervades. The criticism that is voiced most loudly and clearly is that too much is expected with too little professional development which would enable teachers to effectively demonstrate their ability to plan backwards to the outcomes, to design performance-based assessments to evaluate the outcomes, and to report student demonstration of the outcomes on an outcomes-based report card. In their study of Ontario teachers, John P. Miller and Susan M. Drake (1995) discovered that only a few teachers are comfortable with Outcomes-Based Education; the majority found it

complicated and confusing to implement and the key to successful and confident planning is adequate support.

In addition, changes are not being made to successfully implement Outcomes-Based Education; few schools have actually reorganized their curriculum or overhauled their assessment and reporting schemes to reflect the new outcomes. Schools, districts or, in our case, provinces, draft outcomes based on present curriculum or write ambitious and far reaching new outcomes while changing the curriculum very little. Since Outcomes-Based Education attempts to deemphasize subject content in favor of broader outcomes, the struggle between content and process leaves teachers wondering what content should remain in the curriculum (McNeir, 1993).

Ironically, during the time in which the developers were honing their outcomes-based philosophy, highly vocal critics were posing enough questions to let doubt creep into the minds of the potential supporters who initially wanted more definite outcomes and means of assessing them (Brandt, 1998). The education authorities were naively penny-wise and pound-foolish, assuming that content, assessment, and implementation would be self-sufficient as schools sought to understand and carry out the principles of OBE. Berlach & O'Neill, (2008, p. 50) explain that when schools are a part of a district or other larger body, there must be a "system-wide 'core' understanding of how OBE is being conceptualized" or the teachers who are required to implement OBE in their classrooms will be "in a state of abject confusion" (p. 50).

Berlach & O'Neill, (2008) reveal that a variety of international studies have determined that "simply asking 'design facilitators' to 'empower the learning community', to paraphrase Spady, would never be sufficient direction for driving any

system of education” (p. 50). The underlying problem, however, in the opinion of Berlach and O’Neill, (2008) was not necessarily the naivety of the decision makers, but the limited understanding of what is meant by ‘curriculum.’ In fact, they believe that “a commitment to achieving greater epistemic clarity in the areas of curriculum conceptualization *prior* to engaging in implementation would likely have yielded a different result regarding the reception of the courses of study” (p. 60).

O’Neil (1994) suggested that possibly the general public doesn’t think that the schools are performing badly enough to justify the major upheaval, the cost, and the time necessary to change to an Outcomes-Based Education system. The survey conducted in my school as part of our school improvement plan agrees that people are not really dissatisfied with what is going on in schools, which suggests that they would be inclined to support modest, incremental changes more readily than major ones.

Ultimately, wherever the debate is raging over the implementation of OBE, both sides of the controversy are determined to find more evidence to support their specific views, but in the end, it is teachers and students who are caught in the middle trying to make sense of it all. Michael Fullan (as cited in Berlach & McNaught, 2007) insightfully points out, however, “success per se is largely determined by what teachers think about the intended changes. As advertisers well know, perception is everything. If teachers fail to find any sense or meaning in an intended reform,... then regardless of any touted benefits, the change will most likely not succeed” (¶ 10).

Professional Learning Communities

The quest to find solutions for the perceived crisis within North American public education systems and the determination of best practices for enhancing student

achievement has led educational researchers and educators to embark on the latest educational reform journey: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

The envisioning of PLCs takes place in a variety of ways. Many models exist, all espousing improved student achievement, but like every innovation, all are not created equally. For example, Outcomes-Based Education, in its most extensive form is a learning community with exemplary models to its credit (Brandt, 1994). Integration of many of its premises has become a part of the PLC model that the Nova Scotia Department of Education, many school districts, and individual schools have chosen to embrace. This model was designed by Richard Dufour and Robert Eaker who believe that turning a school into a PLC is “the most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement in developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional learning communities” (Dufour & Eaker, 1998, p.xi).

In part, the choice of this model is due to the successful marketing strategies of Dufour and Eaker. Extremely informative, organized, and convincing professional development institutes, which have been designed to promote their trademarked program, *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, have been attended by teachers and administrators all across North America. The enthusiasm and desire to embark on the journey to improve one’s school after attending an institute is compelling. Rick and Becky Dufour and Bob Eaker have become names commonly heard in staff meetings and staffrooms in Nova Scotia, where their work is having a profound influence on the way schools are reshaping to ensure student achievement.

In this review, I will explain the theoretical premises of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Then, I will scrutinize research undertaken in two schools that

have worked collegially as a staff to become a Professional Learning Community. Finally, I will put forth the criticisms/concerns that will need monitoring.

Theoretical Premises of Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities are the primary topic of the current literature on school reform in which they are touted as the number one means of increasing student achievement and as a perspective concept to support the professional development of teachers. Given that Dufour and Eaker's book, *Professional Learning Communities at Work* (1998) and subsequent resources have had a profound influence in Nova Scotia and beyond, it is fitting to turn to them for a summarization of Professional Learning Communities.

Dufour and Eaker (1998) coined the term Professional Learning Communities that was carefully constructed from its three parts: A "professional" is one who has command of a particular field for which she/he has received extensive training and this training must remain current.

"Learning" requires attaining knowledge or a skill through its study, instruction, or experience. This learning must be constantly practiced in order to maintain continuous success. At the local music festival, the adjudicator told a class of thirteen year-olds that they only need to practice on the days that they eat. She stressed the need to incorporate the "P" word, practice, into their daily routine. She used the analogy that if, after plugging the kettle in to make a cup of tea, things keep happening that cause you to have to unplug the kettle, the water may never get boiled quite enough. Similar to the un-boiled kettle, life often gets in the way of the piano practicing for busy teenagers and in the way of teachers updating their knowledge base in a timely fashion.

“Communities” rather than organizations was chosen because the word organization implies that attention will be placed on structure and efficiency, whereas “community” suggests a group of people sharing common interests. Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson cited in Dufour and Eaker (1998) explain:

Community means different things to different people. To some it is a safe haven where survival is assured through mutual cooperation. To others it is a place of emotional support, with deep sharing and bonding with close friends. Some see community as an intense crucible for personal growth. For others, it is simply a place to pioneer their dreams. (p. xii)

Dufour and Eaker (1998) asserted that dreams will be pioneered in schools and students will achieve better results when teachers work collaboratively and are participating in continuous learning and action research projects strategically embedded in their jobs. They suggest that there are six characteristics that will lay the foundation of Professional Learning Communities:

1. Having a shared mission, vision, values, and goals is the first and most important characteristic in building a successful PLC (Dufour & Eaker, 1998). Educators involved in a professional learning community must be clear that learning is the fundamental purpose of the school and collaboratively their purpose is to examine and change, if necessary, all practices that impact on learning. Guiding principles must be developed by all the people in the school instead of the traditional model of administrators deciding what everyone is going to do and how they are going to do it. With a focus on learning, together the staff determines what the futuristic vision of the school will be. Dufour and Eaker (1998, p. 25) write, “Guiding principles are not

just articulated by those in positions of leadership; even more important, they are embedded in the hearts and minds of people throughout the school.”

2. Collective inquiry into “best practice” and “current reality” is the process in which members of a PLC collaboratively engage to question the status quo when it comes to student learning in the past, to investigate new methods that adhere more strongly to the research on best practices, to try the methods out, and then to reflect on the results. Dufour and Eaker (1998) recognize this as “the engine of improvement, growth, and renewal in a professional learning community” (p. 25).
3. Heller Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little – together we can do so much” which unequivocally shows the power of the collaborative learning-focused teams which drive a professional learning community. Present day schools and teachers must rid themselves of the notion that teachers teach “their” kids in their classroom. Peter Senge, (cited in O’Neil, 1995) has heard a teacher say, “When I close the classroom door, I’m God in my universe” (p. 2). When members of a community interdependently work to analyze their results and impact their professional practice so that individual and collective results improve, mutual understandings are enhanced and powerful relationships develop. Depending on the reform that is being addressed, this may take place as a whole staff community or within rewarding professional communities consisting of smaller groups within the school or relationships with colleagues from other schools (Dufour & Eaker, 1998). For example, the English Language Arts team looks at student learning in this area and other members of the community will look at what is necessary in their subject areas. If a member is an isolated entity on the staff, a foreign language teacher for example, then it would be

- beneficial for personal and school development for this individual to seek out a community in their district or possibly become a member of a virtual community.
4. Action orientation/experimentation is a must in a PLC. Members recognize that action must be taken for learning to occur and through involvement and experience school improvement will happen. Current educational research and action research play an important role; teachers are encouraged to develop, test, evaluate, and reflect upon theories and then in a cyclical motion continue the process. “Even seemingly chaotic activity is preferred to orderly, passive inaction” (Dufour & Eaker, 1998, p. 27).
 5. The core of a professional learning community is characterized by its commitment to continuous improvement which comes from constantly questioning the status quo and always searching for better ways. Members must always remain focused on what their fundamental purpose is, on what they hope to achieve, on the strategies for improvement, and on the criteria that will be used to assess the improvement efforts (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).
 6. A professional must have a results orientation and realize that all of their efforts and hard work must be “assessed on the basis of results rather than intentions” (Dufour & Eaker, p. 29). Ongoing assessments on the basis of tangible results validate purposeful improvements instead of hoping that hit and miss attempts will work. Peter Senge, (2006) claimed that, “a learning organization revolves around the premise that such organizations will produce dramatically improved results” (p. 44).

To become a professional learning community a school must undergo many shifts

in fundamental purpose; a daunting, sometimes uncomfortable task which requires a lot of hard work. By asking the question, What do we want each student to learn?, schools turn the focus away from teaching to a focus on learning. The response to this question must be acquired from the students demonstrating the provincially mandated curriculum outcomes regardless of the content that is covered. Luckily, with the development of collaborative teams, teachers will no longer have to determine on their own what the essential learnings are in the curriculum guide. Also, it is essential to place the emphasis on what students learn instead of what was taught. Staffroom comments such as, “I don’t know where they were when I taught that, on another planet, I think...Oh well, we have to move on” will be a thing of the past (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

Within a PLC, a major shift must take place in the use of assessments. Instead of the traditional infrequent summative assessments given by individual teachers at the end of a unit to determine a mark, the collaborative teams design common assessments that assess a few things frequently. The common assessment will clarify the criteria that must be met to master each outcome and confirm that inter-rater reliability will be present when assessing student work. This means that each student in each level will be graded with the same criteria, ones which reflect their completion of the outcomes. This approach still allows for teacher autonomy in choosing the material and resources that will be used to achieve this end. In addition, the assessments are designed to identify students who need additional time and support and to provide students with the necessary information and instruction to ensure their mastery of the outcomes. The changeover in assessment practices might have eventually occurred with the promotion of outcomes-

based learning, but, certainly not in the systemic way that Dufour and Eaker have outlined it (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

Another necessary reform expedited through Professional Learning Communities is the necessity to have a timely response when students do not learn what you have determined is necessary to validate completion of the outcomes. Schools will have a systematic process which guarantees support for every student and which allows for multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning instead of the traditional one-shot deal. Teachers will not be solely responsible for providing students with the opportunity to complete quality work. As the schools progress towards becoming a PLC, teachers will not have to shoulder this responsibility individually because students will be required to obtain this support in organized classes during the school day (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

The climate in which teachers work will change drastically with the development of true professional learning communities; teaching in isolation will become a topic for educational history books. Over the course of time, teachers have become comfortable with the expectation that they determine what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach it, and whether or not they will embrace the curriculum reform as it comes along or choose to close their classroom door and maintain their status quo. During the 2007 Institute entitled, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement*, R. Dufour, (personal communication, April 11, 2007) stated emphatically that not one single piece of educational research can be found that supports teachers working in isolation as being best practice to promote student learning. On the other hand, Eastwood and Lewis (cited in Twadell, n.d.) reveal that, "Creating a collaborative culture is the single most important factor for successful school

improvement initiatives and the first order of business for those seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their schools” (ppt.#312/28).

The way teachers choose the work that students will complete, the grading process they use, and how a mark is determined is very different in Professional Learning Communities than in traditional schools. In a traditional school lessons are presented, activities, projects, presentations are assigned and completed to reinforce the concept and then individual teachers construct tests to assign grades. In a professional learning community, the collaborative teams form common assessments to inform their individual and collective practice and thus are able to respond immediately to students who need additional time and support. Students will be less likely to fall through the cracks, teachers will have the support of their colleagues to design quality assessments, and each community will benefit as teachers unite to share the responsibility for all of the students (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

To be able to design quality common assessments, teachers will need collaborative and ongoing professional development within their staff and teams. This implies that the external, top-down, and ineffective professional development sessions used to present the “flavour of the day” will not be necessary. For example, I have been required to leave my students to attend an inservice promoting a reading strategies book that the workshop leaders assume few have read. If one attends these meetings long enough, she/he is able to catch session re-runs. My day was spent re-reading and hearing the same presentation given several years ago. In a professional learning community, teachers develop professionally both individually and collectively as they read

educational research, conduct team-based action research, and assess the focused initiatives that they embark upon to improve student learning (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

All of the profound, fundamental changes discussed above will be difficult to bring to fruition without a dedicated and well-constructed leadership team. Principals' roles will change from being top-down managers to being supporters and facilitators while retaining their leadership responsibilities. Teachers will become leaders within their teams, communicating with the principal and each other, planning, modeling, and monitoring (Eaker, Dufour & Dufour, 2002). Senge (cited in O'Neil, 1995) described the effective principals that he knows as ones who "create an environment where teachers continually learn" (p. 2) and he goes on to challenge Human Resources to seek out and hire principals who have this mindset. Fortunately, Valley Woods Middle School where I teach has a principal and a vice-principal who are "intuitive, risk-taking, visionary, self-confident, empathetic, and trusting;" all the characteristics that Donahoe (1993, p. 300) espouses for a strong leader in a professional learning community. Many teachers have already begun assuming leadership roles within their subject teams and throughout the school.

Historical Account of Professional Learning Communities

Frequently, in light of the current charges that the present system is ineffective, Professional Learning Communities have been suggested as a viable means of school reform whereby the traditional focus of schools as organizations would be changed to the recognition of them as communities (Shields, 2000).

One could argue that community has always played a role in education. The notion of professional learning communities has grown out of age-old ideas. Etienne

Wenger (n.d.) explained that communities of practice date back to ancient times, but present day learning communities differ from the ones in the past because the focus today is on improving performance.

Shields (2000) contended that theories developing the idea of schools as communities unfolded from Tonnies' concept of *gemeinschaft* (often translated as community) which is an association in which individuals are oriented to the large association as much if not more than to their own self interest. Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews & Smith (1990) argued the tracing of its theoretical roots to John Dewey and Alexander Meiklejohn in the 1920s. Kleine-Kracht (1993) affirmed that the notion of schools as a community centered on learning originated in "Dewey's philosophy of learning and teaching where teachers and students participate together in the process of learning and sharing experiences of learning" (p. 391).

As a means of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, educators and administrators have looked to the notion of schools as learning communities for answers. Although several designers of learning communities exist in the literature, two stand out above all others, foremostly Peter Senge and to a lesser degree, Etienne Wenger. Both made an impression on business management and then progressively found their way into the field of education.

Peter Senge's (2006) book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* popularized the concept of the 'learning organization' in which learning organizations within American business organizations emphasized a need to develop the capacity of the whole organization to learn together rather than focusing on the learning of isolated individuals. It is interesting to note that this move to a "more

egalitarian organizational model was inspired, not by the lofty ideals of American democracy, but by a desire to regain lost business competitiveness” (Cowans, 2005, ¶ 5).

Senge identified five disciplines of a learning organization: systems thinking, personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, and team learning. He proclaimed that a learning organization is one “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (Senge, 2006, p. 14).

Etienne Wenger (2003) who coined the term “communities of practice” in his powerful book, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* defines communities of practice as “groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise” (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 139). He suggested three crucial characteristics; the domain, the community, and the practice. Within this framework, he contends that changing to a learning community in a school is a much deeper transformation that will inevitably take longer because “learning is not only a means to an end; it is the end product” (Wenger, n.d., ¶ 14).

The most intriguing and encouraging fact about the concept of Professional Learning Communities is that, unlike any other educational reform, it is supported by North America’s most respected authorities on what is necessary to improve schools: Dr. Rick Stiggins, one of America’s foremost authorities on assessment; Dr. Larry Lezotte, the Effective Schools movement; Dr. Roland S. Barth, founder and former director of the Harvard University Principals’ Center; Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, Chief Education Officer for Chicago Public Schools; Dr. Mike Schmoker, educational consultant; Dr.

Dennis Sparks, known as the voice of professional development in the United States; and Dr. Michael Fullan, internationally known for his ideas on change, leadership, and school improvement to name a few. They all agree that educators who embrace student learning as the mission of their school, who collaboratively help all students learn, who use formative assessments with a focus on results to guide their practice and foster continuous improvement, will better serve their students (Dufour, 2005).

Implementation in Various Schools

Continuous improvement is happening in many schools across North America as more and more seek to become Professional Learning Communities. Richard Dufour, (1989) whose co-authored book, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* is taking North American educators by storm, has personally implemented the PLC model with great success. During his tenure at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, the school that was once labeled as “the school no one wanted to attend” (Cowans, 2005, ¶ 3) became “one of the most recognized and celebrated schools in America” (Dufour, 1998, p. viii). For this review, I have chosen to review the process that two American schools undertook to implement Professional Learning Communities in their school. Although both have utilized educational reform models that evolved from Peter Senge’s (2006) model of corporate “learning organizations,” the reader is left with a very different impression about their potential for success. As a school-wide initiative, the first one implemented Dufour and Eaker’s model and the other a design initiated by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

In the first account written for the *Journal of Staff Development*, Becky Burnette (2002) described the process of becoming a Professional Learning Community at Boones Mill Elementary School in Boones Mill, Virginia which began in 2002 when she became the principal. Her goal, as an experienced administrator was to maintain the high standard that the school was already achieving. She believed that restructuring the school climate into a professional learning community following Dufour and Eaker's model was the most favorable way to ensure continued improvement and she was confident that her staff was ready for the challenge. The staff had already been immersed in professional development for more than a decade implementing effective schools research and had recently been involved in a study of Boyer's basic school model (1995) which offered a ready-made theoretical framework for school renewal and change (Burnette, 2002).

Even though Burnette believed that the staff would be eager to try Dufour and Eaker's model which research suggested would help to improve their students' results, she struggled with how she was going to lead the effort to develop a Professional Learning Community in Boones Mill Elementary School. She decided to ease the staff into experiences that would allow them to function as a PLC and hope that positive attitudes and commitment would follow (Burnette, 2002).

Surprisingly, the first step in the process began in the summer when the whole staff got together in small groups to discuss the school. Becky Burnette recorded every teacher's responses to three questions: What makes this school such a good school? What can we do to make it an even better school? As a new principal, what do I need to know and understand about this school?

Following the meeting, Burnette coded all the responses for common themes and she discovered that every team said that, “The people who work here make it such a good school.” The staff valued their colleagues and wanted to have more time to work with the people who taught the same subjects. Also, they saw a need to work together more effectively to further their school’s achievement. These were exactly the responses that Burnette was eager to receive (Burnette, 2002).

The collaborative memento was maintained by creating a master schedule that would permit the collaborative culture essential to Professional Learning Communities to unfold. Specialist schedules were rearranged allowing every teacher a daily 40-minute planning block and grade level teaching teams were guaranteed one hour of collaborative planning time per week. Multigrade team meetings were scheduled for once a month during the school day and learning would be shared at monthly staff meetings to keep everyone informed of each team’s progress. Although extremely productive, this summer meeting raises two red flags for me; it foreshadows the dichotomy between the amount of time necessary to implement Professional Learning Communities and Nova Scotia teachers’ contractual time. This will be discussed later, as it begs the question, How do schools “find” the necessary time if specialists are at a minimum?

Understandably, it was decided that since time was being provided for teachers to work collaboratively, a set of guidelines and procedures had to be determined to give the newly formed teams purpose and direction. Each team formed norms that would guide the way they worked together. In addition, it was agreed that the newly acquired collaborative planning time must be spent with teachers engaged in collective inquiry

related to teaching and learning and critical questions were designed to keep teams focused and to create a common vocabulary (Burnette, 2002).

The answer to critical questions such as, Are we clear on what students are to learn and the evidence they must show that they have learned it?, required teachers to produce documents or artifacts as evidence of their labour which helped bring focus to the team meetings.

In a business-like format, a feedback system was created to ensure that vital communication was happening. Teams reported what they were working on, any problems that were developing and any resources or support that they might need. Burnette responded back to them every week through team chairpersons or in person when she was able to attend the meeting (Burnette, 2002).

Fortunately, these improvement initiatives did not present themselves as extra burdens to already overloaded teachers because Burnette was insightful enough to align school, district, and state requirements to the professional learning community's initiative. She said they, "worked smarter, not harder" (Burnette, 2002, ¶ 22). Similarly, when the Valley Woods Middle School staff developed our School Improvement Plan in 2005-2006, creating the culture of Professional Learning Communities was part of the plan instead of being a separate initiative and it will provide the framework for the other goals.

The most important outcome was that the staff of Boones Mill Elementary School wanted to create a collaborative culture that would improve student achievement. Every team designed and committed to one specific, measurable student achievement goal. They identified the action steps that teachers had to take to achieve the goal, and they

described the evidence that would be used to assess their progress. For example, Burnette explained that a deficiency in the area of word analysis was determined in the school's performance on state standardized tests. A goal was established that by spring 2001 student performance would increase by at least five percentile points on the word analysis subtest. Revising the spelling and vocabulary curricula and developing grade-level assessments that modeled the state test format were two of the steps implemented to achieve this goal. Not only did local assessments reveal student gains, but the state achievement tests gave them reason to celebrate; performance matched the school's all time record in one of the areas tested and established new records in the other eight areas (Burnette, 2002).

By the end of the school year, Becky Burnette had definitely realized her goal. Under her strong leadership, her staff was developing a Professional Learning Community which continues to improve student achievement; daily living out their school motto, "We will work together, because hand in hand we all learn."

The author of the other account, Kristine A. Hipp, was a newly hired university professor at a private Franciscan University in Midwestern, United States when she was asked by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratories to join their PLC study. She would become the co-developer, or external change agent associated with a project to create a Professional Learning Community at Foxdale Middle School. The school's recently appointed principal, Rebecca Johnson convinced Hipp to accept the challenge as her efforts and the outcomes in this school would be transferable to other schools since Foxdale served a socio-economically mixed student population (Hipp, n.d.).

Early indicators should have pointed out that the transition to a PLC at Foxdale would not be easy. It was part of Mill Street School District which was going through a re-structuring process due to declining enrollment and financial difficulties. Low teacher morale, new ways of operating, and a new configuration of schools (K, 1-4, 5-8) which fed into one of the most competitive schools in the state were blamed for the rampant mistrust and suspicion prevalent in the school. A group of fifty-one teachers were made into a staff through the transfers of 5th and 6th grade teachers from a dismantled elementary school and the 7th and 8th grade teachers who were already serving the high school. It is very understandable that these two schools had “very different images of what a middle school could and should be” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 5). Attempting to turn Foxdale Middle School into a Professional Learning Community in your inaugural year as principal and amidst such turmoil would either prove to be a refreshing new beginning, or a daunting and unrealistic expectation. From personal experience, I know that when a school is closed down and teachers must join another staff, mistrust, disillusionment, and anger are but a few of the emotions that pervade one’s thoughts. If our principal at that time had tried to bring us together as a Professional Learning Community, the initiative would have failed unconditionally. Within three years, however, with the growth of the school, new relationships being fostered, old hurts dissolving, and new strong leadership, our school was ready in September to begin the process.

With the wholehearted support of Foxdale’s superintendent who thought that the opportunity to change the school into a PLC was both intriguing and in line with the school district’s vision, the project forged ahead. He cautioned them that two potential barriers; the memory of unsuccessful educational experiences and that a majority of the

staff would be retiring within the next five years, coupled with the pressures of two failed referendums which affect funding, steadily decreasing test scores, declining enrollment, and morale issues could hinder the active involvement of the staff (Hipp, n.d.).

It was with this concern in mind, that the project coordinators chose relational conditions, one component of one dimension of a Professional Learning Community, (Hord, 1997) upon which to begin the process. They allowed the rise and fall of trust among the staff to drive the project. Their belief that, “Nothing will change without trust. Trust is everything” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 2) influenced every part of the four-year ongoing project to the detriment of all of other key factors in the development of a learning community; structural conditions, shared values and vision, collective learning and the application of that learning, shared personal practice, and shared and supportive leadership.

The ball was scheduled to begin rolling with a meeting that was scheduled for Kristine Hipp to introduce the concept to the school’s leadership team, who apathetically did not attend. Later, a full overview of the SEDL project was delivered to the entire team at a dinner meeting at the principal’s home and they developed a strategy to introduce the project to the staff at their next meeting (Hipp, n.d.).

“Are you satisfied with the way things are in the school and in the district, and if not, are you open to try something new?” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 11) was the question with which Kevin Charles, an influential member of the leadership team and the head union negotiator opened the meeting. Two major concerns raised by the staff were whether the new initiative would add more to their already overflowing agenda and if the necessary time could be made available to learn and share collectively.

Hipp assured the teachers that the project would be integrated into current school initiatives so it would not be an add-on. As well, when they recognized themselves in Senge's (2006) second model of alignment, as being individuals with a clear purpose, they were convinced that it should be their goal to become the model that boasts a staff that is both empowered and aligned. In order to have time to work on achieving this success, two barriers had to be circumvented, time and transportation (Hipp, n.d.). The teachers surprisingly agreed to Charles and Johnson's plan to add five minutes to each school day to reap four half days spread throughout the year for professional development. They submitted a formal proposal to the district's teachers union to have this change made to their contract and it was approved. There was no mention of coming up with creative ways of restructuring the school day to permit time in its schedule to proceed with the plans. If PLCs are to be successful, teachers must be provided with the means to meet on a regular basis to address issues of concern regarding student achievement. The other challenge which they thought was probably the greatest was transportation. Strangely, the principal, in order to check the feasibility of the plan, rode on every bus route and met with every bus driver. In our district, a phone call or a meeting with the person in charge of scheduling would have accomplished this. In the end, the teachers and the school board approved the proposal (Hipp, n.d.).

In November, 1998, Foxdale faculty enjoyed their first "banked day" which began as an evening social followed by a day-long retreat. The explanation of the rustic lodge, the fun that was had engaging in a variety of creative activities, the pancake breakfast put on by some of the male staff, and fire-side chats planning the approach that would be taken with those few who had not attended was all too over the top for me. When the

written evaluations indicated a successful retreat due to teachers feeling empowered from planning and carrying out the day, one is left wondering if it was the team meetings or the fun that was successful (Hipp, n.d.).

Ultimately, a whole year was spent building trust among staff and between staff and administration to get them ready to begin building a community of learners in the following year. The fragile trust was easily shaken when a defunct alternative program designed to try to catch grade 7 and 8 students who were “falling through the cracks” resurfaced and with it came \$92 000 dollars and serious expectations. Some teachers began feeling disempowered due to declining enrollment and staff restructuring for the alternative program. They viewed the Alternative Program as an “unstoppable juggernaut” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 22) and began soliciting school board assistance behind the backs of other teachers and the principal. This led the leadership team to establish a welcomed protocol for staff members to voice their concerns and be respectfully heard supposedly to begin the next school year with a working sense of consensus (Hipp, n.d.).

Before year two began, the leadership team (not the whole staff) met at a member’s cottage where they established a common purpose as they constructed meaning for themselves, participated in collective inquiry, and collaborated with each other.

The 1999-2000 school year began with the Alternative Program being successfully launched. Teachers noticed and appreciated the change in climate, the decrease in behavioral problems, and they were enthusiastic about the focus that was being placed on learning. The year two of the PLC project also began with a stronger focus on student learning through a study of their current practices and the discovery that the standards were not being met as effectively as they could be. A long-range district

plan required core subject teachers to align their instructional practices and units with the established standards. All the banked time and some staff meetings were used up to accomplish this goal (Hipp, n.d.).

Evidence that a Professional Learning Community was developing within the school was witnessed in the vocabulary and in the activities throughout the school. Rebecca, for example, relinquished her leadership role to John White, the school's curriculum specialist, the mentor teachers, and to Kristine Hipp and she learned through collective inquiry and shared practice along with the teachers. Her presence at team meetings provided support, enforced the importance of accountability and increased her personal knowledge and skills. Teachers who were not required to align their curriculum attended the Standards Academy to create interdisciplinary units informed with best practices instruction and were applying the skills that they were learning at their grade levels. Hipp believed that the shared vision of student learning was evident in the collaboration that was taking place in the monthly meetings, in teams helping teams, in coaching that was taking place on the side, in the development of collaborative relationships and through the Alternative Program (Hipp, n.d.).

At the end of year two, Hord's (1997) 17-item "School Professional Staff as Learning Community" questionnaire and twelve onsite interviews of 25% of the teaching staff were conducted to assess the results of year two. Hipp reports that the interviews provided rich data and that the PLC instrument recorded increased rating in sixteen of the seventeen items which assessed progress in Hord's five dimensions of a PLC. Some respondents thought that core teachers were privy to more leadership opportunities than others such as financial compensation received for unit writing in the summer. Also, the

sharing of practice among colleagues remained low ranging from those who saw the benefits and were actively collaborating to those who still preferred to work alone and were resistant to change. Widespread trust was still hindered by a few (Hipp, n.d.).

Supportive structures such as changes to the building organization, banked days, meetings, technology partners, and e-mail were put in place. More time for meaningful dialogue, inclusion to be experienced by all staff, resources, and inter-grade planning were continuing needs. Also, collective learning and supportive conditions such as the rise and fall in the level of trust, greater staff involvement in more initiatives, and time for cross-graded collaboration and across subject areas needed to be addressed. The assessments suggested that in terms of supportive relationships, “the Foxdale staff truly cares for one another” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 32). Disappointingly, Hipp proceeded to list the various social events for which she credits this increase in supportive relationships, even more than what was witnessed in the team planning focused on student learning.

Even after all the socials and team building activities, resistance to change and mistrust continued to undermine their efforts. By the school year of 2000-2001, when they were looking forward to sustaining their efforts and focusing on some of the needs mentioned above, patterns of mistrust reared their ugly head and “some things are found to be difficult to forgive and forget” (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 35). It is interesting that throughout the building of the Professional Learning Community at Foxdale Middle School, the focus has been on the amount of trust apparent or not apparent. All the while this trust was systematically broken down by organizing socials and meetings that were arranged on personal time and did not include all staff. Also, staff members were alienated by the principal accepting money for a program that would impact all staff, but benefit only a

few, and by designing professional development sessions specifically for certain staff and leaving it optional for others to attend. Senge (cited in O'Neil, 1995) reminded us that even though you have to start with those who are eager to try the initiative, the process must be visibly inclusive so that others can join in at any time, from any level. This speaks to me of a lack of strong leadership, a necessary component, if the vision is going to unfold as the PLC has determined it should and it was not surprising that Rebecca Johnson resigned and accepted a position in another district (Hipp, n.d.).

Time can only tell what the overall attempt to transform Foxdale Middle School into a Professional Learning Community will realize. Fortunately, a new beginning in 2002-2003 suggested hope that with a strong focus and strong leadership, Foxdale was now on the right track. They have some positive foundations upon which they can build and the staff perceives their new principal, Leo Dunn, "to be a leader with that rare mix of hands, heart and mind" (Hipp, n.d., ¶ 36) who can lead them to get the job done.

Criticisms and Concerns to Monitor

Recently, I attended a workshop entitled, *Learning CPR: Creating Powerful Responses When Middle School Students Don't Learn*, where the presenter Mike Mattos, the Principal of Pioneer Middle School (M. Mattos, personal conversation, April 12, 2007) in California was strongly advocating Professional Learning Communities as the way to improve student achievement. He said that often teachers will say to him, "Gee Mike, you really buy into this, don't you?" His response is always, "I don't buy into it, I believe in it because it works!" Then, he went on to say that there is not one piece of educational research or any article in the trade literature that criticizes the impact that Professional Learning Communities have on student learning.

I was intrigued with the challenge to actually review the literature to see if indeed any articles of criticism could be found. My finding was that there are no articles that dispute the enhancement of student learning through the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. I did, however, find major concerns addressed in the literature regarding implementation issues of both structural and cultural change.

Some problems also exist with Professional Learning Communities discourse. Even though the metaphor of community is being used all over North America to begin school reform, Shields (2000, p. 275) points out that “there seems to be little clarity about the concept of community, what it might look like, how it might be implemented, or what policies might sustain it. According to Fullan (2006, p. 2), “the term travels faster and better than the concept” and he warns of the danger of superficiality. Dufour (2004, p. 6) concurs that the term is used in every conceivable way by a combination of people with a stake in education and “in fact the term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning.”

Shields (2004) added a different dimension to the notion of community. She noted that community is generally recognized as the glue that binds participants together with shared norms, beliefs, and values. In contrast, members of communities of difference “do not begin with a set of established norms but develop these norms together, with openness and respect, as they share their diverse perspectives” (p. 38).

It is true that diverse models of Professional Learning Communities do exist. Even though they may look different, however, the underlying philosophy is the same. This diversity enables the schools to tailor their chosen model to their particular situation; similar to clothing sizes, one size does not fit all.

A major concern raised in the implementation of Professional Learning Communities is that of time. Leonard and Leonard (2001, p. 389) explain, “There is convincing evidence that achieving measurable success through collaborative initiatives is often a demanding venture.” Dufour states (as cited in Eaker, Dufour, and Dufour, 2002) that learning -- not time-- is the only stable entity and should be the only consideration when making decisions about professional practice. Collinson and Cook (2001) however, in their study of a group of teachers’ perception of the barriers to sharing and learning discovered that the nine most important factors to them were all related to time.

How can schools effectively implement and carry out the process without infringing on the contractual gains that teachers have earned over the years and without disrupting the transportation schedule of the students? Dufour (2004) argued that, “The school must ensure that everyone belongs to a team that focuses on student learning. Each team must have time to meet during the work day and throughout the school year” (p. 9). Gordon Thomas, writing in the Alberta Teachers’ Association newspaper, alerts teachers to the dangers of agreeing to alter their school day in order to find the time necessary to participate in Professional Learning Communities. In Ontario, Cowans (2005) points out that participation in PLC is voluntary, and any attempt to make it mandatory will require adherence to collective bargaining agreements. In Nova Scotia, the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board adopted a motion to promote the institutionalization of a Professional Learning Community philosophy and culture in their region, and schools began banking time by adding six minutes to the instructional day. Due to public pressure, the first half-day scheduled for teacher collaboration was

cancelled by the Minister of Education, who later approved the request to allow schools to plan a full-day professional development inservice to take advantage of the days previously banked (Christianson, 2007).

Since it is evident that PLCs will not be a quick fix strategy, governments must be willing to invest in it over time to reap the results. The bottom line is that if governments and school boards want to see this initiative develop to its full potential, they must hire teachers to allow for the collaborative planning time that is necessary for its success.

The role of the teacher is another concern voiced about the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. Cowans (2005) suggests that the requirements that are placed upon a teacher in a PLC, such as mentoring, mark and curriculum evaluation, and possibly interviewing and hiring, far surpass the job description of a teacher, which could lead to contractual grievances. He also disagreed with the assertion that PLCs empower teachers by making decisions regarding the direction and operation of the school because any decision made by teachers is ultimately accepted or rejected by the school's principal. Hargreaves (cited in Couture, 2005, p. 4) recognized the power that principals have over the collaborative process, but stresses that "strong communities require strong leadership" and he asserted that if he were in government, he would invest his energy in securing that strength.

Keeping the purpose of school and the focus of a professional learning community, student learning, in the forefront of everything that we do, is essential. Members of a PLC must continuously be asking themselves and each other these crucial questions: What do we want each student to learn?, How will we know when they learned it?, How will we respond when they don't learn?, and How do we respond when they

already know it (Dufour, 2004)? A concern is also voiced that the expectation of teachers to continually engage in improvement robs them of the feeling of being educational experts. Fullan's work (2006) contradicts this assumption. He believes that as effective PLCs develop, "educators in these schools become more confident and more competent and thus become more comfortable in taking the risk to involve others, also recognizing that engagement of students and parents is essential for success" (p. 4).

Tarnoczi (2006) charged that Professional Learning Communities "appear to have a lot more to do with managing teachers and protecting the status quo than with inducing educational creativity" (¶ 40). Contrary to protecting the status quo, Fullan (2006) asserts that the most important step in implementing a strong PLC is the recognition that the first item on the agenda must be "changing the learning culture of the school" (p. 4). In a sense it can be viewed as managing teachers in that they are required to become collaborative learners and to have input into a systematic approach to ensure student learning. Senge stresses (as cited in O'Neil, 1995) that "there is always a huge difference between individual capability and collective capability and collective and individual learning and collective learning" (p. 20).

Just as the proponents of PLC used research from the business world to design their models, Tarnoczi used it to illuminate the perceived dangers. He questioned the need to form 'shared' goals when often goals are adopted from other schools that have similar cultures and many sound the same. If mission statements are not unique, then the importance must lie in the ceremony that builds teacher's commitment to bring change into the future; a change that will ultimately be to their own behavior (Tarnoczi, 2006). Senge (cited in O'Neil, 1995) suggested that it is not the vision statement that is the

problem, it is the fact that it is made into such a big event. The whole staff meets and spends a lot of time building a vision statement and then everyone goes back to work as usual, leaving people thinking, “we’ve done the vision stuff, and it didn’t make any difference” (p. 22). It is not the vision statement that makes a difference in student learning, it is all the work that is involved in implementing and sustaining a learning community. “For anybody really serious in this work, you’ll spend 20 – 40 percent of your time – forever – continually working on getting people to reflect on and articulate what it is they’re really trying to create. It’s never ending” (O’Neil, 1995, p. 22).

Certainly, Professional Learning Communities offer a means of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Whether it will change public education in Canada or succumb to the “10-year rule,” a reminder that American educational reform usually shows up in Ontario ten years later, moves to Alberta, British Columbia, and then on to the rest of the country is yet to be determined. Fullan (2006) cautions that Professional Learning Communities should not be held up as the latest innovation to avoid it being viewed as “one innovation among many – perhaps the flavor of the year, which means it can be easily discarded once the going gets rough and as other innovations come along the following year” (p. 2). It is crucial that we give Professional Learning Communities the time, patience, and support necessary to bring forth systemic change and sustainable improvements in student learning. Hargreaves (cited in Couture, 2005) reminds us, “Things that are important are usually also difficult and complex” (p. 4). Change will not be easy and creative thinking, outside the traditional box will be necessary to assure that teachers do not feel disempowered as we strive to empower students.

We also need to remember that Professional Learning Communities are much more than a learning factory. Recently, I was so taken with the words of Walter Bruggemann, a leading Old Testament theologian (Sister Elizabeth Ann, personal conversation, March 28, 2007) that I wrote them down and contemplated their deep connection to Professional Learning Communities in schools. His belief that the three signs of an authentic community are uncommon gentleness, when hurts are noticed, and when large dreams are entertained is a powerful concept which when nurtured and ripened will help to enhance student achievement and bring forth future citizens who will change the world for the better.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, a description is presented of the methodology and methods used to investigate the research problem. The chapter begins by presenting the rationale for the design selected for the study, followed by a description of the research site, the selection of participants, and the role of the researcher. Next, the section on data collection strategies provides a description of methods used and how these were implemented in the context of the study. Subsequently, the methods of data analysis are described to show what steps were taken to transform the data into findings and confirm these findings. The chapter ends with a discussion of the criteria used to ensure the quality of the study.

Methodology Rationale

In 1998, the new outcomes-based English Language Arts curriculum was introduced in the province of Nova Scotia (NS Department of Education and Culture, 1998). The professional development promised for ELA teachers to work with their forty-one outcomes never happened. My individual attempts to incorporate the outcomes into my teaching included putting outcomes into easier terminology and creating an ELA outcomes-based report card for my students. These attempts were insufficient, however, when my reality included dealing with an unsupportive principal and angry parents who did not understand the new methods of instruction and assessment. In response to this scenario, I became driven in my quest to be able to justify, explain, and be held accountable in my teaching.

Now, many years later in curriculum meetings, other ELA teachers have been voicing their frustrations and concerns about their difficulty in incorporating the forty-

one outcomes into their teaching. The imminent requirement of producing outcomes-based report cards has further heightened the necessity for action. These concerns and developments have provided an ideal opportunity to investigate the way this group of Nova Scotia English Language Arts teachers interacted as a collaborative culture to improve their levels of understanding and comfort with the mandated Nova Scotia English Language Arts curriculum outcomes. Ethnography was chosen as the design that would fit the requirement of the research problem and the research questions.

Ethnography

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) defined an educational ethnography as, “The process of providing holistic and scientific descriptions of educational systems, processes, and phenomena within their specific contexts” (p. 242). My study fell naturally into an ethnographic approach because of its cultural orientation. In addition, the fundamentals of engagement, a human connection, and an investment of time, are the essentials of an ethnographic study. This approach provided me with a conceptual framework through which to view, record, and interpret social action and became the structure that guided my research and focused my interpretations. The process of examining practices, beliefs, and behaviors of a group also implies that ethnography is field oriented and naturalistic. It is a research methodology based on observing people in their natural environment rather than in a formal research setting. This approach provided me with a conceptual framework through which to view, record, and interpret social action and became the structure that guided my research and focused my interpretations.

A Study of Cultural Context

Owing to the cultural orientation of ethnography and the social setting of my study, the terms culture and school culture need to be understood. Goodenough (cited in McDermott & Varenne, 2006) suggested that the “term culture [refer to] what is learned ... the things one needs to know in order to meet the standards of others” (p. 7).

Spindler and Spindler, (cited in Massey, 1998) however explained:

For each school setting (i.e. classroom) in which various scenes (e.g. reading, ‘meddlin’, going to the bathroom) are studied, there is the prior (native) cultural knowledge held by each of the various actors, the action itself, and the emerging, stabilizing rules, expectations, and some understandings that are tacit. Together these constitute a ‘classroom’ or ‘school’ culture. (§ 5)

A cultural inquiry lent itself to choosing six ELA teachers, as participants because all had an underlying motivation to work together. As the interviews and professional development sessions proceeded, the researcher-participant was able to have direct, first-hand observation and she also interpreted the data to reveal how all persons’ thoughts and actions intertwined. Also, of particular interest was the way participants created context and made meaning from their activities together in the educational milieu (McDermott & Varenne, 2006).

In cultural analysis, a criterion which is very important to the research is that we are required to look beyond the participants to the crux of the problem, the issue with which the participants are struggling. Authors of ethnographic research suggest that researchers strive to understand programs and situations as a whole to try to “cope with

forces within and beyond their control” (Wolcott, 1999, p. 51). McDermott and Varenne (2006) warn that context-related, in-depth analysis is not easy but represents “the best way to see them (participants) in their full complexity; anything less delivers a thin portrait of their engagements and leaves them vulnerable” (p. 7). Certainly, a fact to remember at this point is that the ELA outcomes were first given to the teachers in 1989 with the promise of professional development to incorporate these outcomes into their daily practice. This promise has been forgotten and now outcomes-based reporting is imminent.

McDermott and Varenne’s (2006) supposition that “education is difficult to make better” (p.14) is another reason I chose an ethnographic approach to study the professional development of these ELA teachers. The problem that the study was designed to address, was possibly only a symptom of a larger and more powerful one. The lack of professional development for educational initiatives, which makes a measured difference in teacher practice, seems to be a systemic one. This perennial dilemma, however, did not make analysis and change difficult to accomplish in this study because as a team of teachers we collaboratively orchestrated our own professional development to address our common need (McDermott & Varenne, 2006). Ethnography helps to create more compelling solutions.

Prolonged Engagement

Not only does ethnography address culture but one of the most prominent features of an ethnographic study is engagement. Ethnography usually involves extensive fieldwork for a year or longer. Spindler and Spindler (cited in Massey, 1998) stated explicitly that, “The requirement for direct, prolonged, on-the-spot observation cannot be avoided or reduced. It is the guts of the ethnographic approach” (¶ 11).

The need to interact within the culture long enough to achieve effective and lasting change, requires the researcher’s prolonged commitment. Wolcott (cited in Bresler, 1995) also revealed his belief that the researcher should stay, “at least long enough to see a full cycle of activity, a set of events usually played out in the course of a calendar year” (p. 4).

Following the example of Wolcott (1990), the term microethnography, the study of a smaller experience or a portion of everyday reality, was assigned to this research study. Wolcott (1990) explained that the “prefix micro recognizes necessary accommodation to such limits, through narrowed focus and manageable objectives” (p. 64).

The fieldwork and reporting in this study were under the constraints of time and scope, allowing only fifteen after-school sessions and two five-hour school inservice days over a six-month period. However, this time period was enough to allow the researcher and the participants to enhance their understanding of how to improve student learning through their professional development endeavors.

Perspective Seeking

It was also essential for the researcher to be able to understand the process from the participants' point of view, in the collaborative context and within the school setting and for the researcher to convey her own perspectives (MacCleave, 1992). Since the researcher, the principal instrument of data collection and analysis, was also a participant in the study, particular care was taken to consider how underlying assumptions and values and more explicit issues and constructs affected her interpretations.

Ethnography links what people say to what they actually do - avoiding the pitfalls that come from relying only on self-reported, focus-group data. There is no way of knowing whether words and actions are actually linked. Also, the use of audio taping and subsequent analysis of the data extended the reach of the researcher far beyond personal impressions from casual conversations at the photocopier. It is important to remember that while useful ideas can emerge during casual observation, the most powerful insights come from a rigorous analysis of systematically collected data.

Interestingly, the issues uncovered from the perspectives of the researcher and the participants were progressively focused. The direction of the issues and central points that shaped the study emerged during data collection and analysis, rather than by a pre-set plan. The researcher scrutinized ideas often taken-for-granted, by examining her commonplace group and their participation in professional development sessions as exceptional and unique (Erickson, 1973). During these examinations, it was discovered that along the way, the problem became transformed from an unacceptable solution to newly formed challenges and unexpected results (McDermott & Varenne, 2006). The success of the professional development sessions begged the question. "What will we

work on next?’’ and the ELA teachers transformed into a real team. This situation illustrates that participants’ perspectives are not necessarily static but dynamic and subject to change over time.

In Elliot Eisner’s (1994) view, it is “not difficult to understand why ethnography is attractive as a way of studying educational practice” (p. 199). Educational research has transformed from using quantitative methods to describe natural happenings in daily school life to trying to bring about reform where needed. This study envisioned the improvement of student learning through the enhancement of teacher knowledge of and level of comfort with the curriculum outcomes and school improvement through ethnographic procedures.

Context and Participants

The School Context

My educational microethnography took place in Valley Woods Middle School (VWMS). I chose this location because I work here and am familiar with the location and its teachers and it is the one school setting where collaborative planning was the most feasible. The school is located in the small town in northern Nova Scotia, an entity of the school board. It came into being four years ago in the wake of school closure and realignment. It hosts approximately 280 students who come together for grades seven and eight from three elementary feeder schools, two towns, and a rural area.

In response to the school’s consolidation and need for renewal, the administration and teachers of Valley Woods Middle School have worked diligently to build a healthy school climate and improve student learning. The goals within our School Improvement Plan and our recent decision to become a Professional Learning Community speak to the

school's commitment and proactive stance. The ELA team formed a Professional Learning Community within the larger PLC developing at our school. The sole purpose of this PLC was to help teachers determine what the ELA curriculum outcomes want students to learn, what each student must know and be able to do in order to meet the outcomes, and how each outcome will be evaluated to assure that the student has met its requirements.

In the heart of the school is the library. It is where all of the professional development sessions for the study took place. It provided a large, bright space with large tables where we could gather and spread our materials out and it provided us with computer access. Most importantly, as the researcher and a participant, I wanted to promote the feeling of oneness among the participants. I did not want to promote the notion that we would work in my room because it is my study.

Participant Selection

My knowledge of the research setting, Valley Woods Middle School, and its English Language Arts teachers is based on my experiences of working at VWMS and participating in professional development sessions with its ELA teachers for the past four years since its inception. This shared history facilitated my recruitment of all six members of the English Language Arts teaching team at the school including three grade 7 English Language Arts (ELA) teachers, one of whom was the researcher and three grade eight ELA teachers. Two at each grade level teach ELA to the core-French students, in six 50-minute classes per week; the third is the extended-core French teacher who teaches ELA in three 50-minute periods per week. These teachers have a growing knowledge of the curriculum outcomes, see a need for this professional development,

interact with the school's entire student body, and work with the same or similar curriculum outcomes as the researcher. I chose this group of teachers because planning and working collaboratively with my colleagues is the most effective way to improve student learning. We collectively feel the inner pressure to understand the curriculum outcomes as outcomes-based reporting will soon be required.

Procedures

In casual conversation, I briefly outlined my research to each ELA teacher. The purpose of this face-to-face encounter was to convey my interest in working with each member of the ELA team to better prepare us for outcomes-based planning and assessment and confirm their pre-stated interest in participating. I told them that I would need approval from the school board and ethical approval before we could begin.

Since I wanted to interview and collaborate in professional development sessions with the teachers at our school, I needed permission from the school board and the school principal. A request was made via e-mail to the school board to conduct research in their jurisdiction.

In September of 2007, I met officially with Ms. E. L. Hood, the school principal, to once again describe my research study. We discussed the benefits of the study and the expected timeline. She agreed in principle to allow me to collect data at the school and as usual, she was supportive and eager to see the project underway. I informed her that I was awaiting my ethics approval.

I received ethics approval from Mount Saint Vincent University for my research on October 22, 2007 and approval from the school board shortly thereafter. In late October, the principal and I met again in her school office. I provided her with a copy of

my ethical approval form from the Mount Saint Vincent University Research Ethics Board (UREB) (see Appendix B), a Letter of Information (see Appendix C), a consent form, and a copy of the e-mail from the school board.

After I received ethical, board and principal approval, I contacted Anita, Alison, Chantelle, Lori, and Vicky, the other five ELA teachers via e-mail, about the possibility of their participating in my study. I briefly described the purpose of the study and informed them that as participants they could drop out of the study at any time without penalty or repercussion of any kind from the school administration, and asked them to acknowledge their willingness to participate via e-mail (see Appendix D). No incentives were offered to recruit participants. All six teachers agreed to participate and were sent a Letter of Information (see Appendix E), and a consent form (see Appendix F). A copy of the consent form was signed by each participant.

Role of the Researcher

It was advantageous that the researcher was already a part of the culture to be studied. The researcher was a full participant in the study as a grade seven teacher and as member of the English Language Arts community of learners. In addition, the study's effectiveness was enhanced by the fact that this is the researcher's area of special interest and that she was a full participant who devoted as much time to the study as was necessary for a microethnographic study.

As a staff member at VWMS, I interact daily with my fellow teaching colleagues. We participate in school life together and will continue to do so after the study is completed. Developing trust, between the researcher and the participants and with each

other, as a result of these ongoing relationships, is crucial and informed consent in this context is an ongoing and dynamic process.

Throughout the six months of my educational microethnography, the researcher and participants maintained their usual schedules that often see us together in the classroom. We also increased the amount of time that we normally spend working on professional development. In total, each individual participated in two interviews with the researcher, two full inservice days, and fifteen after school sessions lasting at least forty-five minutes and most were longer than one hour.

Data Collection

The Interviews

Two sets of semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, including an initial one and a follow up one. With permission from the participants, the interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. The questions were designed to determine the participant's understanding of Outcomes-Based Education, Professional Learning Communities, outcomes-based planning, and how teachers must work together to improve student learning. The questions were open-ended to elicit as much information as possible. I was able to clarify if a participant was confused and lead into other questions when appropriate. The initial interviews provided a baseline for comparison with the results. Each participant was asked a series of questions from an interview guide (Appendix A) and even though all of the same information was obtained from each person, there were no predetermined responses so I was free to probe and explore within the predetermined inquiry areas. The interview guide helped the interviewer be sure that time was used wisely and it helped to keep the interactions

focused. In keeping with the flexible nature of qualitative research designs, however, the interview guide for the post-interviews was adjusted slightly after the first interview in order to modify questions that the researcher found to be unproductive for the goals of the research.

The initial interviews were followed by a series of professional development sessions facilitated by the researcher to assist the teachers in their collaborative effort to better understand and implement outcomes-based programs. At the conclusion of the professional development sessions, semi-structured interviews were conducted once again by the researcher to determine the growth in teacher learning and the increase in their level of comfort with outcomes-based planning.

The Professional Development Sessions

Guskey (2002) defined professional development as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so they might, in turn improve student learning” (p. 16). During the course of this study, the researcher facilitated and participated with five other English Language Arts teachers’ to improve their understanding of the curriculum outcomes by aligning the outcomes, analyzing them, and then developing rubrics for each to be used to improve student learning.

The process began with the scrutinization of the aligned English Language Arts curriculum outcomes to determine collectively whether each one is introductory, continuing practice, or mastery (K. Sullivan, personal conversation, May 18, 2007). Next, the participants were introduced to the study, and the researcher and the participating colleagues decided together that, in the long run, it would be more

beneficial for all the stakeholders to complete the necessary work on all forty-one outcomes instead of an experimental few. I then showed them the analysis of one outcome and due to time constraints, it was agreed that I would continue the analysis process to enable us to get on with the conversations and decisions that would create meaning and increase our comfort with the outcomes. Using the analyzed outcomes, individual rubrics were developed for all forty-one outcomes in teacher, parent, and student-friendly language. We determined what must be accomplished in the future and discussed where we needed to go from there.

Transcribing the Data

Both sets of interviews and the professional development sessions were tape recorded. Transcribing interview conversations and the interactions that took place during the professional development sessions provided me with another opportunity to focus my attention on what the participant said during the interviews and the sessions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). All of the recordings were reviewed several times through the process of transcription. Some of the interviews were transcribed twice including the pre and post interviews with the researcher-participant. They were initially transcribed on paper and then keyboarded into a word processing file. This activity was extremely time consuming but, it allowed me to check for accuracy especially in the two transcriptions of myself. The repeated opportunities to reflect on the contents of the transcripts enabled me to formulate ways to address the various perspectives in the interview questions. It was at this stage that I had the idea to describe the professional development sessions through a metaphorical description.

Transcription produced 37 pages of text for the first set of interviews, 43 pages for the professional development sessions, and 137 pages for the third set of interviews. In total there were 217 pages of interview text (MacCleave, 1992).

Data Analysis

Two qualitative interpretive processes were employed to analyze the data. An item-by-item content analysis was conducted on both sets of interviews and on the professional development sessions. In addition, to capture the essence of team building throughout the data, a narrative analysis based on a metaphor helped to interpret the professional development sessions.

Content Analysis

Content analysis in qualitative research is the “process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150). To move from “raw data to meaningful understanding” (O’Leary, 2004, p. 196), I first responded to the interview questions to conduct a content analysis of individual items. The responses to items were compared and contrasted across the interviews and across the two sets of pre and post professional development questions. The use of common words and phrases showing similarities and differences in participants’ responses was noted.

Through this process of content analysis, it was determined that the teachers collectively shared a large amount of knowledge and skill, suggesting that working as a collaborative group would be much more beneficial to the individuals in this group. Years of experience and participation in professional development outside the school may have affected the participants’ level of research-based knowledge regarding

Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities. Through similar themes found in both sets of questions, the change in the participants' knowledge and understanding of outcomes-based planning was evident. Most remarkably, the content analysis allowed the researcher to capture the insights that emerged through the process of data collection. That is, the threads of team building which ran through the data came into view as did the image of the metaphor that I would use as a result in order to describe the team's transformation.

Coding the Data

When the transcription process is complete, one looks at the results and asks, What am I going to do with all this data? How do I make meaning from it all? In order to interpret and make meaningful assumptions, the researcher must use a means of categorizing and organizing called coding to reduce this large amount of data (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). In this study, I coded the data through three separate lenses:

Interview Questions

An item-by-item content analysis was conducted on all of the data collected in the interviews and in the professional development sessions. This analysis permitted me to review the data from the perspectives of each individual and from the participants as a whole.

I began the coding process by re-reading the transcripts of the interviews for all six participants and of the professional development sessions. With the help of a word processor, I organized the interview data so that each participant's answer to number one was together and then, I did the same for all the questions in both sets of interviews. The transcripts were re-printed so they could be marked on. I read Participant One's

responses to each question, one line at a time to identify themes by isolating words, phrases, and concepts relevant to the study and in particular, to the question at hand (Stokrocki, n.d.). Of special interest were those that Patton (cited in O’Leary, 2004, p. 196) referred to as ‘indigenous categories’, those directly related to the culture of school. I then recorded them on a graphic organizer designed to have a column for each participant. The next step was to identify “categories” of data, decide whether some items of data related to more than one category, and to determine major and minor categories.

Moving onto Participant Two’s responses, I repeated the process. In turn, the process was completed for all interview responses and professional development sessions, continuing to identify new categories of information. Increasingly, it was difficult to find themes that had not already been placed in a category, until all of the relevant and interesting information was accommodated in the existing categories. At this point, I transferred all of the extracts that seemed to be related into a graphic organizer on the computer to enable me to colour code each category and the connected items of data in the transcripts. I examined each one individually to determine if they did fit in the category or belong elsewhere, and then when all the major and minor categories were established, I reread each category to see that everything was in the right place and to look for connections between two or more categories. This process suggested that they would be major themes of the research. Finally, now that all the major and minor categories were in place, I reviewed my original charts to look for any missing data.

Professional Development Sessions as a Metaphor

In spite of the many themes that were identified in the item-by-item content analysis, a descriptive explanation of the professional development sessions emerged from the data in metaphoric form. A metaphor is a figure of speech that associates two distinct things, the representation of one by another. It is also a concise way of expressing ideas. We use language to construct models to cement our understanding; by comparing one thing to something else we already know, metaphors allow us to connect information and give definite form to ideas and relationships (Aita, McIlvain, Susman, & Crabtree, 2003). In this study, I am comparing the professional development sessions to a reality television show doing personal makeovers because it captures the key qualities of our working sessions.

Team Building

Simultaneously, as themes emerged directly from the text, the concept of team building “jumped from the page.” Eisner stated, “features that count do not wear labels on their sleeves; they do not announce themselves (as cited in Stokrocki, n.d., ¶ 77).” This feature was just there.

Simultaneously, not by design, team building happened. The transformation from a semi-effective group of people to an effective learning community was powerful. Using Thomas L. Quick’s (1992) book, *Successful Team Building*, a graphic organizer facilitated easy recognition of the pertinent categories that determine an effective team versus an ineffective one. It also provided a means of identifying themes with which the study data could be analyzed (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: The Nature and Benefits of a Team

The Nature and Benefits of a Team	
Effective	Ineffective
Information:	
• Flows freely up, down, and sideways	• Flows mainly down, weak sideways
• Full sharing	• Hoarded, withheld
• Open and honest	• Incomplete, mixed messages
People Relationships:	
• Trusting	• Suspicious and partisan
• Respectful	• Pragmatic, based on need or liking
• Collaborative	• Competitive
• Supportive	• Withholding
Conflict:	
• Regarded as natural, even helpful	• Frowned on and avoided
• On issues, not persons	
Atmosphere:	
• Open	• Compartmentalized
• Nonthreatening	• Intimidating
• Noncompetitive	• Guarded
• Participative	• Fragmented, closed groups
Decisions:	
• By Consensus	• By majority vote or forcing
• By Efficient Use of Resources	• Emphasis on power
• Full Commitment	• Confusion and dissonance
Creativity:	
• More options	• Controlled by power sub-groups
• Solution-oriented	• Emphasis on activity and inputs
Power Base	
• Shared by all	• Hoarded
• On competence	• On politicking, alliances
• Contribution to team	• Pragmatic sharing
Motivation:	
• Commitment to goals set by team	• Going along with imposed goals
• Belonging needs satisfied	• Personal goals ignored
• More chance for achievement through group	• Individual achievement valued without concern for the group
• Based on contribution to group	• Basis for rewards unclear
• Peer recognition	• Based on subjective, often arbitrary appraisals

Theme Generation

Wiersma and Jurs (2005, p. 206) described the process of extracting themes or coding as the way qualitative researchers “see what they have in the data.” The themes, spread throughout, are used to categorize, describe, and synthesize the data. Almost magically, themes, that may otherwise go unnoticed, emerge from the data. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define themes as “concepts, grounded theories, or ideas that emerge from your data that transcend and unify particular data and findings into coherent patterns. Themes are the big ideas derived from research and provide the structure for the presentation of findings and interpretation” (p. 275).

Themes can be developed deductively from the literature, “gut” reactions, or prior experiences, but many researchers prefer to sideline their preconceived notions for those that emerge from the data. Similar to any outline, there are major codes, like headings such as Outcome-Based Education, Understanding the Outcomes through a Metaphor, Professional Learning Communities, and Team Building. The researcher needs to be selective when choosing the specific categories within which to organize the themes but, the number of themes in total is determined by the study. The researcher sought out “patterns of thinking or behavior, words or phrases, and events that appear with regularity or for some reason appear noteworthy” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 207). The interview and professional development transcripts were read with an inquiring mind, wondering, What am I going to find out? Although the semi-structured interview questions and the professional development sessions were quite structured, they were still open-ended. They allowed the participants to explain their perspectives, give their opinions, and their feelings and emotions emerged from the transcripts. It was helpful to be able to rebuild

the content of themes both mentally and through maneuvering the data around with the word processor. This allowed me to make connections between codes and to see codes in a new light and to connect the codes to broader themes. The process of data analysis is like the process of reading: one begins with words on a page, studies them carefully, determines which are important, infers, questions, makes connections to themselves, other texts, and the world, and synthesizes to make new meaning.

Criteria of Quality

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns for this study were minimal because it involved professional development with teachers, conducted in an established, commonly accepted educational setting, and it involved normal educational practices. To maintain ethical standards of social science research, the four key components of informed consent were observed: communication of information, comprehension of information, voluntary participation, and anonymity. Informed consent was an interactive process that involved the researcher informing potential participants of the purposes and procedures of the research, the risks and benefits associated with the study, and how the data provided by the participant will be protected and stored. The participants were fully informed by the researcher of the intent of the ethnographic research, how the participants' information will contribute to the research, and the anticipated risks and benefits the participants may expect to occur resulting from their agreement to participate in the research.

An ethical principle of concern for this study was that of confidentiality. It is common practice in the social sciences to keep the research subjects from harm and protect their rights by assuring confidentiality. All precautions were taken to assure that

any reference to specific personalities was omitted. The study was written to protect individual identities and their personal experiences; pseudonyms were used for the participants and the school. There may still be, however, identifying features within the data despite these precautions which have made it difficult to completely disguise participants.

Since the research followed an emergent design, specific details of the professional development sessions could not be provided to the educators before they agreed to participate. This was not a dilemma because participants actively reviewed the data as part of the professional development sessions. Throughout the research process, the participants and researcher worked closely together and all were encouraged to participate fully.

Criteria of Quality

In traditional experimental studies, early submissions for validity criteria in an ethnographical study were evaluated by concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Lincoln and Guba, (1985) however, were among the first researchers to realize that these characteristics would be difficult to address in an interpretive study and suggested that to be reliable and valid, research must be credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable. Consequently, in qualitative research these concepts are replaced by credibility, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The processes used in this study to satisfy each of these criteria are described below:

Credibility

There are two ways to meet the credibility criterion of a study: by enhancing the likelihood that the credible findings and interpretations will be generated and by testing the findings and interpretations with their original source (Guba & Lincoln, cited in Mertens, 1998).

With the use of multiple sources of data, the researcher must cross-reference for consistency of evidence in order to validate the findings and interpretations. Miles and Huberman, (1984, p. 235) stated that this process known as triangulation “is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, don't contradict it.” In this study, all of the participants were from the same school. As a result, the researcher had the opportunity to verify and clarify information that was specific to the school with a variety of participants in the setting. In addition to interview data, professional development sessions were conducted to ensure that teachers were in fact addressing the problems and concerns they reported during the initial interviews. Even though triangulation is effective, a more critical technique for establishing is to complete a credibility whereby a formal or informal check is completed with individual participants regarding specific items of data (Mertens, 1998). Occasionally, the researcher would read back portions of the interview to the person who provided it. This guaranteed that the data was perceived accurately and it verified that the researcher accurately understood the participant's message. Also, one of the participants was asked to read the metaphor to verify content and to confirm the feasibility of the metaphor itself.

Persistent observation is another process that strengthens the production of credible findings, focusing on reporting the most important categories in detail, rather in a cursory way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the researcher conducted each interview after school, at the convenience of the participant, there was plenty of opportunity to cover each topic in depth by probing for more information as necessary.

Transferability

The qualitative parallel to external validity is transferability; determining whether the findings suggest that the lessons learned from one sample, setting, or group could be relevant to a larger population, a different setting, or another group (O’Leary, 2004). Eisner says it is a form of "retrospective generalization" that can allow us to understand our past (and future) experiences in a new way (1991, p. 205).

Of course, this study, which only focused on the quest of the ELA teachers in one school, does not have the sample size necessary to make far reaching statements about the generalizability of the study and the context is quite specific. All the same, one intent of this study would be to make the larger population aware of the significance of the findings. O’Leary (2004, p. 63) says, “Transferability highlights that lessons learned are likely to be applicable in alternate settings or across populations.” It is crucial, for a researcher to provide a thick, rich description of the voices, feelings actions, and meanings of interactive individuals, along with the culture, time, setting, context and methods of the study, to enable the reader to compare them with their own conditions and make an informed decision (Mertens, 1998). It was with this goal in mind, that the researcher attempted to write an interesting and informative account of the findings.

Dependability

Ethnographic studies may not be reliable, consistent, or standard. This is the premise of dependability, the qualitative correspondent to reliability. O’Leary (2004) reminds us that realistically, “capturing what is seen as standard may not be possible” because “people are complex and multifaceted” (p.60). Indeed, the circumstances of various situations may lead to multiple presentations of self. Accordingly, it was the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that her methods were systematic, the research data was well documented, and to have a plan to justify research subjectivities.

Therefore, Lincoln and Guba, (1985) suggested using techniques that will enhance the dependability of results obtained from the data. The goal of the researcher is to have others agree that, “given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable” (Merriam, cited in Choi, S., 2001, p.35).

The triangulation of data rarely leads to one unchanging picture. Its main purpose, in this study was to determine when and why there were differences in the information attained from the collected data. In situations where discrepancies occurred, attempts were made to discover why. Most importantly, to make it possible for others to corroborate the findings of the study, the researcher has rigorously maintained a “residue of records stemming from inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319). These records include raw data, products of data reduction and analysis, development of categories, themes, and coding of data. Goetz and LeCompte (cited in Wiersma and Jurs, 2005) cautioned:

The researcher must clearly identify and fully discuss data analysis processes and provide retrospective accounts of how data were

examined and synthesized. Because reliability depends on the potential for subsequent researchers to reconstruct original analysis strategies, only those ethnographic accounts that specify these in sufficient detail are replicable. (p. 265)

The researcher was therefore mindful to document how the data was collected, how the categories were chosen, and how decisions were made. The results of the microethnographic analysis described above are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This microethnographic study of six ELA teachers' collaborative and co-constructed professional development efforts is unique with regards to the individual participants, the group culture they created, and their school. Despite this uniqueness, the study is situated in a broader social, educational, and political milieu and cannot be fully understood without considering this broader context. Outcomes-Based Education is a provincial initiative that impacts local school curriculum efforts. The Professional Learning Community is an initiative that is being promoted in the broader educational community. The profession of teaching has long established traditions that have been resistant to change. Yet, different stages were evidenced in this study as were transformations in individual and group thinking about practices of teaching and assessment. This study demonstrates that change is indeed possible.

The stages that I witnessed in this ethnographic study, are mirrored in the works of McDermott and Varenne (2006, pp.13-14). When undertaking a minimal cultural analysis, they claimed that the following stages are usually encountered:

Stage I: "Blaming the victim – Those poor people have many problems. Someone should help them." Society frequently blames those experiencing the problem as the cause of the problem. For decades, governments world-wide have perceived a crisis in education. The belief that students are not receiving the education necessary to take them into the 21st century is well documented. Nova Scotian educators were introduced to Outcomes-Based Education in 1989; as a catalyst through which change in teaching practice would result in improved student learning. In this scenario, teachers were

viewed as the cause of the problem of poor student learning and needed to be more accountable.

Stage II: “The Problem stays far from those who diagnose and make policy. Those poor people sure get pushed around. Too bad we can’t help them directly.” The Department of Education implemented Outcomes-Based Education to address this educational crisis but failed to provide the promised professional development to ensure its success.

Simply telling teachers what they ought to do to improve student learning has been the norm. How one actually changes her/his teaching practice has received very little attention. In response, teachers who work in isolation become frustrated with the magnitude of what is required, do not fully understand the desired changes, and revert back to the way they have always done their planning.

Stage III: Improving student learning is complex, and it takes the whole education culture to address this problem. “Let’s change the world enough that these problems do not come anymore.” This stance recognizes that all the responsibilities cannot be laid at the feet of the teacher and that improving student learning will require transforming the culture of school. This study, although small, documented the collaborative processes of a group of teachers who recognized the need to understand and feel comfortable with the ELA curriculum outcomes. The collaborative work not only addressed this need, but the team building will continue to support them as they move on to tackle new problems and initiatives.

Overall, these stages provide a brief overview of the broader social context of this study. With these stages in mind, the beginnings of the collaboration process will be examined.

What was Brought to the Table

Synergy: Sharing Knowledge

The information gathered from both sets of semi-structured interviews revealed the six teachers' personal knowledge of OBE and their level of comfort with its planning. Their thoughts were noted with regards to the current alignment of their curriculum, whether they think professional development sessions are necessary, and impact that the professional development sessions had on their professional growth. Using their thoughts and ideas, I was able to create a mosaic of the teachers' perspectives based on my interpretation. The interviews also obtained information from the participants about Professional Learning Communities and working in a collaborative culture; ideas discussed later in this chapter.

The first set of interview questions were designed to assess participants' prior knowledge and experiences, as we do with our students when collecting assessment data. What knowledge and experiences did teachers bring to the table? The theoretical premises and historical background of OBE were unknown to most. The amount of individual knowledge of an Outcomes-Based Education system varied greatly among the teachers. However, the teachers did collectively reveal considerable knowledge about outcomes-based planning. Combining the knowledge that each brought to the task expanded our collective pool of knowledge. This starting point suggested that any previous attempts at widespread professional development were ineffective. In fact, one teacher emphatically charged that curriculum planning has been left up to individual teachers to do what they want; *we are trying to do this but, I don't find that we get enough support.*

Several factors appeared to account for the differences in individual knowledge: Teachers with the greatest number of years experience, appeared to have a richer knowledge base. One participant had previous experience with OBE outside the province. Professional learning outside of school also seemed to make a difference. Certainly, owing to my current immersion in this topic and recent professional learning, I was able to provide the most extensive knowledge. Upon reflection, I realized that I was probably trying a bit harder to “show all that I know,” because the principal was asking me the research questions. In contrast, during their interviews, my colleagues were sharing ideas with a friend and were under no pressure to impress me.

Against the Grain: Discomfort/Insecurity

In the interviews, I also wanted the teachers to reveal their current practice with outcomes-based planning and their level of comfort with it. Alison, for example, even with a strong knowledge base, readily voiced that she didn't have her courses matched with all the outcomes yet and that outcomes-based planning was opposite to the planning that she was currently doing. Lori suggested a reason for discomfort was that outcomes-based planning goes against the way most of us were trained. In university or Teachers College planning typically began with an activity that was later connected to outcomes instead of beginning with the outcomes and planning backwards to show that they have been demonstrated. *I don't feel fully comfortable with it*, was Chantelle's admission, and after using OBE for the seven years that she has been teaching, she is still learning and still struggling. Despite the clear evidence of discomfort, a positive attitude prevailed among the teachers to begin this collaborative process. Everyone displayed a willingness and eagerness to understand the outcomes in order to improve student learning, even

though it was a leap into the unknown. Would knowing and feeling comfortable with the outcomes enhance student learning more than current practices? The teachers' attitude was pragmatic because the pending outcomes-based report card offered us no choice. So, with nothing to lose and plenty to gain, we agreed to begin.

Curriculum Alignment: Our First Sessions

Equally important was the need to assess the level of outcomes-based planning currently being done. Curriculum Alignment is a process that ensures that curriculum fulfills its goals. This process aligns the curriculum across the continuum of the grades and enables the stakeholders in education to see at a glance where the students have been and where they must go in order to meet the outcomes required for graduation. Prior to the interviews, we held several professional development sessions where we attempted to match the material taught at our specific grade levels with the mandated curriculum outcomes. When Anita was asked how well she thought the current curriculum was aligned with the current provincial outcomes, she responded: *it was not aligned as well as it should be, not by a long shot!* Then she revealed that often student activities or learning experiences aren't tied directly to the outcomes so she thinks we need to marry the activities and learning experiences much more closely to outcomes in order for students to demonstrate their knowledge. Chantelle indicated that *we've all done things in our classroom in which the outcome was the last of our worries, it's more about the activity*. I suggested that the report card is an indication of how our curriculum is aligned. We should be able to report on a child's progress on any outcome, but we are far from this reality.

In order to plan effectively for the professional development sessions, I wanted to negotiate whether these professional development sessions should follow a similar format to the sessions recently held on curriculum alignment. At those sessions, the six ELA teachers sat around a large table with the newly constructed charts of the curriculum aligned from primary to grade twelve spread out in front of them. We looked at the outcomes across the grade levels, shared our opinions and expertise about what we discovered, and set the stage for future professional development sessions. The teachers' feedback from these sessions suggested that the informal, collaborative working sessions were beneficial and informative, giving the green light to proceed in a similar fashion throughout the study. Included in the feedback about our curriculum alignment were the following statements:

- *It was a valuable experience to look at outcomes globally. (Anita)*
- *Time for all of us to talk together so we have an understanding of the kinds of things the kids are exposed to in grade 7 and what it looks like in grade 9 (Lori)*
- *We could actually visualize, Hey, this is what they are supposed to be able to do in 7, 8, 9. (Vicky)*
- *What you did with us that day, organizing us that way was probably the best thing you could have done for me because all I had was the big, fat guide and all those outcomes that I didn't really understand. You had the knowledge to share with us and you sat down and went through it and showed it to me visually on paper and we discussed it and we seemed to, as a group, come up with, This is what this means and we made sure we understood it. (Alison)*

- *You have to know what they (students) are going to be doing, when, and in how much depth so that we are not spending the whole year on certain outcomes.* (Eleanor)

There seemed to be consensus about the value of seeing the whole picture of aligned curriculum as opposed to each teacher's particular grade level. Fitting outcomes into pre-selected activities is problematic because an imbalance can occur in the completion of all forty-one outcomes; some don't get addressed at all while others are demonstrated more than is necessary.

What Makes Good Professional Development?

In order to bridge the gap between what we know and what we are doing, the teachers believe that effective professional development sessions are essential. In addition, they were specific as to what the sessions would need:

- *teachers who possess a willingness to look at change, a willingness to change, and be very proactive rather than waiting until it is mandated and we have to do something, which it already has.* (Anita)

The outcomes-based report card was available, at the discretion of the school's principal, for use in 2007 but without understanding what the outcomes are requiring the students to know and be able to do, teachers felt ill-equipped to report effectively in this manner.

- *somebody to take a leadership role, to model and guide the practice until teachers are ready for independence. Without direction, it's hard to do and easier for people to say, "I'm not doing that. I'm just going to stick with my regular way of doing things."* (Lori)

The teachers were interested in pursuing professional autonomy, a premise of a PLC but, at the same time, they sought guidance to ensure that they were moving in the right direction.

➤ *a lot of planning, very definite direction, and consistent administrative support*
(Alison)

As a team, we recognized that strong and caring administration was essential to support us in our quest to understand and be more comfortable with the outcomes.

➤ *to help teachers understand what the outcomes are and what they mean because some of the outcomes are pretty vague* (Vicky)

Up to this point, the teachers have been intimidated by the language of the outcomes; in some cases convoluted and in other cases very vague. The issue of accountability was also a concern:

➤ *to help teachers in using rubrics with our assessments* (Alison)

➤ *to give the teachers sufficient knowledge to help the kids and parents understand*
(Chantelle)

Teachers are expected to be accountable to all of the stakeholders in student learning. It is sometimes difficult to communicate changes to students and parents because teachers must first understand the changes themselves and then find a way to explain them to others.

When all was said and done, the decision to undertake the professional development sessions in this manner was a great success. Even though the impact of all the PD sessions on the teachers and the school will be discussed in the team building

section, a glimpse into teachers' perceptions helps to put the success of the PD sessions into perspective.

Transformation: Knowledge and Comfort Level

When re-interviewed at the end of the PD sessions, outcomes-based planning transformed from being an overwhelming individual task to something that all participants saw as beneficial and possible when worked on in a collaborative setting.

- *Ah, tremendously. I was always aware of outcomes but found them overwhelming. Now, I can see that actually it's not that difficult once you get a few in place. It follows the same pattern and is actually a lot easier to mark using outcomes-based planning. (Alison)*

Once teachers have an organized plan in place to assure that all students are given an opportunity to demonstrate all of the outcomes in any given year, it will become a working plan for daily curriculum implementation and it will be much easier to assess whether the outcomes have been demonstrated or not.

- *I would rate it very, very beneficial and almost a requirement for anybody, especially in ELA, anybody that is going to be teaching ELA should have to do that as part of their programming; as part of their learning. (Anita)*

It is unfortunate that students graduating from Nova Scotia universities with an education degree are not required to have courses dedicated to outcomes-based planning where they can learn the process of planning and assessment in terms of outcomes. Upon graduation, these students should be a resource to their more mature colleagues, bringing new

research, ideas, and practical knowledge to the table instead of being taught how to plan upon their arrival at school.

➤ *Oh tremendously. Eleanor has been like our guru through the whole thing. In terms of knowledge, I thought it was wonderful being able to sit down together and say exactly, “This is what it says, this is what we say that it means, and then, if this is what it means then, what are the behaviors, what are the things, the skills that the students are going to have to use to be able to demonstrate to us that they are actually meeting the outcome,” because a lot of times in the past our activities and even our assessment that we would use in the classroom, they may have been wonderful and they may have shown us lots of things about our kids, but they didn’t necessarily meet the outcomes that we needed them to be meeting. (Lori)*

➤ *It’s been fantastic. We’ve never had that before, we just kind of picked wording out of outcomes and said oh, I can do this assignment or whatever but we really didn’t know what the whole picture was. Now I think we will be much better at it. (Eleanor)*

It is essential for the teacher and the students themselves to be able to accurately assess whether the outcome has been demonstrated. Clear, concise language with the outcome broken down into distinct parts will make this easier to accomplish. Instead of a hit and miss approach to outcomes during their planning, the teachers are moving towards a holistic, coordinated effort.

- *It made me more aware of the outcomes because we always talk about them but, if you don't actually see it down in print, sometimes you forget about them. We're trying to do the things that we should be doing and making sure that the activities that we do now match up with an outcome, so it is making us more responsible. (Vicky)*

The professional development sessions suggested that teachers need to put their tried and true activities on the back burner to ensure that their planning begins with the outcomes; new concrete examples are required to stimulate their outcomes-based thinking.

- *Well for me anyways, being a new teacher to ELA, it has allowed me to further my knowledge of the outcomes in ELA and understand what they are, what they mean, and what would be things we would require of the different levels, grade eight, grade seven. (Chantelle)*

Teachers at all stages of their career, whether they are in their first few years of teaching or veterans, must take an active role in enhancing their knowledge and understanding of working with the outcomes. Without personal interaction with the outcomes, understanding will be minimal and teacher confidence will wane.

Student-Friendly Rubrics

Rubrics are tools for assessment used by teachers and students. Rubrics are a consistent way of assessing whether the students have demonstrated the requirements of the outcome. A rubric is a set of categories which define and describe the important components of the work being completed, critiqued, or assessed. Each category contains a gradation of levels of completion. For each assignment, a clear description of what criteria need to be met at each level is given and in the end a clear picture is provided of

the opportunities given to meet the outcome and the individual results of each student.

Writing the rubrics in student-friendly language allows teachers to be more certain of what they are assessing, students to become more responsible for their own learning, and parents to understand what their child is accomplishing. The following teacher feedback reveals that the teachers are impressed with the wording that we collectively chose:

- *I like our group's interpretation and language in the outcomes better than I like the official provincial guide. I think that ours are much easier for students to know and for teachers to determine whether kids are successful with them too. (Anita)*
- *Oh, very confident. I think that the kids are going to have no trouble in understanding the wording that we used when we broke the outcomes down. It's very straight forward. (Lori)*
- *This is very specific, detailed student-friendly language that students and parents will be able to understand very well. It will make the teachers confident because we know exactly what we want them to do. (Eleanor)*
- *I think by us sitting down and looking at it and saying, would students be able to understand this and changing some of the language, it will make it a lot easier for them to understand because if you don't know what you are doing or what's expected of you, then it's pretty hard to reach that outcome. (Vicky)*
- *I certainly feel that I understand it a lot better. I'm hopeful, where I understand it a whole lot better and that we've used some kid friendly terminology, there's not these big words that they are going to sit there and wonder, What does that mean? (Chantelle)*

There are many rubrics available in print and online and there are sites that provide a template to construct rubrics with your own criteria. However, teachers must understand their curriculum to provide the students with clear learning targets and then these targets must be re-written in student-friendly language. With a clear sense of where they are heading, students can take an active role in their own learning.

Outcomes-Based Reporting

Beginning in the fall of 2008, teachers at VWMS will be required to report student progress on the provincially designed outcomes-based report card. The ELA teachers commented on how comfortable they will be reporting on student progress using the following provincial criteria:

Reporting on Levels of Achievement	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student consistently demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. • The student's work consistently exceeds program expectations.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. • The student's work sometimes exceeds program expectations.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates achievement of most of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. • The student's work meets program expectations.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates achievement of some of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. • The student's work approaches program expectations.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student rarely demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. • The student's work does not meet program expectations.

- *Yeah, 100%. I feel right now, I'm actually kind of excited about it which I never thought I would be because it was really overwhelming when we first started talking about it but, it makes so much more sense now that we we've talked about it and we've worked on it together. (Alison)*
- *I do feel that my knowledge of the ELA curriculum has expanded. I can more confidently report on the outcomes that we're going to be assessing. (Chantelle)*
- *I see that we still have a lot of work, personally I have a lot of work to do. (Vicky)*

Comments range from full confidence to still a lot of work to be done before using the criteria effectively.

- *I can't wait for it to come. Each outcome can be assessed on its own merit and with our rubrics we're all geared to go to do that. (Eleanor)*
- *I think it will be much easier for me to talk about a student's strengths in terms of outcomes, much easier and it will be a more authentic report on what children can and cannot do. (Anita)*
- *To be quite honest, I think in some ways that it may be a little more comfortable for me doing it that way than the way we are doing it right now with the numbers. When you look and see that a child has 75 in English, what's that really mean? It doesn't really tell you a whole lot in terms of which outcomes they were struggling with, which ones they didn't get, and which ones they are excelling at, it's just kind of a lump sum combination of those. (Lori)*

These comments show enthusiasm for using outcomes-based reporting but also the perennial struggle with numerical assessment. Describing the extent to which an

outcome is met seemed more concrete and meaningful to the teachers than a summative number.

Through analyzing the interviews, I became aware that the teachers were all at a different point in their journey. Searching for a way to express this idea more vividly, I was stimulated to think of a TV makeover show as a metaphor.

Professional Development Sessions as a Metaphor

What do English Language Arts teachers working in professional development sessions have in common with a reality television show doing makeovers? When I began thematically analyzing the data for this study, I did not anticipate using a metaphor to help me understand the journey upon which our English Language Arts team had embarked. However, the data continuously gave rise to a metaphorical explanation comparing the process that we had undergone to a TV makeover show. This helped me to make sense out of what took place both in the pre-research sessions and in the professional development sessions. This was very exciting, for as Phil Manning (1991) suggested, “When metaphors attend to fleeting resemblances between apparently disparate phenomena, they incite us to make a cognitive leap or connection that subsequently appears to be both inspired and self evident” (p. 71). Since we understand one thing by comparing it to something else we already know, metaphors are a natural step to allow one to gain greater understanding by possibly connecting information and giving definite form to ideas and relationships (Aita, McIlvain, Susman, & Crabtree, 2003). It is true, however, that the metaphor is an accessory to the research. It is “the crank to start the engine but not the fuel to start the car” (Manning, 1991, p. 71). The reader must also understand the metaphor, so, because the pattern for many of the reality

makeover shows is very similar, I have given a general explanation of what takes place, instead of comparing my study to a specific show that the reader may not have seen. In this metaphor, I will compare the recognition of a problem, the nomination of the participant(s) and the collection of evidence. Next, the participant(s) are selected and the current wardrobe is dismantled. Then, the participant(s), with their guidelines in hand, engulf themselves in shopping. Constant visits and feedback from the hosts and other professionals ensure their success. Finally, the end result is a transformation that is celebrated by all stakeholders.

Recognition of the Problem and Action

To make it possible for a candidate to have the opportunity to appear on the show, someone, usually family and friends, recognizes that there is a problem, that the person that they care about is “selling herself/himself short” by the way they appear to the public. They initiate the opportunity for change by sending in the nomination to the show and then they begin to collect the evidence necessary to ensure participation of the participant.

Problems frequently arise in the teaching profession and teachers must continuously gather evidence necessary to decide when and how to implement changes in practice. How to understand and undertake outcomes-based planning in a collaborative context was a problem that I recognized was facing the teachers at VWMS. The problem was evidenced by the impending reality of having to be accountable to parents and students regarding student learning on an outcomes-based report card. “In the absence of good professional development, how are teachers to reach beyond their current

professional repertoire?” is a question that Joyce (2004) poses and is the premise behind my suggestion that the ELA team begin looking at curriculum alignment as a part of our School Improvement Plan professional development sessions.

Curriculum alignment is the first step to make sound educational decisions about our students’ learning, to making us accountable and able to provide reliable data to all the stakeholders regarding completion of outcomes. With it, we will be able to monitor the performance of our students and be involved in continued professional development that will improve student success (NS DOE, 2007).

Looking through the research and models from the United States, I decided that the curriculum alignment process does not have to be so daunting that the ELA teachers are overwhelmed and decide not to do it. The alignment process should not model the one in North Carolina (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1999), where comprehensive professional development sessions demand six hours of teachers’ time just to orient them to the program. Curriculum alignment means that teachers are assuring that the materials taught in their classrooms match the outcomes set out by the province. A simple matrix can be designed for teachers to check the “alignment of learning outcomes with their pedagogy and the curriculum” (Driscoll, 2004, p.13). The only ingredients needed were a structured plan for action and commitment both for hard work and for the time necessary to complete the work.

In preparation for our first curriculum alignment session, I cut out and pasted all forty-one English Language Arts outcomes from Emergent (Primary) to Grade Twelve onto four 11x17 sheets of paper using a different colour for each ELA strand, aligning them so that when they were taped together, each outcome could be read horizontally

across the grade levels (for example, see Diagram 4.1). This arrangement was to enable the teachers to read each outcome across the continuum and then to collectively decide whether we would code the grade seven and grade eight outcomes as Introductory, Continuing Practice, or Mastery. This coding helped the team to be knowledgeable about what exactly is their responsibility in the overall picture. In turn, areas neglected or over-emphasized could be identified and allow the teachers to make more balanced decisions about our curriculum.

Diagram 4.1: Speaking and Listening Outcomes Aligned P-12

Speaking and Listening Curriculum Outcomes												
GCO 1: Students will speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thought, ideas, feelings, and experiences.												
Emergent	Early	Transitional	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Students will be expected to: express feelings and give simple descriptions of past experiences	Students will be expected to: express thoughts and feelings and describe experiences	Students will be expected to: describe, show, and draw thoughts, feelings, and experiences and consider others' ideas	Students will be expected to: describe, show, and draw thoughts, feelings, and experiences and consider others' ideas	Students will be expected to: explain and/or describe their thoughts, ideas, and experiences and consider those of their peers	Students will be expected to: compare thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions, and ask questions to clarify their ideas and expand their ideas	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers	Students will be expected to: synthesize thoughts, ideas, and experiences to decisions and compare their own ideas with those of their peers
Students will be expected to: begin to ask and respond to questions, seeking information (What? Where? When? Why?)	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to clarify information and gather further information	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to clarify information and explore possibilities or solutions to problems	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to clarify information and explore possibilities or solutions to problems	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to clarify information and explore solutions to problems (e.g., using an interview format)	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts	Students will be expected to: ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts
Students will be expected to: express opinions (I like... I don't like...)	Students will be expected to: express opinions and give simple explanations for some of their opinions (I like because...)	Students will be expected to: express and explain opinions and respond to the opinions and opinions of others	Students will be expected to: express and explain opinions and respond to the opinions and opinions of others	Students will be expected to: express personal opinions and respond to the opinions and opinions of others	Students will be expected to: express and support personal ideas and opinions and respond to opinions of others	Students will be expected to: defend and/or support their opinions with evidence and/or reasons to support their position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position	Students will be expected to: express clearly and with concrete ideas, a personal point of view and be able to support that position
Students will be expected to: listen to the ideas and opinions of others	Students will be expected to: listen to others' ideas and opinions	Students will be expected to: interactively listen to others' ideas and opinions	Students will be expected to: interactively listen to others' ideas and opinions	Students will be expected to: listen critically to others' ideas and opinions expressed	Students will be expected to: listen critically to others' ideas and opinions and point out new	Students will be expected to: listen critically to others' ideas and opinions and point out new	Students will be expected to: listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of messages, and recognize and consider supporting details	Students will be expected to: listen carefully to identify key points in oral presentations, and evaluate the relevancy of supporting details	Students will be expected to: listen carefully to assess the adequacy of the evidence provided to evaluate the integrity of information presented	Students will be expected to: listen critically to analyze and evaluate ideas and information in order to formulate and refine opinions and ideas	Students will be expected to: listen critically to analyze and evaluate ideas and information in order to formulate and refine opinions and ideas	Students will be expected to: listen critically to analyze and evaluate ideas and information in order to formulate and refine opinions and ideas
GCO 2: Students will be able to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.												
Students will be expected to: participate in conversation and in small- and whole-group discussions	Students will be expected to: participate in conversation and contribute to small- and whole-group discussions	Students will be expected to: participate in conversation, small-group and whole-group discussions, understanding when to speak and when to listen	Students will be expected to: participate in conversation, small-group and whole-group discussions, understanding when to speak and when to listen	Students will be expected to: participate in conversation, small-group and whole-group discussions, showing an awareness of when to speak and when to listen	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas	Students will be expected to: contribute to small-group conversations and whole-group discussions, recognizing their role and responding to others' ideas
Students will be expected to: begin to use gestures and cues to convey meaning	Students will be expected to: use gestures, facial expressions, and gestures to communicate ideas and feelings	Students will be expected to: use gestures, facial expressions, and gestures to communicate ideas and feelings	Students will be expected to: use gestures, facial expressions, and gestures to communicate ideas and feelings	Students will be expected to: use gestures, facial expressions, and gestures to communicate ideas and feelings	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion	Students will be expected to: use word choices and expressions appropriate to the speaking occasion
Students will be expected to: respond to and give simple directions or instructions	Students will be expected to: respond to and give instructions or directions that include two or three components	Students will be expected to: give and follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: give and follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: give and follow precise instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: give and follow precise instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: give and follow precise instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions	Students will be expected to: follow instructions and respond to questions and directions
Students will be expected to: engage in simple oral presentations and respond to oral presentations and other texts	Students will be expected to: engage in informal oral presentations and respond to every oral presentation and other texts	Students will be expected to: engage and respond to a variety of oral presentations and other texts	Students will be expected to: engage and respond to a variety of oral presentations and other texts	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)	Students will be expected to: engage in oral presentations and oral presentations (e.g., oral reports, oral presentations)
GCO 3: Students will be able to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience and purpose.												
Students will be expected to: demonstrate that they are becoming aware of social conventions, including work and cooperative play	Students will be expected to: demonstrate a growing awareness of social conventions such as turn-taking and politeness in conversation and cooperative play	Students will be expected to: use basic conventions and conventions of conversation in group work and cooperative play	Students will be expected to: use basic conventions and conventions of conversation in group work and cooperative play	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: demonstrate an awareness of the needs, rights, and feelings of others in listening situations and in language that shows respect for all people
Students will be expected to: develop the concept/sensitivity of feelings and an awareness that some vocabulary choices can hurt people	Students will be expected to: recognize some examples of verbal and non-verbal vocabulary and begins to make vocabulary choices that affect others that hurt people	Students will be expected to: identify some forms of oral language that are used to particular individuals and others and use vocabulary that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify some forms of oral language that are used to particular individuals and others and use vocabulary that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people	Students will be expected to: identify examples of respectful and non-respectful oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people
Students will be expected to: demonstrate agreement or agreement that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations	Students will be expected to: begin to show awareness of some ways to be respectful according to the situation (e.g., playground, classroom)	Students will be expected to: demonstrate a growing awareness that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations	Students will be expected to: demonstrate a growing awareness that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences	Students will be expected to: show an awareness of the kinds of language appropriate to different situations and audiences

During the first after school session, I suggested that curriculum alignment was similar to how a young child is fascinated the first time he or she independently pulls a zipper up, but how this excitement quickly turns to frustration when the teeth do not align and the zipper is stuck. The same is true for some teachers who are trying to improve student learning using the mandated Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes. When student learning is derailed, it is necessary to find out why. Frustration develops when concepts and skills that teachers believe were learned in previous years are definitely lacking in the majority of students. In grade primary, teachers suggest that the students don't come from home ready for school; in middle school, teachers wonder what the elementary school teachers have been doing; in high school; teachers charge that the middle school has sent them students with insufficient skills and knowledge, and in turn university professors claim the same about high school graduates when they arrive. Unless teachers collectively examine, not only the outcomes for their grade level, but also the levels before and after, they will not have a complete picture of where their students have been and where they must go in order to graduate with all the outcomes mastered.

Curriculum alignment is the tool that leads teachers to know exactly what outcomes they need to address and to what degree in each grade. It is the tool that determines whether the curriculum that was designed and taught by individual teachers matches the curriculum outcomes mandated by the Nova Scotia Department of Education (Johnson, n.d.).

Richard Dufour, (personal communication, April 12, 2007) founder of the model of PLC that we are implementing in our school, believes that curriculum alignment is a “rational plan for getting better.” His model recommends that it is necessary to get all of

the teeth in the zipper lined up correctly or the zipper will not go up and student learning will not happen. Just as the teeth in the zipper must fit precisely together, curriculum alignment reflects the difference between the written, planned, taught, assessed, and evaluated curriculum (Armstrong & Studdards, 1999).

Our first activity was to have the teachers tape all the sheets into three large charts, one for each strand of ELA: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and Other Ways of Representing, similar to mine. After that was completed, we were able to study and discuss the outcomes, beginning with the Writing and Other Ways of Representing outcomes.

The atmosphere of the meeting was unlike a staff meeting or traditional top-down professional development sessions. The teachers came prepared, bringing useful tools that I had not thought of, such as highlighters to differentiate the coding. They immediately started preparing their sheets, and they seemed eager to get the process underway. As the time neared the end, it was exciting to hear Anita ask when we could meet again to continue the work. Then, Lori asked if I wanted them to do their initial thinking at home so that we could share our ideas right away and save time. Teachers were offering to do extra homework and stay for an hour after school for a meeting.

Wow!

In successive after school sessions, quality in-depth professional conversations took place. For example, as we studied the grade seven and eight wording for outcome 8.1, Lori asked, *How is this wording different from four to six?* Outcome 8.1 states: Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences,

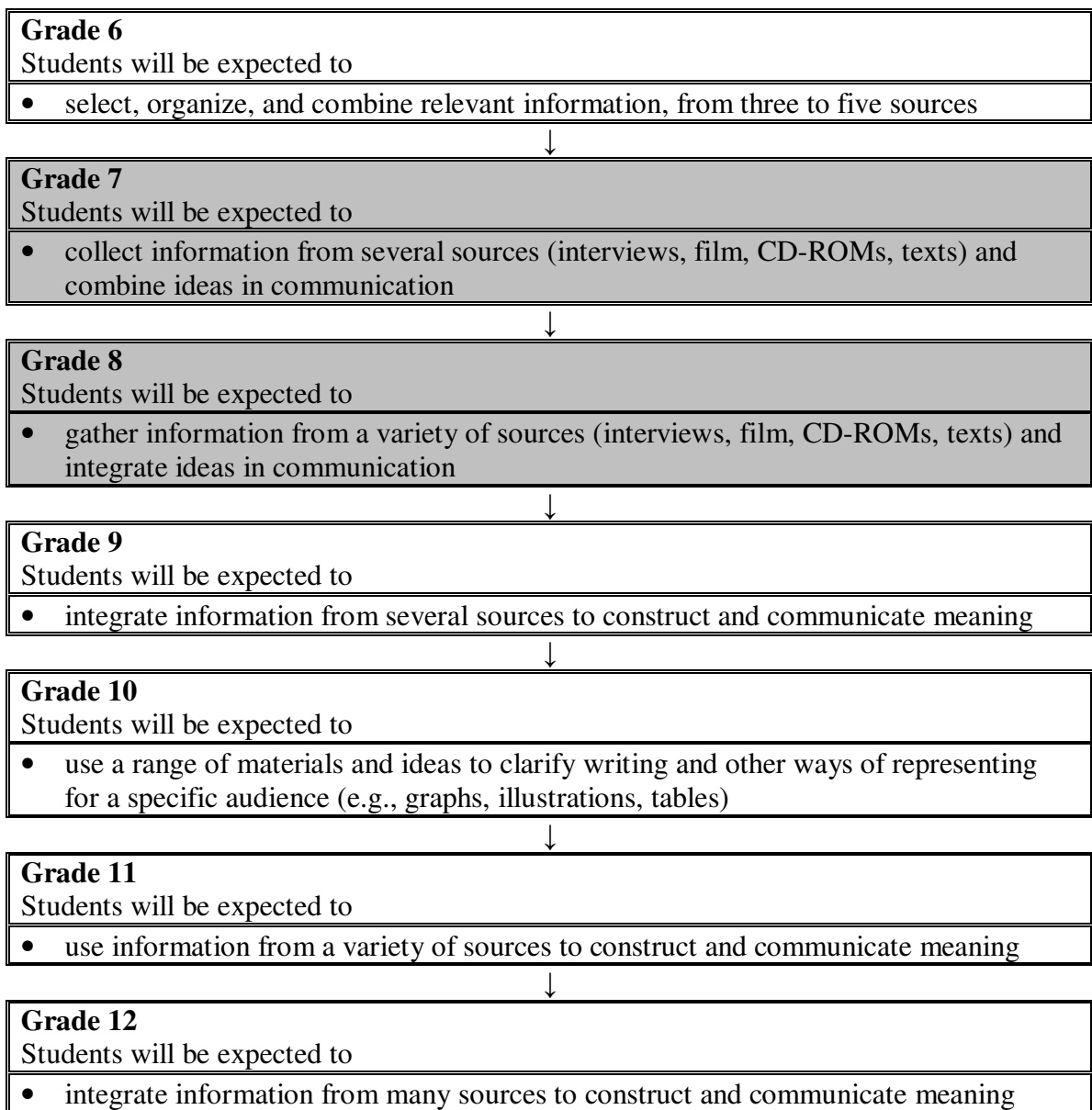
and learning; and to use their imagination. After discussion, the consensus was that in grades four to six, the process must be more teacher-directed and in grades seven to nine the students are required to make choices that are more independent. Subsequently, in grades seven and eight, the outcome must be continuing practice as a means of gradually releasing the responsibility.

Throughout the process, we were all amazed at the number of skills and concepts that should be continuing practice of what had already been mastered. In reality, we have needed to re-introduce these same skills and concepts continually which would suggest that their mastery has never taken place. At one point we were mulling over two outcomes that did not seem to make sense and we realized that I had mixed the two of them up when I was aligning them. When we moved onto the last one, Lori exclaimed, *Oh my gosh, this one can't be right either!* Thinking that I had mixed up outcome 10.5, she read the outcome verbatim, Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication and said, "That can't go there. It would not be mastered in grade three." In fact, there was no mistake. This writing outcome that we struggle to have students meet in middle school, should have been mastered in grade three. Table 4.2 illustrates the progression of required skills in outcome 10.5 from primary to grade 12.

Table 4.2: Outcome 10.5 Aligned P-12

GCO: Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and media products to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Emergent Students will be expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• with assistance, engage in the research process to construct and communicate meaning– interact with a variety of simple texts (e.g., pictures, computer software, videotapes, easy fiction and non-fiction), as well as human and community resources– record information in simple ways (e.g., drawings, labels, predesigned booklets, short pieces of writing)– share information with others in a variety of ways
↓
Early Students will be expected to
select, organize, and combine, with assistance, relevant information to construct and communicate meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– interact with resources (print, non-print, or human) to answer their own questions or learning needs– with assistance, develop strategies for making and organizing notes– create a new product– share their information in a variety of simple ways
↓
Transitional Students will be expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• select, organize, and combine relevant information with assistance, from at least two sources, without copying verbatim, to construct and communicate meaning
↓
Grade 3 Students will be expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• select, organize, and combine relevant information with assistance, from at least two sources, without copying verbatim, to construct and communicate meaning
↓
Grade 4 Students will be expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• select, organize, and combine relevant information from two or more sources to construct and communicate meaning
↓
Grade 5 Students will be expected to
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• select, organize, and combine relevant information, from three or more sources, to construct and communicate meaning
↓



In these curriculum alignment conversations, the problem was recognized, the participants were nominated, and the evidence was collected. Just as the participants would now be encouraged to take part in the TV makeover show, the ELA teachers would be encouraged to undertake the professional development sessions with me as part of this study.

Whose Makeover is it?

The television show begins with the show's hosts and the family and friends of the potential participant "ambushing" them and revealing that they all believe that their clothes, hair, and make-up are all stuck in a time warp. Prior to show day, more evidence was collected to share with the participants, showing them that they dress too old or too young, too loose or too tight. The hosts offer the participant an opportunity to restyle themselves receiving a complete makeover and, with expert assistance, improve their knowledge and comfort with wardrobe planning. A credit card with their name on it is loaded with \$5000.00 dollars for them to go shopping for a new wardrobe, but they must follow the hosts' rules to improve their wardrobe planning skills. Most participants agree to participate with a great deal of reservation.

Fortunately, I did not need to ambush the teachers in order to interview them and initiate the study. Their own misgivings about outcomes-based planning and reporting and the professional development sessions that we previously completed on curriculum alignment were the primers that caused them to want to be involved in the study. I was offering the teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively with the other members of the ELA team to give the outcomes a makeover and in the process to strengthen their understanding and comfort level with the outcomes. Although apprehension was in the air, the teachers were ready and eager to begin.

Certainly, no monetary reward was necessary to convince the ELA teachers to participate in this study. Contrary to the findings in Holloway's (2000) research, these teachers were able to articulate their needs, and identify criteria deemed necessary for

effective school-based professional development. All six members of the ELA team agreed to accept the invitation because they also recognized the need for the sessions, not only for the upcoming report cards, but also, due to their desire to improve their teaching practice and to work towards improving student learning.

Purging the Closet: Outcomes Analysis

The next step in the restyling process witnesses the hosts going through the participant's current wardrobe, assessing where it is now and where it needs to go. A huge trashcan becomes the home for all the unwearable clothing, usually the majority. It is at this point, that the participant receives the credit card and the guidelines to go out and shop for a new wardrobe. Simultaneously, behind the scenes, hair and make-up experts are developing plans for the transformation of the participant's overall look.

Behind the scenes, actually, sitting at my kitchen table on the weekend before the professional development sessions were to start, my intention was to analyze one outcome to use as a model to show the teachers how the process works. I was anxious about this, wanting to get the sessions off to a good start, and the resources to show me how were limited. In fact, the one article that I was using for a guide, *Tools for Teachers* where two Connecticut educators Deborah E. Burns and Jeanne H. Purcell (2001) described strategies that they used to help eighty teachers with state standards, was designed to help them create standards from scratch, not enhance their understanding of ones already mandated.

Joyce (2004) pointed out, "I know from personal experience that commitment to an idea is different from knowing how to take effective action to make it happen." (p.

77). I decided to contact a “critical friend,” Jocelyne MacDonnell, a retired French teacher whom I consider an expert on analyzing outcomes, to guide me and assure that I was moving in the right direction. She offered to come up that morning. I chose to begin with outcome 4.4: Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts. This particular outcome not only dealt with reading strategies that we work with daily but, is an example of the complex wordiness of many of the outcomes.

When she arrived, we began the analysis process on one outcome that took approximately two hours to complete. She informed me that we are not required to rewrite the outcomes. We must interpret what was written in keeping with the philosophy of the Department of Education as outlined in the provincial curriculum guide. For the educator to complete the analysis of an outcome into specific target activities, the following steps must be followed: (Spady, 1994a)

1. Read the mandated outcome.
2. Isolate the action(s) that indicate(s) to the teacher the required academic activity/assignment that leads the student to the outcome.
3. Clarify the exact meaning of the action words (verbs) with the use of a children’s dictionary.
4. Identify the visible, concrete actions required to demonstrate the outcome. The educator has to have or acquire a clear understanding of the elements of the outcome:

actions, students' prior knowledge pertaining to this particular outcome.

Collaborative discussions among the team members are essential to develop a complete identification of all the actions required of the outcome.

5. The choice of target activities shall be in keeping with the student's level of knowledge as well as the degree of demonstration (introduction, continuing practice, or mastery) required at the level at which the student is performing.
 - a. Make the action concrete.
 - b. Express the action in a way which can be observed and measured.
6. Each target activity has components that will lead the student to reach the desired outcome. Each component should be:
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Attainable
 - d. Realistic
 - e. Timely

To facilitate the evaluation task, each component should also be concrete and observable in a way to permit its incorporation into an assessment rubric. You need to know that the majority of the students have completed the task to the specifications and level outlined within the parameters of the outcome. In other words, not all students will attain the designated level but some, such as those on Individual Program Plans, should attain the outcome at an earlier level.

When I lamented that it would take my whole study time just analyze the outcomes, Jocelyne offered to work with me after school and on the weekends to

complete this task. She said that it is the discussions that take place and the decisions that are made from them that are important. I thought this was a wonderful idea and said that I would offer it to the group the next day, in our first session.

Shopping: Professional Development Sessions

The next morning, bright and early, the participant is off to the stores to begin spending their \$5000.00. Using the hosts' guidelines, the plan, at the outset, is for them to spend all of the money on a new, functional, and effective wardrobe.

Having the money to shop, however, does not guarantee that it will be easy or successful. Inevitably, participants become stressed and overwhelmed and revert to the shopping patterns that are familiar to them. It is at this point, that help arrives to make sure they are on the right track, compliment them on their effective shopping purchases, and offer assistance.

The hosts, using mannequins, give the participant lessons on the proper fit for their body shape and on the elements of design: shape/form, colour, line, and texture. This coincides with lessons on the principles of design: rhythm, emphasis, proportion, balance, and unity that show how the elements are used to create looks with whole outfits, accessories, and shoes that are different or unique.

At the outset of the professional development sessions, I briefly reintroduced my study to the participants. I provided them with a copy of outcome 4.4 that Jocelyne and I analyzed (see Appendix G) and explained that it took two hours to complete. We looked at the analysis together and I reviewed the steps that were taken. Alison said, *I think you*

should copyright this and sell it and you'd be rich. Well, seriously, it's what everybody is looking for.

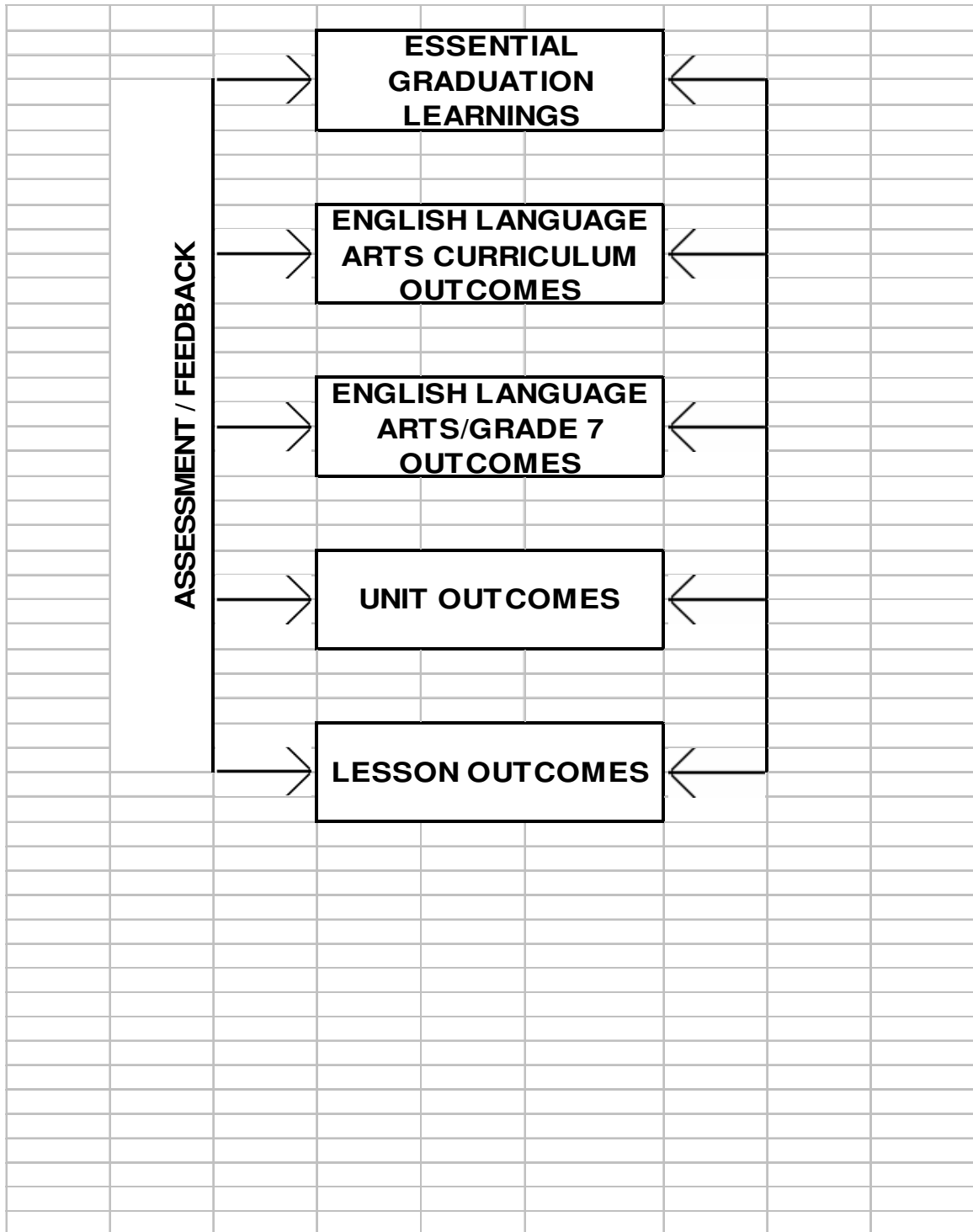
At the end of the session, I explained that Jocelyne said that when you are analyzing outcomes, *you have to kind of live it and breathe it and it just comes like second nature*. I said that my goal was to be able to do this, but that I am still working on it. I told them that Jocelyne offered to help me analyze the rest of the outcomes so that the team could spend our time having the necessary conversations about each analyzed outcome to formulate assessment rubrics for each one. Knowing the amount of time involved, they were happy to agree.

The analysis of the other forty outcomes began with a full school day. The Principal, Ms. Hood, realized the time-consuming nature of this work and its urgency. She granted me the day to work on assessment as the school's Literacy Liaison (see Appendix H). The work continued on the weekend and for several successive evenings and weekends. The analysis process took approximately 20 hours to complete (see Appendix I).

By our next session, the Speaking and Listening and Reading and Viewing strands were analyzed. The principal invited two supervisors from central office to join us for a half-day inservice. We wanted to know, in their expert opinions, we were moving in the right direction. During the first part of the morning, we looked first at a planning chart (see Table 4.3) to see the process that we must follow for outcomes-based planning (Kansas State Board of Education, 1993).

Table 4.3: Outcomes-Based Education

**NOVA SCOTIA
OUTCOMES - BASED CURRICULUM**



We discussed many topics related to outcomes-based planning which provided us with very positive feedback throughout. One of the supervisors said she wished that we had a camera and could be taping the session and she remarked on how far this conversation has come since she met with us two years previous. The other supervisor said the analyzed outcome was awesome and that our level of understanding right now is incredible. Most importantly, it was confirmed that what we were doing is instructional alignment.

In addition, Supervisor 1 indicated that we need to be sharing; it is not having the document that matters, it is the conversation. I agreed that if people are willing to have these conversations, the fact that the outcomes are already analyzed, permits them to get to the conversations instead of trying to pound out each one and make the “I can statements.” The supervisor said that my point was well taken, that the conversations are the pounding out part. She continued on to say that she could think of no other word except pound because you have to pound the curriculum into a form that can be used.

Both supervisors soothed our fear that our work would not be correct saying not to worry about the Department of Education’s response. Supervisor 2 reminded us that different conversations may reap different results. *You know that this school may say that this is what this means and we might go two doors down and they might say I’m not comfortable with this we need it worded ... but my response is that doesn’t matter, what matters is this conversation is something that you can go back to.*

The rich conversations that we had to go back to, far too numerous to record, were the result of our six month study. We discussed: rubrics, the amount of work required by the action(s) in the target, whether the learning target was comprehensible

and unambiguous, the resources necessary to fulfill the learning target, if the target needed to be rewritten to make it more student-friendly, how to revise the learning target, and keeping it S.M.A.R.T. In fact, it was these conversations, which solidified our understanding of and improved our level of comfort with the curriculum outcomes and permitted us to consolidate the learning targets and develop corresponding assessment rubrics necessary to improve student learning. For this reason, I thought it necessary to carefully select and provide excerpts of these conversations to complete this section:

Regarding the Outcome Analysis

In the first phase of the professional development sessions, the teachers scrutinized the content, word structure, and vocabulary previously used to analyze the forty-one ELA outcomes. An example is given below of how we were looking to clarify, simplify, and most importantly, understand exactly what the outcomes are going to require the students to know and to be able to do.

Eleanor: *It will be a bit dry to go through each outcome but your thinking is what I need so we can look at each GCO section 1.0 to 1.4, 2.0 to 2.4, etc.*

S-2: *Can I ask you a question about the first one?*

Eleanor: *Uh huh.*

S-2: *See the first bullet under the first one ... It says, I can express my ideas, listen to others responses, and address their comments.... At this grade level do you do this as a collective or is it three separate skills? Do you know what I'm asking? Would the first one be expressing my ideas and the second one be, I listen to others responses about my ideas and the third one, I address their comments about my ideas or do you address them all as one?*

S-2 was suggesting that the outcome be analyzed further because there are too many things being asked of the student in one attempt. We need to be very certain about what we are assessing and should be looking for specific criteria each time.

Eleanor: *When they do it, they will do it collectively but, yes, I think it should be three separate bullets.*

S-1: *You may need to do them in full class in grade seven and some of them may be in groups.*

Anita: *Probably at first it would go from whole class to guided practice, to working in groups, and then to little conversations.*

S-1: *Up in the first bullet, I can participate in a small group conversation; I would separate that from a whole class discussion because they are very different.*

Eleanor/ S-2: *Yes.*

S-1 reminded us that whole class involvement is different from working in small groups and should therefore be separated in the assessment.

S-2: *So when you see the “and” maybe...*

Eleanor: *I’ll take that out and make it a separate bullet.*

S-1: *I think you’re right. Vocabulary, sentence structures, rate of speed, tone – four things I would assess.*

S-2: *But separately?*

S-1: *Yes. Writes – very well, sentence structure – very good, they talk too fast and it will affect their tone.*

Eleanor: *It makes it better to have it that way because sometimes it’s important to focus on one particular thing so you can make comments about it.*

S-2: *And likewise it becomes more manageable for the student too because they know what you are looking for.*

The supervisors stressed the need to simplify the learning targets to help both the students in their learning and the teachers in their assessments.

Designing Rubrics

The next phase was to agree upon a consistent means of assessing each of the analyzed outcomes. Even though a variety of assessments will be used to formatively assess the students' understanding of the outcome and to give them multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know, the summative assessment of the outcomes will be completed with the rubrics that we have designed.

Anita: *Will we be using rubrics for all of them because there are all kinds of other ways of evaluating?*

Eleanor: *I would like to be able to create either a rubric or some form of assessment for each and every outcome. If I am marking 1.0 today, I want to be able to know exactly what I am looking for and what criteria would get me to know that they have done it.*

S-1: *Right. You need a rubric to know specifically what it is that you are looking for so you can say to the kids, This is how you meet grade level and so if we have the criteria, they know what their target is before we start.*

Lori: *So in other words, like Anita, what you are saying essentially is, What is the criteria? What is it that we are looking for? Whether you choose to use a rubric to check that off or an observational checklist or whatever it is that the kids have to know what we are looking for.*

Eleanor: *But, if we're going to have an evaluation for each outcome, a rubric makes sense because if they are not at grade level, then they are below grade level or they are above grade level and we need to know what that looks like.*

Anita: *And if we do use a rubric for everything, it is very consistent.*

Eleanor: *That's right. It is certainly a way of comparing apples to apples all the way across.*

Alison: *Well, and all three of us, will be using the same one and knowing that we are doing exactly the same assessment in all three of our classrooms.*

Anita: *I would rather a Likert scale: never, sometimes, always, or ... and I'd put four things in because I find it is really hard for kids to judge, is it all the time or not but, if you put in always, sometimes, rarely or never, then kids can rate them.*

These rubrics, when shared with the students before the work begins, offer them a sense of security. The students will be able to determine exactly what they must do in order to be successful. There is also a comfort for both teachers and students in knowing that all students are consistently being evaluated throughout the grade level. The design of the rubric itself is very important. Although Anita originally suggested four categories, we all agreed that we did not want big gaps between them into which the student could fall. We decided to have five categories: Always, Most of the time, Some of the time, Rarely, Never.

The professional development sessions to create the assessment rubrics were not for the "faint of heart." Long hours were spent discussing, arguing, and eventually coming to a consensus about the wording and any additions necessary to explain the requirements of each analyzed outcome within all three strands of ELA.

Speaking and Listening

Eleanor: *For 1.0, they need to express their ideas, listen to others' responses about their ideas, address the comments of others about their ideas, and comment on the ideas of others after listening to them. We need to figure out what that looks like for a grade level, grade seven. It might be in a discussion, it could be in a presentation, just generally, what we would expect a grade seven student to be able to do. They are recognizing that their participation is necessary in a discussion. As we walk along and we hear somebody saying, Well, I think whatever, what criteria are we looking for to say, yeah, they're meeting that?*

Alison: *This is going to be such a hard one to qualify, you know. How do you say you are above grade level?*

Vicky: *I'm looking at, I express my ideas 90% of the time, 70% of the time, okay whatever, or I'm looking at it that if I asked you a question and you just gave me minimal details but somebody gave me a lot of details or a lot of information to back up what they are saying then that would be the higher end.*

Anita: *Quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality.*

Vicky: *No, I mean details but ...*

Anita: *Pertaining to it.*

Vicky: *Yeah.*

Lori: *When you look too, what is the difference between 1.0 and down here 1.3 when you're saying about the amount or the quality where they express clearly and with conviction a personal point of view and be able to support that position so that's that one, right?*

Eleanor: *Um hum.*

Vicky: *For point of view, it may be something that we're extracting from the information, or a story or ...*

Lori: *Oh right, okay.*

Alison: *It's hard to measure because it's somebody's ideas. They might be off on the wrong track but that's their idea. If they are expressing themselves, how do we say, Oh you are expressing ideas above ... that's a hard one.*

Vicky: *I think this would be more of a checklist like, personally responding and listening, that would be more of a checklist than a rubric.*

Eleanor: *Which it would be, but what are we checking? That would be our rubric, right?*

All: *Right.*

Lori: *Where's the Teaching in Action 7-9 (NS DOE, 2008) binder? There is a section on Speaking and Listening where it lists the characteristics of effective speakers and listeners. We can use some of that to put in our checklist.*

The Nova Scotia Department of Education has provided each of us with a wealth of professional resources which we can draw upon for teaching and assessment suggestions. Individually, we know some of these resources better than others and collectively we know the content of the majority of them. However, as can be seen by the apparent confusion and the lack of direction in the above conversation, these resources have not been satisfactory.

Lori: *What does that mean then, being aware of the listening audience? So, like for example if you were supposed to be giving a eulogy, being aware of the fact that you are speaking to people who are grieving the loss of someone so ...*

Eleanor: *The jokes should be minimal.*

Lori: *If you were at a golfing tournament, the way that you are there is different from if you are at a baseball game.*

Eleanor: *It's different than a school assembly.*

In this conversation about being aware of the listening audience, it is obvious that the teachers felt comfortable, especially as time passed, to ask for clarification when they didn't understand something. Although we often joked with each other, respect for each individual participant was always an unstated priority.

Reading and Viewing

Eleanor: *Okay, so then we get to 4.4 and there are a lot of bullets but I think we need to have a rubric for each one.*

Anita: *I think you need "always" for all of them.*

Vicky: *Can we put all of this together and say, "I can draw the six elements of a short story?"*

Eleanor: *No, because remember when we did the Speaking and Listening, the first thing S-2 said was, "Can you break those down?" They might be able to tell the plot but they don't know the setting so we have to basically know that they can do it all.*

Anita: *But you could use one story and say this story is similar to this story in the setting, you can do a lot at one time but you still have to separate the items.*

It was important to remember to incorporate the guidelines that we had previously established with the supervisors. Each target must be specific and concrete, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

Eleanor: *We are hoping to finish reading today. We were looking at the fix-up strategies. We have the sheet, “What Good Readers Do” and Chris Tovani’s book, I Read It, But I Don’t Get It. It has a whole section on fix-up strategies.*

Lori: *Isn’t that in “Teaching in Action” too? The bookmarks! They are like bookmarks. It has the little symbols, you know, there’s a wrench or whatever.*

The Department of Education and the School Board invested a great deal of time and money into inservicing teachers on how to teach the reading strategies referred to as the Big Six: Making Connections, Determining Importance, Questioning, Visualization, Inference, and Synthesis and other reading and viewing strategies. Unfortunately, the instruction and suggested activities often led teachers to teach these reading strategies as isolated entities instead of in context. Teaching and assessing reading strategies must be a part of the curriculum designed to meet particular reading and viewing outcomes.

Eleanor: *It’s the Big Six plus prediction. Back in 4.5 it says, I can identify either orally or in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies that they use to understand a text. There are fourteen of them here and we were wondering if we should have some that are essential for the grade sevens and choose some more for eight? Fourteen is a lot to expect that they can do.*

Working together as a whole ELA team we decided which of the strategies we should concentrate on in grade 7 and in grade 8, and which ones would be a

concentration in both grade levels. This was a visible sign that we were all trying to strengthen the link between the two grade levels.

Lori: *You want to look at which ones for seven and which ones for eight?*

Eleanor: *Obviously, the grade eights need to do the same ones, plus, we can introduce inference, synthesis and analysis to them.*

Vicky: *Predict would be an easier one too.*

Eleanor: *And this monitor, I've never thought about that but, it's just-right books.*

Lori: *Yeah.*

Eleanor: *Asking themselves, "Is this text too difficult?" We should be able to do that. Now, self-correct using fix-up strategies ... some people will do it, but I'm not sure that we will be able to say that they've mastered it in seven.*

Alison: *Do they have to master them by then?*

Eleanor: *Well, no.*

Again a reminder was given of a previously learned lesson. We must always be aware of the degree of demonstration (introduction, continuing practice, or mastery) required at the level at which the student is performing.

Eleanor: *Word-solve: use a variety of strategies to figure out unfamiliar words, look for smaller words in the word, well we will certainly be working on that. Sample/gather: Pay attention to the helpful parts of text.*

Lori: *Would that be like in a piece of non-fiction like when you are reading an article, and there's pictures that help to illustrate the main point or ... Would that be what that means?*

Anita: *Um hum.*

Eleanor: *Synthesis, we know isn't going to happen on a regular basis.*

The teachers guide their students to attempt the reading strategies of inference, synthesis, and analysis. The teachers, however, through years of experience and knowledge of Bloom's Taxonomy realize that these strategies require students to use higher order thinking skills which the majority of grade 7 and 8 students are not developmentally ready to independently implement.

Alison: *I don't even really know what synthesis is.*

Eleanor: *Putting all the pieces of the puzzle together.*

Anita: *And making new information.*

Alison: *That's pretty tough.*

Eleanor: *Determining Importance – think of your purpose for reading and read for key information. Questioning – they find it difficult. Visualizing and making connections can be done.*

All: *Oh yeah, definitely.*

Eleanor: *Looking at these now, there are four that should be done in grade seven: predict and confirm, monitor, making connections, and visualizing. Then inferring, questioning, determining importance in eight ... or should that be in both?*

Anita: *That one should be in both and I think that questioning almost should be too, even though I wouldn't say it would be strong in seven.*

Eleanor: *Analyze and synthesis will be in eight. Seven and eight are determining importance and self-correcting word solving, sample and gather, maintain fluency. We can put these criteria into 4.5 now:*

Grade Seven:

- Predict and Confirm
- Monitor
- Make Connections
- Visualize

Grade Seven and Grade Eight:

- Self-correct
- Word Solve
- Sample/Gather
- Maintain Fluency
- Question
- Determine Importance

Grade Eight:

- Infer
- Analyze
- Synthesize

Deciding together on these criteria was an important collaborative step for the ELA team. We divided the work load in the way which we felt would be the most beneficial to our students.

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

This conversation evidences the struggle that we had attempting to guarantee student-friendly word choice and to discuss the suggestions that S-1 sent to us via e-mail.

Eleanor: *We started with 8.4, we have, "I can show, not tell with words" and then we changed, "I can include physical observations to sensory language. It would be a teaching item, I know "physical observations" is too difficult but, "sensory language" is probably ...*

Alison: *More difficult.*

Eleanor: *Exactly.*

Lori: *Could we in brackets put like, I can include sensory language and in brackets put like the sight of, sound of, taste of ...*

Eleanor: *I think that would be good. Just so it will be a reminder for them. S-1 asked, "What does this look like in practice?" If we are getting them to do an activity about showing, not telling it would be a brainstorm of all the things that they could say about a certain thing and creating the paragraph.*

Outcomes-based planning does not require throwing out all of the resources that we have been using all along. It necessitates reviewing the purpose of each activity and realigning them with the specific targets that meet the outcomes.

Eleanor: *I can include ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.*

Lori: *Would that be adding adjectives and things, for example, if you are writing about being in a hospital waiting room, the words that you pick ... you might have somebody*

who's there who is relieved that they are there and waiting whereas somebody else might be there and they are anxious.

Alison: *You could do a RAFT.*

Lori: *Yeah, that's right. Yes.*

Alison: *As the patient, as the parent, as the nurse.*

The following outcome is one of the most convoluted ones but, with the original analysis and with back and forth dialogue, we were able to hammer it out and put each learning target into the language needed for a student-friendly rubric.

Eleanor: *I can limit my ideas to avoid too much detail that will take the reader away from the main idea. That seems long, is there any way that we can shorten that up?*

Alison: *That's pretty much when a kid goes off on a tangent because they are trying to say everything and they are not realizing you can't do that.*

Vicky: *I can keep my ideas to the main idea.*

Lori: *Yeah, or I can keep my ideas focused to the main idea or on a single topic.*

Eleanor: *On a single idea?*

Chantelle: *So, I can always focus my ideas on a single topic to avoid too much detail that will take the reader away from the main idea.*

Eleanor: *Ah, do we need all that stuff?*

Vicky: *No, that's what we're trying to avoid.*

Lori: *How about this, where it says, I can limit my ideas to avoid too much detail, what about, I can focus my details to relate to the main idea.*

Eleanor: *How about, I can stick to one main idea.*

Lori: *In my writing.*

Chantelle: *How about I can always focus on one idea.*

Lori: *I can focus on one clear main idea.*

Alison: *That makes sense.*

Eleanor: *How about one idea that makes sense?*

Lori: *Yeah.*

Alison: *That's easier for them.*

Hooray! I can't believe we're finished, the teachers said. We had developed an individual rubric for each of the forty-one ELA outcomes (see Appendix J). The professional development sessions, unlike the hour-long TV show, took six months to complete. Similar to the show, the team that began the process of working together to understand and feel comfortable with the Nova Scotia English Language Arts outcomes was not the same as the team that completed it.

Time to Return Home: Conclusion of the Professional Development Sessions

Wow! Oh, my gosh. Look at you. The participants appear from back stage to reveal themselves to the hosts before their debut back home, in front of the family and friends, that sent them to the show. Adorned with new clothing, matching accessories, an updated hairstyle, and flattering make-up the participant presents themselves as confident, sophisticated, and stylish. The transformation is visually amazing, but what is more exciting is that everything has changed not just their appearance; self-esteem, enthusiasm, demeanor, and the certainty that they are going home to a different way of life.

After the professional development sessions, the ELA teachers were now equipped for their final interviews. Adorned with their new learnings and increased confidence, the story of their metamorphosis is a whole show unto itself.

Transition to Professional Learning Community

The show consists of the final interviews with each of the teachers involved in the study. Compared to the first interviews, these interviews were much easier to transcribe because their answers were so succinct. Similar to the question asked in the interviews to assess each teacher's knowledge of OBE, the teacher-participants were asked to share their background knowledge of Professional Learning Communities. Despite several in-school professional development sessions regarding PLCs, comparable results to their knowledge of OBE were found; individual teacher-knowledge was lacking, but collectively the knowledge base was sound. It is true that all participants were comfortable with these notions: that the goal of PLC's is to improve student learning, that they involve professionals getting together in curriculum teams, and that there must be collaboration, support, and a willingness to share expertise (Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005). Each teacher expressed a concern over the amount of personal time required to complete only one part of our goal to improve student learning. The principal, during my final interview, acknowledged and praised the teachers' willingness to devote their time to an initiative that she knows will benefit students, teachers, and parents of our school. Each teacher also offered research-informed opinions to respond to "the working in isolation versus working in collaborative curriculum teams" debate.

The inner conflict experienced by each teacher during the transition from one philosophy to the other was very evident in the interviews. When Alison was asked in

the initial interview for the benefits of working in isolation, she explained that *you (an individual teacher) look better than other people if you are doing classes that are incredibly creative and other people aren't, you come off as being a so-called better teacher. I don't always agree with what we (the team) are doing but, if we decide to do it as a group then I (individual teacher) will definitely do my best to make sure that I do it. Sometimes I do want to do things that other people are not doing and keep them to myself but I try not to because that is just greedy.* According to Quick, (1992) competitiveness, individual achievement being valued without concern for the group, and hoarding and withholding resources are all common characteristics of an ineffective team. In contrast, during the study, Alison freely shared her resources and in her final interview, she said that she *loved, loved, loved the collaboration.* These signs show that she is moving towards full sharing of resources, being collaborative, making a contribution to the team, and realizing that there is more chance for achievement through working with the group, all signs of an effective team.

Traditional, ingrained ideas are often a teacher's first response, even though they believe, as Chantelle pointed out, *There are no advantages to an isolated practice.* These ELA teachers know many of the reasons that are given to justify why teachers want to work in isolation.

➤ *It's my way and I don't want to change... only being responsible for the people in your classroom, not for the overall, the global learning of students... some people prefer to work alone. Those would be the advantages for teachers. (Anita)*

- *You can close your door and do your own thing, you don't have to account to anybody else. You get to do what you like to do, whether or not you are always meeting the needs of your students. (Lori)*
- *You get to do what you want to do when you want to do it, you don't have to answer to anybody. (Eleanor)*

Certainly, the teachers who participated in the study agree that collaboration is best for their teaching practice and for their students' success. They are very aware of the benefits of working in collaboration:

- *For students, I don't think that there are many advantages to working in isolation. Actually, the teaching profession has been very much an isolationist activity: for many years and there has not been enough sharing going on. You don't have people to share with when learning doesn't happen. All research shows that all children can learn, that all children must learn, and that it is the teacher's job to see that this happens. There are extreme disadvantages for students when we don't work together because we aren't all giving the same message in the same direction for students and their learning. (Anita)*
- *You've got your own bag of tricks that you have, but once you use them up and you are still not making any progress, you are just kind of left wondering. I think in my case, if I was working by myself and not able to share with other people, I would tend to put the blame or the onus of that on my shoulders and be carrying around a lot of that as stress. It is much less work for everybody. (Lori)*
- *It would be hard to help that student in isolation - You are only able to do what you are doing with the knowledge that you have. (Vicky)*

- *You might be stuck, you might teach the same thing over and over and not realize that there are easier or different ways to do things, you might end up giving the same test every year on the same day. Not everything you do might be working but, you might assume that it's working. You're kids might not actually be getting what you think they are. (Alison)*
- *As a non-ELA person teaching ELA, I've benefited from working with people who specialize in the ELA curriculum. (Chantelle)*
- *To get on the track of improving student learning, to be able to do it together, would be so much easier than to go it alone. The research says that there is no advantage to teachers working in isolation. (Eleanor)*

Although the teachers talked enthusiastically about the benefits of collaboration during the interviews, we were to discover over the six months, that it is one thing to call a group a team, but it is another to actually be one. Reflecting upon the first professional development session, I realized that I prematurely envisioned us working together, discussing each outcome as Jocelyne and I did. At the time, I didn't take into account that Jocelyne has been a professional colleague and friend for my whole teaching career, and we had developed a trusting relationship built on mutual respect.

To my surprise, even though a variety of conversations about the broken down outcome ensued, the first session was more like a traditional, top-down professional development model. I talked and the team listened most of the time. I was nervous and uncomfortable and I felt that I had to fill the gaps every time my questions were met with silence. By the end, I was relieved that the session was over. I was worried about how the subsequent professional development sessions would go. I questioned my ability to

sustain the meetings if I had to be the leader all of the time, and I thought it would be painful and less productive if the sessions were like this every week. It wasn't the way it was supposed to be!

The next session was a bit surreal because our supervisors joined us, but it was the beginning of our conversations. They were also able to confirm information previously gathered and to illuminate gray areas. For example, S2 explained that *much of the literature around curriculum alignment or assessments and Professional Learning Communities is American so they talk about aligning curriculum and developing curriculum, and defining essential outcomes because they don't have a curriculum like you and I have. I don't think we can talk about essential outcomes because we have a curriculum.* S1 firmed up the thought by asking, *Which ones of these are we throwing out?* to which S2 replied, *They're all essential.*

When the supervisors were gone, we began the conversations necessary to “pound out” an understanding of each outcome and develop a rubric to assess each one. The atmosphere at these sessions was sometimes far from comfortable, although not outwardly uncomfortable. *I think at first, Lori said in her final interview, when we first started getting together, it was very much the grade sevens and the grade eights, really, like, you know. We were very separate. It was sort of like, well the grade sevens with the grade eights, and they have to fend for themselves and we have to fend for ourselves.* I did know exactly what she meant because I remembered a conversation that I had with Anita on the stairway, in which, I told her that originally I planned to only invite the grade eight teachers to attend the information part of the professional development sessions and then the grade seven teachers would work together to develop their

curriculum. The grade eight teachers, if they chose, could do the same. I also suggested that when the grade seven teachers had the curriculum in place, then we could select the best activities, essentially leaving the rest for the grade eights. Luckily, it didn't turn out that way because during the inservice with the supervisors, everybody was contributing. At the end of the day, when everyone was excited and enthusiastic, I said, *Why don't we all just meet together on Tuesdays?*

In the beginning, conversations were guarded with certain people speaking up on a regular basis, others limited their comments, and some rarely spoke at all. Chantelle, for example, did not contribute very often because she offered to type the changes that we made to the analyzed outcomes and the new rubrics that we were developing. This created tension for me, in my dual roles of researcher and participant. I said, *There's really not much point in you typing it all out Chantelle because I have it all.* On the one hand, as the researcher, I wanted control over my data. On the other hand, I soon realized that I would not be able to collect field notes as I had intended and actively participate at the same time. I cautiously accepted, being careful to leave each day with the session on my portable storage device. Over time, I came to appreciate having the data typed and ready to manage.

Moreover, at first, the participants looked to me to be the leader of the sessions. They sought clarification of what Jocelyne and I were thinking and confirmation for the changes that were made. Lori pointed out, however, that in the beginning when we would start to talk or debate about something, she had the sense sometimes that some people wanted to say it's just this and let's get on with it. The "people" that the "they" in her statement was referring to was probably Lori's diplomatic way of not pointing the

finger at me. It took strong willpower on my part to keep an open mind and recognize that the suggested changes to the previously analyzed outcomes made sense, were necessary, and were for the better. Over time, we seemed to be more comfortable with the idea that you have to talk it through to get it to make sense.

As the sessions proceeded, a shift began to occur. One day, Lori initiated the day's conversations and maintained the role of leader, a change that I gladly acknowledged. A real breakthrough occurred approximately mid way when we were saying that we don't really need to worry about what we do in seven and eight because eight needs to be a reinforcement of seven. Lori reminded us that in the past, when a new kit of books came to the school, the fight would be on. *We're doing this at seven. No, we're doing it at eight.* You wouldn't, heaven forbid, want the students to do the same thing more than once. Now that we understand, we know that we could do the same thing more than once, seeking deeper understanding. At the beginning, we were focused on the idea that grade seven had to be distinctly different from grade eight, now, everybody has come around to the idea that, no, it doesn't.

Coupled with this the conversations had become much more inclusive. In any given exchange, all six participants could be heard giving their input. In fact, after one of her contributions, Vicky, who, up until recently, had offered only sparingly, was exuberant.

Furthermore, those of us who had previously been very hesitant about being assigned to each other's classrooms for learning support, experienced a change. We began to enjoy the opportunity that we had not only to learn from each other but also to be able to incorporate some of our newfound ideas into our own teaching practice. In

addition, Anita says that she sees signs in the students that we're becoming a community. They are already starting to say, *Oh, we did that*, or *We're doing that*, or *My teacher said that too*. Likewise, Ms. Hood believes that these professional development sessions, with all the ELA teachers taking part, have dramatically changed the milieu of the school.

When you are totally immersed in something, it is often difficult to grasp subtle nuances that occur. It is often upon reflection, that one is able to step back and take a closer look. Even though I had inklings of change during the later professional development sessions, it was during my second interview with Anita that my thoughts were substantiated. We were nearing the end of the interview, when I asked Anita if she thought there were any valid reasons, besides the obvious ones, for pursuing outcomes-based design in a collaborative culture. She replied, *We've become a Professional Learning Community, a real one, rather than just on paper and rather than just people having common time, we actually do productive things together*. When I went to respond, I couldn't. I had a huge lump in my throat and I was all choked up and teary-eyed. That instant confirmed just how powerful the professional development sessions had been.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the show, *Today's Special*, when the store closes at night and all the customers have gone home, the store's security guard carries the mannequin to the children's department where a hat is placed on his head and Jeff is brought to life with the magic words, "hocus pocus alimagocus." In the hours, before the store reopens for business, Jeff and his friends embark on many fun learning adventures that must conclude before he returns to the mannequin state.

Similarly, after the ELA curriculum document had been in the hands of teachers for ten years, the English Language Arts curriculum team of Valley Woods Middle School carried the outcomes to their school library and brought them to life with the magic words, "collaboration and commitment." Through teacher-led professional development sessions, within the framework of a professional learning community, the ELA teachers worked collaboratively to understand the outcomes and increase their level of comfort with them before they will be required to do outcomes-based reporting. This study confirmed the research that says that collaborative professional development is an essential part of improving school performance and that it is essential to the development of the curriculum (Hargreaves, 1994; Bolam, 2000). Magically, as the team "breathed life" into the ELA curriculum outcomes, the collaborative process "breathed life" into the team, making it a true learning community.

Overview of Significant Findings

The foundation for this study could be found in the desire of one ELA teacher to work collaboratively with the other members of the ELA team to understand and feel comfortable enough with the outcomes to be able to effectively report student achievement on an outcomes-based report card. According to Guskey (2005), schools can only be as good as the teachers that work in them. Professional development must be a key component in the school improvement plan in order to witness effective staff development, and to assist change in teacher attitudes and professional practice (Kroll, 2004). The results of this study provided extensive evidence that the ELA teachers of Valley Woods Middle School made valuable changes in their level of understanding and of comfort with the mandated curriculum outcomes, which will directly influence their teaching practice. The ELA teachers at VWMS, through this research, were able to breathe life into their curriculum outcomes and according to the principal; their collaborative work has changed the atmosphere in the school.

In this final chapter, I will summarize key findings of the study. Next, the implications of the study for the teachers involved and for other teachers in the school, will be addressed. Then, I will suggest implications for others in the teaching profession who want to better understand and feel more comfortable with outcomes-based planning and reporting. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research and concluding remarks.

Consideration of Findings in Light of Existing Research

Certainly, one element involved in our success was the continuous support, both moral and practical, that we received from our school administration. We are fortunate to have a strong leadership team who are willing to let go of some of their power and encourage teachers to take on leadership roles; an essential criteria according to the literature (Eaker, Dufour & Dufour, 2002). Not only did the teachers involved in the study recognize this support, they appreciated the efforts that were being made. In her final interview, for example, Alison said, *I am very thankful to the administration for giving us team planning time in lieu of some of the time that we spend after school because I'd have to say that what we've done is the most beneficial thing that I've ever done with a group of teachers.* Although the McTighe and Emberger (cited in Easton, 2004) model of professional development states that it is mandatory for administration to participate, our administration is spread far too thin to be able to make this commitment. It was comforting to know that our administration demonstrated interest by consistently checking in to see how things were going, but that they had the confidence in the ELA team to know that the initiative would be completed effectively, without their participation.

Another issue that fortunately did not present itself in this study is the contentious nature of some staffs. S2 told us that she was working in a school one day where the staff didn't even want to talk to each other, let alone work together. Collaboration would be difficult for schools in this position especially since we have discovered that it is "all about the conversations." Feedback from the participants revealed that this was not an issue in this study:

- *Actually, considering that we are all different types of teachers, I think that we worked really well together. I think we're lucky in the sense that everybody is open-minded and willing to offer suggestions and I didn't feel like we were putting down people's ideas or I didn't think anyone was afraid to speak up or sound stupid or anything like that. (Alison)*
- *I don't think there were difficulties so much in terms of working with everybody; I don't think that was a problem. (Lori)*
- *We didn't have the problems that I have read about, people not getting along, arguing, and not liking people before they ever started. I know we have likes and dislikes among the staff. We set that all aside. (Eleanor)*
- *I think overall, we did fairly well together. (Chantelle)*

Undoubtedly, the most recognized issue, overwhelmingly voiced by all of the participants, was the need for structured, organized time for teachers to plan, collaborate, and reflect, in order to improve student learning. The time must, however, be built into teachers' timetables, not added to an already busy schedule. Sparks and Hirsh (cited in Sytsma, 2006, p. 10) recommend that "twenty-five" percent of teachers' time be devoted to their own learning and sharing. Since teacher learning is linked to student learning, teacher learning and professionalism need to be supported if student learning is going to improve." In Hargreaves' words (in an interview with Sparks cited in Sytsma, 2006, p. 9), "If we want high-level, deep learning for students we have to have highly skilled and intellectually able teachers."

To be sure, I felt that the teachers who participated in this study went out of their way to change their lives to be here. They knew that I was under time constraints for my

study and that Anita was going on deferred leave; they inconvenienced themselves to participate in every session:

- *It did take a very long time. It's very time consuming. It would be nicer if we didn't always have to meet after school, if this was built into teacher planning time during the day. (Alison)*
- *Time constraints, everybody is very busy and I think that it is very hard to make it a priority but, for me, it was very, very important. (Anita)*
- *Time, people giving up their time to get together when they have other obligations. I know from the point of view of the grade 8 team, we've kind of neglected meeting as a group as regularly as we did to work together on our things because we were meeting together as a larger group. (Lori)*
- *Time. It was hard, definitely for myself anyways with having to plan. (Chantelle)*

Reexamining the Transformations

Change occurs over time and the results of initiatives often spiral teachers into a continuous cycle of change. It is easy under these circumstances to allow incremental gains that have transformed a group of teachers into a PLC to go virtually unnoticed, instead of being celebrated. It is essential for schools to reflect upon these transformations and recognize the achievements of teachers who dedicated their time to improve their teaching practice and enhance student learning.

This study provided an opportunity to witness, reflect upon, and record the incremental growth of six ELA teachers who not only agreed to give up personal time to participate, but did so without complaint. Contrary to the usual passive acceptance of PD

opportunities, the teachers were eager to begin and were determined to “stay the course” until the rubrics were ready to use.

Throughout this lengthy process, changes occurred within the teachers that impacted upon them as individuals, as a group, and as members of a broader school community. Individually, the teachers experienced the power of working in a group by accomplishing a task that none was able to complete as an isolated individual. Each teacher was required to think about outcomes: What do they say? What is the intended student learning? How can the outcomes be assessed? This process expanded their familiarity with the outcomes, developed self confidence in their ability to use the outcomes effectively, and in turn was the catalyst for the teams to begin their planning with the outcomes instead of activities.

In addition, the teachers began to feel a sense of ownership for the assessment rubrics that we collaboratively hammered out. They started to think outside their grade level and recognize the positive ramifications of using the rubrics across the two grade levels and the positive benefits of working together. In other words, they started to see the bigger picture of student learning and development over time and across grade levels. Collaboration among team members and cooperation between grade level teams can only strengthen teacher knowledge and comfort level with the outcomes and inevitably improve student learning.

Another cultural change was noted in the dynamics between the ELA team and the school’s administration. In the past, the pressure and frustration that teachers experienced due to outcomes-based planning was blamed on inadequate support in general and in particular on a lack of support from the school’s administration. During

these sessions, the ELA team empowered itself by working together to take control of the problem and was appreciative of the administrative support that it received.

Remarkably, the teachers have successfully begun to change the traditional culture in which we have been embedded our entire teaching careers. Undoubtedly, these changes will require the teachers' diligence and hard work to maintain. Renewing and recommitting to the goals of our school improvement plan will be necessary to chart a course for our continued success and to keep the walls of isolation permanently down.

Implication of Study for Current Practice

As the teacher-participants continue on their journey to improve student learning, Anita says, *it almost seems that we are still at the beginning*. It is true, that a huge learning curve still awaits us. The team must get together and have time to collaborate, as we attempt to improve student learning. One of the ways that we will attempt to do that is by gathering baseline information on our students in ELA. We will look at their reading and writing skills to determine their strengths and weaknesses. As a group, we will then decide how we are going to address the information that is found.

The students' strengths, weaknesses, and learning in general must be addressed with the outcomes. The target activity is the core; it is intrinsic to the planning and evaluation. The completion of the target activities for each outcome facilitates lesson planning and permits the incorporation of lesson plans into cohesive units. Target activities make the evaluation process easier because they determine what is to be assessed and the level of performance determines the student's achievement to be used in formative or summative assessment. The shift to outcomes-based assessment demands

that teachers show that the students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the outcome.

After the outcomes are aligned in units and lessons, common assessments will need to be developed. When a rubric or other form of assessment is determined for each outcome and attached to every performance task, it then becomes a performance assessment. Individual teachers will be able to choose their own path to arrive at the common assessment or, as a team, decide that path together. After all of this, the most important step can happen, implementation in the classroom. On a regular basis, the team will meet to share progress and offer support. When the unit is complete and the summative assessment has been completed, the team comes together again. This time to look at the results and decide if the path that was chosen addressed the problems identified in our baseline data. We also look to improve our practice by assessing if in some classrooms it seemed to improve whereas in other classrooms it didn't. If that was the case, what did teacher A do or not do compared to teacher B? Through discussion and team work we would plan where to go next to improve student learning.

This will be the first time that we will see this process in action in our school and it will be the first time that many of the teachers will leave the isolation of their classrooms to collaborate with others about student learning (Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005). It is difficult to envision this all coming about because the amount of work seems immense. Nancy Wilder (2004, p. 2) eases these fears by explaining, "When we align our teaching and learning activities and our assessments to the important knowledge and skills we have identified, we reduce the number of assessments that students have to

complete and we have to mark. More importantly, we move closer to deep understanding by better articulating the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning processes."

Eventually, class sessions, learning resources, assignments, and assessments for learning will be plotted on a matrix. This is a way of placing the curriculum onto the outcomes to chart out what is expected for the students to learn and for teachers to teach. Curriculum mapping will be another time consuming tool that gives us vital information to determine if what was planned to be taught was actually taught and when teachers share their maps across the grade levels, the duplication of what is being taught will end. If used wisely, curriculum alignment and mapping will coordinate the written, taught, and tested curricula and it can effectively help teachers develop units that will interest students and enable them to improve their performance.

Simultaneously, teachers will be better equipped to guide the enhancement of student performance on the secure literacy assessment that has become a part of the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia's assessments are designed to gather information on student learning (NS DOE, 2007). Unlike the American models, which often base a school's funding on the results of their state-wide tests, Nova Scotia designs a comprehensive assessment to monitor the progress of individual students on their levels of literacy based on the reading and viewing and writing outcomes addressed in the assessment. Students experience what the assessment will be like by writing a practice assessment and teachers are encouraged to alleviate their students' apprehension by telling them that the assessment activities will be just like doing their regular work. Also, the usual encouragement is given to read instructions carefully, take their time, and read their answers over before passing in the assessment.

The assessment results are used to identify students who are not able to meet the minimum expected level of literacy, to offer extensive support to those students, and to track their progress as they proceed through the grades (NS DOE, 2007). Nova Scotian educators must align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with both the outcomes and their individual students in mind so that we can be sure that outcomes assist teaching and learning, not teaching and learning serving the outcomes (Strong, Silver, & Perini, 2001).

In the future, when the English Language Arts teachers are comfortable, the next challenge will be to collaborate with other staff members to complete a similar process with the other subjects that we teach. Alison and Lori are already suggesting that they would like us to do the same thing that we've done for ELA in social studies. Alison added that she'd like to see teachers of every subject being able to sit down and do what we did. Together we can complete the same process, look at ways of integrating all of the subjects and the time that is spent teaching and planning each one.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study was developed in the form of an educational microethnography and could not be directly connected to other sites, the lessons learned through this study may help other schools develop and implement professional development sessions to increase teachers' understanding of and level of comfort with the mandated outcomes, leading to desired changes in teacher practice and student performance. In addition, the "how-to" instructions will help them to analyze their outcomes. The analyzed outcomes and the rubrics that we have developed will serve as models and guide their process. However, the experiences of other schools and other

groups will take on a life of their own and cannot be expected to be identical to this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

Unequivocally, the findings of the present thesis have important implications for future professional development initiatives. Future research will be necessary to determine whether the teachers implement, in their classroom, the new curriculum that we have developed and if they will pursue it long enough to realize the contribution of this study on the improvement of student learning. Bolster, (cited in Guskey, 1986, p. 9) cautioned, “Teachers do not easily alter or discard the practices they have developed and refined in the demanding environment of their own classrooms.” For this reason, we must capitalize on the excitement and momentum generated by the study to encourage teachers to replace the “tried and true” with a collaborative means of planning and reporting. According to Guskey (1985, p. 58) experienced teachers seldom become committed to a new program or innovations until they have seen that the new practices work well in their classrooms with their students.”

If similar ethnographic research projects could be conducted in other schools and if several of these studies could be contrasted and compared, a more generalizable pattern may emerge to guide future professional development efforts province wide. Typically, teachers do not research their professional development efforts but school-based research has the potential to provide greater relevance and more concrete benefits for teaching practice.

Implications of the Study for Professional Practice

In addition, the results of the study, speak to the need for revision in the way professional development initiatives are presented to teachers. Teachers need to be actively included in the initiatives pertinent to their particular situations and to practices that work for them and for the needs and interests of their students. S1 confirmed that students come to us from all different places, at all different levels, and with all different skills and activities and admitted that a better job must be done to support teachers at all levels. She said that the “Big Six” was a prime example. She said that all teachers were inserviced on the “Big Six” reading strategies. Everyone ran back and tried their best to put visualizing in their classrooms and were all overwhelmed. At no point did anybody say, when you do that with your students, it will help this outcome at this particular grade. Knowles (1984) indicates that learning is enhanced by active participation in the learning process and with interaction with the other learners.

Collaborative professional development requires more than just being told about the research-based practices. Effective professional development involves interplay between theory and practice. Reeves and Forde (2004, p. 85) claim, “The task of influencing the practice of professionals who have already established themselves as practitioners in their work setting raises issues that differ from those affecting the induction of a newcomer into a profession.” It is essential that both seasoned teachers and those new to the profession become well versed in the curriculum outcomes. Anita declared that it was not her student teacher’s fault that he had no idea what an outcome was, or how to make an assessment that would fit an outcome, or how to differentiate that outcome for all the learning needs that were in the classroom.

Sadly, teachers are graduating from teacher-training institutions with a lack of skills to do outcomes-based planning and reporting. S1 suggested that the growth of their knowledge base greatly depends on where they are hired to work. They are fortunate if they are placed in a school where teachers are actively interacting with OBE. Alternatively, they may have the bad luck to end up in “word search heaven.” Such activities are easy and seem to work in the short term but, are irrelevant when required to assess student progress on an outcomes-based report card.

Student learning and student achievement must always be a school’s main goal. Like a zipper, schools must be sturdy, flexible, and have all the teeth in alignment for a successful rise to the top. Outcomes-Based Education in a collaborative culture plays an essential role in ensuring that all students reach their potential and graduate with the essential learnings necessary for life in the 21st century.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Pre Working Sessions Questions:

1. What can you tell me about a Professional Learning Community?
2. When trying to improve student learning, what advantages and disadvantages are there to teachers working in isolation/collaborative groups?
3. What can you tell me about Outcomes-Based Education and outcomes-based planning?
4. How effectively can teachers implement an outcomes-based English Language Arts program?
5. What staff development do teachers need to use outcomes effectively and to develop effective outcomes-based assessments?
6. How well is our current curriculum aligned with outcomes?
7. Was the process of determining whether the outcomes are introductory, continuing practice, or mastery beneficial? Explain.

Post Working Sessions Questions:

1. In your opinion, besides the obvious reasons such as outcomes being mandatory, being part of the school improvement plan, are there valid reasons for pursuing outcomes-based design in a collaborative culture?
2. In what ways have these sessions improved your knowledge and comfort level with outcomes-based planning?
3. How will outcomes-based design in a collaborative framework change your teaching

practice?

4. Presently, how do you know when a student is or is not meeting specific curriculum outcomes? What changes will you incorporate into the way that you will assess student proficiency on specific outcomes?
5. How confident do you feel about the student friendly language we used in our analysis of the outcomes?
6. Outcomes-based reporting will be required of the ELA team next year. Has your comfort level for this improved with these sessions?
7. What did you learn about yourself?
8. What benefits and difficulties did you encounter working collaboratively with colleagues during these sessions?
9. In what direction should we go for further collaborative work and professional development?

Appendix B



Excellence • Innovation • Discovery

University Research Ethics Board

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Certificate of Research Ethics Approval

Title of project: *Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes*

Researcher(s): Eleanor Gordon
Supervisor (if applicable): Paula Romanow
Co-Investigators: n/a

File #: 2007-022

The University Research Ethics Board (UREB) has reviewed the above named proposal and confirms that it respects the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* as outlined in the *MSVU Policies and Procedures: Ethics Review of Research Involving Humans* regarding the ethics of research involving human participants.

This certificate of approval is valid one year from the date of issue. A final report is required within 30 days of expiry. Researchers are reminded that any changes to approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the UREB prior to their implementation.


Dr. Elizabeth Bowering, Chair
University Research Ethics Board (UREB)

October 22, 2007
Effective Date

[Expires: October 21, 2008]

Renewal is contingent upon submission to the UREB of a written request for renewal accompanied by a satisfactory annual ethics report thirty days prior to expiry.

166 Bedford Hwy Halifax Nova Scotia B3M 2J6 Canada
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Appendix C
Administrator's Information Letter



Dear Ms Hood:

My name is Eleanor Gordon and I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Literacy Education program at Mount Saint Vincent University. I would like to have teachers from your school participate in a research study to explore the perceptions and experiences of a group of teachers who work collaboratively to apply Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) to their curriculum document within the context of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

This study requires participation in semi-structured interviews by the English Language Arts teachers. These interviews will take place at the beginning and end of the study and will be approximately one class in length, each time. All six English Language Arts teachers are being invited to participate in a series of on-going professional development sessions designed to collaboratively interact with the English Language Arts outcomes and ultimately impact student learning. These sessions will take place over approximately twelve class periods, spread over six months. The interviews and the working group's discussion will be audio taped for transcribing and analysis. The project will be under the supervision of Dr. Anne MacCleave and Dr. Paula Romanow, Faculty of Education, MSVU. The ethical component of the research has been approved by the Mount Saint Vincent University Review Ethics Board.

I would like to send the English Language Arts teachers an e-mail, which will include an information sheet about the project and an invitation to participate. Upon consent via e-mail, I will meet with participants to have them read and sign a Participant Consent Form. Once the consent forms have been returned, the researcher will hold the initial semi-structured interviews. Participation in the interviews and professional development sessions is voluntary. The study involves minimal risk and the participants will be informed about how to contact me if they have any questions or concerns. All information gathered will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or on an access controlled computer file at the researcher's home for a period of five years and then erased or put on an access controlled computer file and used only by the researcher, UREB and her thesis supervisors. Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or on an access controlled computer file at the researcher's home for a period of one year and then they will be erased or shredded. The audiotape and transcriptions will not be stored with the consent forms.

By the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, a summary of the results of the study will be delivered to you.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me [REDACTED], or one of my thesis supervisors: Dr. Anne MacCleave, (902-457-6182, anne.maccleave@msvu.ca), Dr. Paula Romanow, [REDACTED] (paula.romanow@msvu.ca). Additionally, if you have any questions about how this study is being conducted, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International Office, who is not directly involved in the study, at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Gordon MEd
Graduate Student Literacy Education Program
Mount Saint Vincent University

Dr. Anne MacCleave
Associate Professor in
Education
Mount Saint Vincent
University

Dr. Paula Romanow
Researcher
Mount Saint Vincent
University

Appendix D
Invitation to Participate – sent by e-mail



Dear name:

I am writing to ask if you may be willing to participate in an exciting and important research project, which has the potential to be of use to you and your colleagues at Valley Woods Middle School. This project, called “Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes”, is exploring what impact, if any, opportunities that have been made available for teachers to work collaboratively to understand and interact with the Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes will have on their knowledge, comfort level, and ultimately on their ability to improve and enhance student learning. At the same time, it will also explore the perceptions and experiences of a group of teachers who work collaboratively to apply Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) to their curriculum document within the context of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

This project research, in which a professional learning community of English Language Arts teachers work in collaboration to understand and interact with the mandated Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes has potential benefits to itself and its colleagues. Through the use of the projects’ findings, better decisions concerning what students are to learn, how teachers will implement outcomes-based planning, and the ongoing assessment of student achievement can be made which fit within the frameworks of Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities. In short, with this information, learning communities can shape bottom-up models to improve student learning, instead of trying to make inadequate, top-down models fit their own contexts. As well, the project is part of the research for my Masters of Arts thesis in Literacy Education at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, and is being done under the supervision of Dr. Anne MacCleave and Dr. Paula Romanow. The ethical component of the research has been approved by the Mount St. Vincent University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International Office, who can be reached at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Your participation in the study would be to allow me to briefly interview you on two occasions within a six month period on audiotape for fifty minutes on average concerning your knowledge of Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities, your comfort level with outcomes-based planning, as well as your perceptions about collaborative planning. Of course, your participation in the study is purely voluntary, and

you may choose not to answer any question I may ask, or to withdraw from the study at any time.

I am also attaching an information sheet to this e-mail, which should answer any other questions you may have about the project. Thank you for your interest, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Gordon
MA Ed Student, Literacy Education
Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, NS

Appendix E
[Information Sheet / Letter of Information]

Some Frequently Asked Questions About “Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia
English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes” Project

1. What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to explore what impact, if any, opportunities that have been made available for teachers to work collaboratively to understand and interact with the Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes will have on their knowledge, comfort level, and ultimately on their ability to improve and enhance student learning. At the same time, it will also explore the perceptions and experiences of a group of teachers who work collaboratively to apply OBE to their curriculum document within the context of a PLC.

2. Who is conducting this research?

This project is part of the masters of arts thesis research for Eleanor Gordon, who is a Masters of Arts student in the Literacy Education Department at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax. Her supervisors on this project are Dr. Anne MacCleave and Dr. Paula Romanow.

3. This is an academic research project...what benefit will it be to me and my school?

Because the project is being developed for the English Language Arts community of learners to work in collaboration to ultimately improve student learning, its benefits extend beyond being merely academic research. Research and practice have identified that too little professional development has been done to enable teachers to effectively demonstrate their ability to plan backwards to the outcomes, to design performance-based assessments to evaluate the outcomes, and to report student demonstration of the outcomes on an outcomes-based report card. The benefit of this research to the ELA Professional Learning Community and to other colleagues is the possibility of alleviating this gap. Through the use of the projects' findings, better decisions concerning what students are to learn, how teachers will implement outcomes-based planning, and the ongoing assessment of student achievement can be made which fit within the frameworks of Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities. In short, with this information, learning communities can shape bottom-up models to improve student learning, instead of trying to make inadequate, top-down models fit their own contexts. However, it is necessary to understand that the nature of research means that it is impossible to predetermine what exactly the results will be before they are gathered. Therefore, the findings may show that these working sessions have no impact whatsoever, and so may not result in any specific benefits for the improvement of student learning.

4. What will be done with the results of this research? Will I be able to see them?

Although the main purpose for this research study is to provide case study data to support the theoretical hypothesis put forth in my masters of arts thesis, the principal of Valley Woods Middle School will receive the findings in the form of a final report for their use,

and for the use of the members of the ELA PLC and other interested parties. You will be able to read this final report by contacting VWMS. As well, it is hoped that conference and journal papers will also be generated from the research process and findings. These, as well as copies of my finished masters of arts thesis, can be acquired by contacting me at (902) 752-5926.

5. If I agree to be interviewed, what will the process be?

If you indicate by e-mail that you are willing to participate, I will contact you to set up an initial time and place for the interview. Both time and location will be completely at your convenience. The very first thing I will ask you to do when we meet will be to read and sign a Participant Consent Form. This form lays out exactly what will happen during the interview, any risks attached, how long the interview will take, the process for it, and so on. It also explains what will happen to the information you give me during the interview, as well as how your confidentiality will be ensured. You will be asked to sign two (2) copies of the form, one for your records, and one for mine.

6. If I sign this form, does that mean I am waiving any rights to control of the interview or the information I give you?

No. Your signature on the consent form in no way constitutes a waiver of your rights. It simply shows that you were informed about what the research and the interview process will entail, and have agreed to participate on that basis.

7. If I am uncomfortable with the interview, can I stop?

Absolutely. If at any point in the interview process, or in fact during the entire research study, you are uncomfortable with what is being asked or how you are being treated, you may either refuse to answer the question(s) or bring a halt to the proceedings. It is up to you to decide whether to allow me to use any information you've given up to that point. If you decide you don't want me to use it, I will shred any written notes, and erase anything on audiotape.

8. If I have a complaint about the process, who can I speak to?

If you feel comfortable, the first person to speak to is me, either in person, or by phone at (902) 752-5926. If I am unable to resolve your concerns to your satisfaction, you may contact the Chair of the Mount St. Vincent University's Research Ethics Board (UREB). Although this research has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through this body, they are not directly involved in it, and in fact, are there to ensure that all research done by individuals affiliated in any way with Mount St. Vincent University is ethical and conducted without harm to the participants. You may reach them at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

9. How long will the interviews and working sessions take?

Each interview will be approximately fifty minutes in duration on average and they will be spread out over a six month period. There will be approximately twelve, fifty-minute working sessions spread out over a period of six months.

10. What kinds of questions will you ask me?

I will be asking you questions about your knowledge of Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities, about your skill and level of comfort with outcomes-based planning, and about your thoughts on the changes in your understanding and comfort upon completion of working sessions designed to address this perceived lack.

11. How will you record the information I give you during the interview?

The interview will be taped on digital audio tape so that it can be transcribed. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of being taped, then I will just take handwritten notes during the course of the interview.

12. Are there other things that I have that may be of use to you for this research?

There may be. I am also interested in seeing any kind of documents that will help me to understand and implement outcomes-based planning and outcomes-based assessment and evaluation. Perhaps you have some books, articles, or website that relate to the development of these concepts.

13. If I give you documents, how will I get them back?

Any documents you need to keep will be photocopied at my expense and the originals returned to you within one (1) week of the interview.

14. What happens to all of the information after the interview is over?

Following the interview, the audio tape(s) will be transcribed by me.

15. How do I know it will be kept confidential?

Once you have signed the consent form and agreed to do the interview, every precaution will be made to maintain confidentiality and your anonymity if you so desire. At the beginning of the research session, you will be asked if you would or would not like to remain anonymous. If an affirmative response is given, starting with the transcription process and continuing through the data analysis phase, right up to the end of the research process (my finished masters of arts thesis and the final report to VWMS) all of the teachers participating in the interviews and in the working sessions will be referred to by fictitious names, and all individuals will only be identified by participant number. The coding key, as well as all transcriptions and tapes will be held in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home where the data analysis will be conducted. No individual other than me will have access to the cabinet.

16. How long will you keep this information?

Any computer discs, files, and audio tapes holding data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home or on an access controlled computer file for a period of five years and then erased, or if you prefer, they will be destroyed, in the case of paper documents, by shredding, in the case of the tapes, by bulk erasing.

17. You say that this research is of low risk. Are there any risks attached to it that I should be concerned about?

This is a low-risk research project since this study in essence involves professional development with teachers, which is a regular requirement of our job. Some of the information you give me in the interview, however, may be of a somewhat delicate or confidential nature. Social ties are very close in school communities and there is still the potential for some emotional and social risk arising from confidential disclosure of personal interactions with colleagues. As I mentioned above, every effort will be made to maintain that confidentiality. If there are things you are particularly concerned about, please make sure you identify them to me.

18. Once the interviews and the working sessions are finished, is my part in this research over?

In general, there will be two interviews with each individual participant and whole group working sessions with all of the participants. There may be cases however, when, after looking at the transcripts or other information you have given me, I have further questions. In this instance, I will see you about any questions I may have. These subsequent discussions will not be taped, but will still be conducted according to the rules covering the conditions of confidentiality I've set out above.

Appendix F
Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia
English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes Project
Participant Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research study entitled: “Breathing Life into the Nova Scotia English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes”, carried out by Eleanor Gordon and sponsored by Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax in the fulfillment of her masters thesis. I understand that the purpose of this study is to determine what impact, if any, opportunities that have been made available for teachers to work collaboratively to understand and interact with the Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes will have on their knowledge, comfort level, and ultimately on their ability to improve and enhance student learning. Further, it will explore the perceptions and experiences of a group of teachers who work collaboratively to apply OBE to their curriculum document within the context of a PLC.

I understand that I will be interviewed twice in a room at Valley Woods Middle School and will be asked questions about my knowledge and experiences with Outcomes-Based Education, outcomes-based planning, and Professional Learning Communities. I understand that the interviews will be approximately fifty minutes in length on average.

I agree that there is no foreseen risk arising from my participation in this interview. However, I understand that should I identify or perceive any risks before the interview begins, or which arise during the course of the interview, the researcher will make all possible accommodations to deal with these, up to and including ending the interview and destroying all records of it, both written and taped.

I agree/do not agree to allow the researcher to tape record my interview. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I may refuse to answer any questions in the interview and that I may terminate my participation in the interview at any time. Should I exercise my right to withdraw, I will / will not allow the information gathered up to that point to be used as part of the research data.

I have been informed that the researcher will transcribe and verify the content of the audio recordings. I understand that the researcher will be bound by the terms of this consent form in regards to confidentiality. These recordings and the transcripts of them will be stored in a secure location.

I have been informed that the researcher will not report any information that will identify me or that will disclose my participation in any aspect of this study without my consent and that, if necessary, I will be identified only by participant number or by a pseudonym. Since, however, there may still be identifying features within the data despite these precautions (e.g., the small numbers of individuals involved in the ELA team, the identifying job descriptions) may make it difficult to completely disguise participants, I understand that anonymity cannot be completely assured.

I understand that all information I provide, such as written documents, web page printouts etc., will be stored in a secure location to which no one but the researcher will have access. I understand that one year upon completion of the researcher's masters; the data will be placed into long-term storage at the researcher's home. I also understand that should I wish, at that time any portion of the data pertaining to me will be destroyed, in the case of paper documents shredded, and in the case of audio-tape, bulk erased. I understand that I must make this request either through written correspondence sent through the mail or by e-mail to the address below, and that should there be any change to the researcher's contact information during this period; such change will be forwarded to the VWMS office for dissemination to all participants in the project.

I understand that the data that the researcher obtained from my participation in this study, besides being used in the researcher's Masters of Arts thesis, may also be reported in professional publications or conferences related to Outcomes-Based Education and Professional Learning Communities. The data may also be used to develop further research. I understand that Valley Woods Middle School will receive a final report of the research findings, and that I will be able to access this report at that time.

I am aware that if I have any questions or concerns about this study, I can contact Eleanor Gordon at [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED]), or one of her thesis supervisors: Dr. Anne MacCleave, (902-457-6182, anne.maccleave@msvu.ca), or Dr. Paula Romanow, (902) 497-4559, paula.romanow@msvu.ca). Additionally, if I have any questions about how this study is being conducted, I may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International Office, who is not directly involved in the study at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Name of Study Participant _____

Signature of Study Participant _____

Date _____

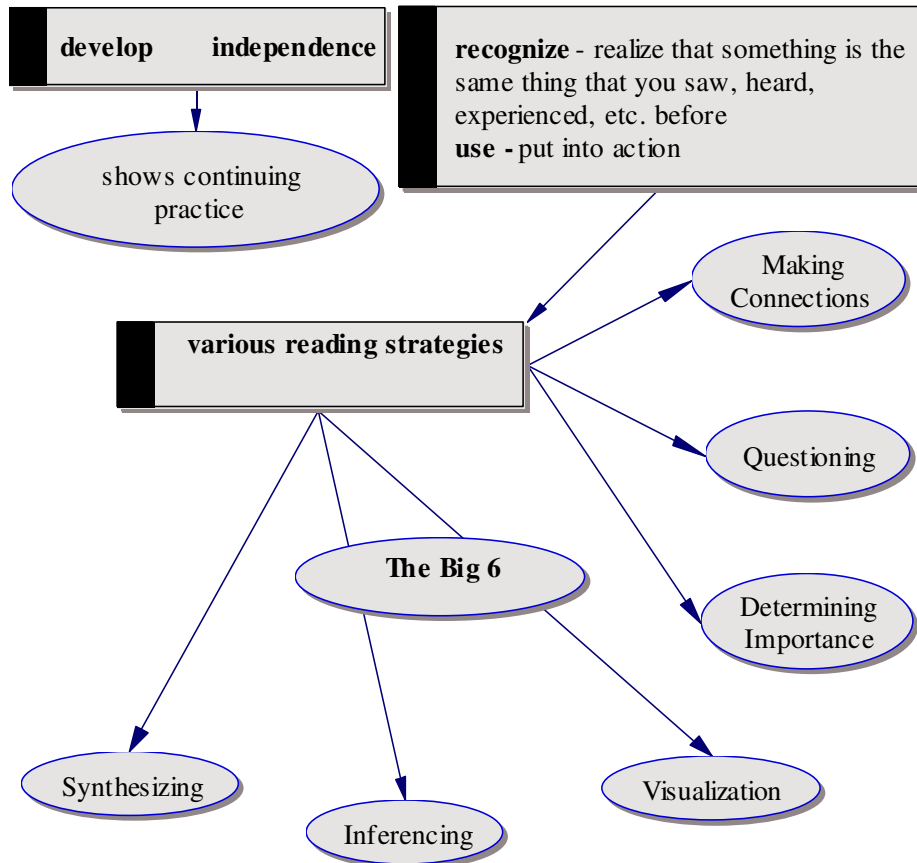
Name of Interviewer _____

Signature of Interviewer _____

Date _____

Appendix G

Outcome 4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts



Making Connections

- understanding text to self connections
- understanding text to text connections
- understanding text to world connections

The student:

1. Draws a parallel
2. Identifies similarities
3. Gives examples
 - from the setting, plot, characters, theme

I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the setting.

I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the plot.

I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the setting.

I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the theme.

Questioning

The questions should be:

- pertinent
- cohesive
- in context
- further the thought process to the conclusion

Non-Fiction

Why I should read this text

Fiction

What does this tell me about the setting, time, characters, problem, climax, theme

I can formulate a question/questions about the story before I read the next part.

I can formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.

Determining Importance(of the information)

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. Beginning | 2. Middle | 3. End |
| | - sequence | - conclusion |
| | - action | |

Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts

- setting
- plot
- climax
- resolution

I can explain why I should read this text.

I can identify the characters and their importance in the story.

I can tell why the author chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.

I can isolate the events which contribute to the development of the story. I can identify the conflict/problem in the story from the information or events I have gathered from the story.

I can tell when the conflict is at its maximum (climax)
Non-fiction - the explanation is complete, all facts are put together

I can identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.

Visualization

- creating pictures in the mind
- drawing a visual depiction of events gathered from the text

I can draw a visual description of a character(s).

I can draw a visual description of a scene(s).

I can draw a visual description of a setting(s).

I can draw a visual description of an event(s).

I can draw a visual description of a theme(s).

I can draw a visual description of the conflict or a conflict leading to it.

I can draw a visual description of the resolution.

I can orally describe a character(s).

I can orally describe a scene(s).

I can orally describe a setting(s).

I can orally describe an event(s).

I can orally describe a theme(s).

I can orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.

Inferencing

- "reading between the lines"
- might not be fulfilled by the end of the story (as opposed to a prediction)
- must be based on facts from your reading and from your personal experience and background knowledge

I can make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).

I can identify which facts I used to make this conclusion.

Synthesis

- "Putting all the pieces of the puzzle together"
- what happens and how it came together

I can complete a diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)

I can complete a diagram of a non-fiction piece particular to a variety of genres in which I label and complete all the pertinent parts of the essay. (Pragmatic)

I can create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts; characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.

Four Cueing Systems:

As readers/viewers interact with text, this complex process requires the integration and co-ordination of four cueing systems or sources of information: pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic (or visual in the case of viewing):

Pragmatic Cueing System

- refers to readers' understanding of how text structure works and their purpose for reading.
 - readers use to predict meaning as they read
 - understanding the basic structure of a narrative, features of a story particular to various genres (fairy tales, mysteries, etc.)
 - text structure cues related to expository text - text features

Semantic Cueing System

- refer to the meaning that has become associated with language through prior knowledge and experience.
- Semantic context - meaningful relations among words and ideas
- construct meaning when the information in the text is related to what is already known - background knowledge
- *What would make sense here? Did that make sense?*
 - Self-correction when text does not make sense indicates a level of appreciation for and effective use of meaning cues

Syntactic Cueing System

- refer to the structure of language or how language works
 - sentence structure, word order, function words, and word endings
- self-correction of miscues that do not sound provides evidence of appreciation for and use of syntactic cues

...

Graphophonic Cueing System

- refer to knowledge about the sound-symbol system and how readers apply this knowledge as they read
- generalizations about letter-sound relationships are integrated with the use of the semantic and syntactic cueing systems

I can predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)

I can use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, *What would make sense here? Did that make sense?* as I read.

I can use oral and written cloze activities, focussing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)

I can predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.

I can assess whether my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.

I can identify parts of a passage that *don't sound right* so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonic)

I can use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonic)

...

Appendix H

English Language Arts Outcomes	
SPEAKING AND LISTENING	
All learning targets must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specific ➤ Measurable/Observable ➤ Attainable ➤ Realistic ➤ Timely 	
GCO 1: Students will be expected to speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.	
Specific Outcomes and their Learning Targets	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can express my ideas. ➤ I can listen to others’ responses about my ideas. ➤ I can address the comments of others about my ideas. ➤ I can comment on the ideas of others after having listened to them.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification; give appropriate responses when asked for the same information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can determine when it is appropriate in a discussion to ask questions. ➤ I can phrase a question to get the explanation and clarification that I need. ➤ I can appropriately explain and clarify when asked to do so.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express clearly and with conviction, a personal point of view, and be able to support that position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can express my point of view and support it with the appropriate ideas.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can isolate the main idea of a message. ➤ I can select the supporting details of this main idea.
GCO 2: Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.	
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion recognizing that there are a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can participate in small-group conversation using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ making eye contact with the speaker, ✓ displaying the appropriate body language, ✓ rephrasing the message in order to clarify my understanding, ✓ not being distracted

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ not distracting others ✓ making appropriate and timely comments, and ✓ asking appropriate questions ✓ asking timely questions ➤ I can participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ making eye contact with the speaker, ✓ displaying the appropriate body language, ✓ rephrasing the message in order to clarify my understanding, ✓ not being distracted ✓ not distracting others ✓ making appropriate and timely comments, and ✓ asking appropriate questions ✓ asking timely questions
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the choice of vocabulary. ➤ I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure. ➤ I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech. ➤ I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based the tone during the talk. ➤ I can select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation. ➤ I can select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation. ➤ I can select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions and respond to questions and directions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can give appropriate instructions. ➤ I can appropriately follow instructions. ➤ I can ask appropriate questions. ➤ I can appropriately respond to questions. ➤ I can give appropriate directions. ➤ I can appropriately respond to directions.

2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g., repetition, volume, and eye contact) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the attributes of a good speaker. ➤ I can use the attributes of a good speaker to determine the effectiveness of his or her communication.
<p>GCO 3: Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.</p>	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can make eye contact when speaking. ➤ I can rephrase when appropriate in a conversation. ➤ I can clarify comments in a conversation. ➤ I can extend comments in a conversation. ➤ I can refine comments in a conversation. ➤ I can summarize points already made in a conversation.
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions such that they reflect sensitivity to others, including differences in culture and language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can express my personal opinion in an inoffensive manner to others.
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify bias, beliefs, and prejudice in an oral text. ➤ I can produce examples from the text to support my choice. ➤ I can identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate. ➤ I can identify evidence of influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions {questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language} appropriate to the situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the different speaking and listening conventions appropriate to different situations. ➤ I can isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.

READING AND VIEWING

All learning targets must be:

- Specific
- Measurable/Observable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

GCO 4: Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can apply the criteria to determine if I will understand a text when I read it.➤ I can apply the criteria to determine if a text is at my reading level.➤ I can choose a “just-right” text at my appropriate reading level.
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.➤ I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.➤ I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.➤ I can tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, headings, and sub-headings.➤ I can make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the titles, headings, and sub-headings.➤ I can tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts• I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the setting.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the plot.➤ I can give an example of where two stories have similar characters.➤ I can give an example of where the two stories are alike in the theme.

- I can formulate a question/questions about the story before I read the next part.
- I can formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.
- I can formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.
- I can explain why I should read this text.
- I can identify the characters and their importance in the story.
- I can tell why the author chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.
- I can isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.
- I can identify the conflict/problem in the story from the information or events I have gathered from the story.
- I can tell when the conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction - the explanation is complete, all facts are put together
- I can identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.
- I can draw a visual description of a character(s).
- I can draw a visual description of a scene(s).
- I can draw a visual description of a setting(s).
- I can draw a visual description of an event(s).
- I can draw a visual description of a theme(s).
- I can draw a visual description of the conflict or a conflict leading to it.
- I can draw a visual description of the resolution.
- I can orally describe a character(s).
- I can orally describe a scene(s).
- I can orally describe a setting(s).
- I can orally describe an event(s).
- I can orally describe a theme(s).
- I can orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.
- I can make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).
- I can identify which facts I used to make this conclusion.
- I can complete a diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)
- I can complete a diagram of a non-fiction piece particular to a variety of genres in which I label and complete all the pertinent parts of the essay. (Pragmatic)
- I can create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.
- I can predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)
- I can use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.
- I can use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)
- I can predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can assess whether my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions. ➤ I can identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonic) ➤ I can use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonic)
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text. ➤ I can identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text. ➤ I can tell orally what I did to understand a text. • I can tell in written form what I did to understand a text.
GCO 5: Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.	
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate personal needs and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment. ➤ I can identify which source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources. ➤ I can choose the right sources of information that I need to complete a given assignment. ➤ I can take the information from its source and use it in my given assignment.
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use research strategies like issue mapping and webbing to guide research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can complete an appropriate graphic organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.
GCO 6: Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.	
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form. ➤ I can explain why I feel this way and provide supporting evidence from the text.
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make evaluations or judgments about texts and express personal points of view <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can express a judgment or make a personal evaluation about a text.

6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issues, and situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgment I have made about the theme of a text. ➤ I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgment I have made about the issues in a text. ➤ I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgment I have made about the situations in a text.
<p>GCO 7: Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre</p>	
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing. ➤ I can list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas. ➤ I can recognize some organizational and structural techniques used to create a bias. ➤ I can point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the purpose of a text. ➤ I can identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading. ➤ I can choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions). ➤ I can identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text. ➤ I can compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias. ➤ I can identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author. ➤ I can identify words, phrases, sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text. ➤ I can identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.

WRITING AND OTHER WAYS OF REPRESENTING

All learning targets must be:

- Specific
- Measurable/Observable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

GCO 8: Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imagination.

8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiment with a range of strategies {brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their own and others' ideas, and to identify problems and consider solutions<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can choose and use the appropriate writing strategy to achieve my goals:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ I can brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.✓ I can sketch to formulate global ideas.✓ I can freewrite to formulate global ideas.✓ I can use the ideas generated by the brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.✓ I can produce a first draft from my outline.✓ I can identify and note problems in my work.✓ I can participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in my work.✓ I can consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.✓ I can offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.
8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.➤ I can describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.➤ I can keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.
8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand that note-making is purposeful and has many purposes {e.g., personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened and what others have said} and many forms, {e.g., lists, summaries, observations, descriptions}<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I can choose and complete the appropriate graphic organizer to generate information in the proper format for the required writing assignment.

8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can “show, not tell” with words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can include physical observations of a subject in my writing. ✓ I can include ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing. ➤ I can limit my ideas to avoid too much detail that will take the reader away from the main idea. ➤ I can identify and correct ideas that are not in keeping with the main idea of the story. ➤ I can choose the most effective structure and vocabulary, phrases, and sentences to improve the style and to support the purpose of my writing. ➤ I can choose the most effective structure to improve the style and to support the purpose of my writing. ➤ I can choose the most effective vocabulary to improve the style and to support the purpose of my writing. ➤ I can choose the most effective phrases to improve the style and to support the purpose of my writing. ➤ I can choose the most effective sentences to improve the style and to support the purpose of my writing. ➤ I can use a variety of words and phrases to support the style and purpose of my writing.
<p>GCO 9: Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.</p>	
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice). ➤ I can write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing. ➤ I can write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing. ➤ I can write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing. ➤ I can write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing. ➤ I can write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview

	<p>using the appropriate traits of writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate traits of writing. ➤ I can write a variety of poems that will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing. ➤ I can write an advertisement that will include the proper format for an advertisement using the appropriate traits of writing.
9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (i.e., understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting info). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can choose the appropriate form for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe). ➤ I can choose the appropriate form for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).
9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiment with using other forms such as dialogue, posters, and advertisements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the same message in various text forms. ➤ I can produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).
9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the awareness that content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization need to fit the reader and suit the reason for writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).
9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft. ➤ I can use this feedback when writing later drafts. ➤ I can complete one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text. ➤ I can listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart. ➤ I can compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.

GCO 10: Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness

- 10.1
- Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts
 - I can choose and use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts (e.g., brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting).
 - I can choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts:
 - ✓ focusing on getting ideas on paper,
 - ✓ taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary,
 - ✓ experimenting with new forms/techniques,
 - ✓ keeping audience in mind,
 - ✓ using a word processor to compose.
 - I can choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts:
 - ✓ reading/re-reading,
 - ✓ adding ideas,
 - ✓ crossing out repetition or unnecessary information,
 - ✓ sequencing ideas/information,
 - ✓ rearranging,
 - ✓ using feedback from conferences to help revise.
 - I can choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce various texts (checking, punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by circling words that don't fit/look right, trying them another way, and checking with a resource such as dictionary; using an editing checklist).
 - I can effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.
 - ✓ I can proofread my work in progress at timely intervals (e.g. after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft).
 - I can choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts (e.g. a word processor to publish; illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate; sharing writing/representing orally; publishing on-line; submitting work to school/district newsletter).

10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10.2 A - I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to spell familiar words correctly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ using meaning, syntax patterns, and sound cues ✓ using a range of spelling strategies ✓ spelling many words conventionally ✓ using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling ➤ I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ using meaning, syntax patterns, and sound cues ✓ using a range of spelling strategies ✓ spelling many words conventionally ✓ using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling ➤ I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ using meaning, syntax patterns, and sound cues ✓ using a range of spelling strategies ✓ spelling many words conventionally ✓ using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling ➤ 10.2 B - I can demonstrate my understanding of punctuation (syntax patterns) by using appropriate punctuation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing by constructing a variety of grammatically correct sentences. ➤ 10.2 C - I can demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex). ➤ 10.2 D – I can use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing. ➤ 10.2 E – I can write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ using topic sentences ✓ expanding on the topic sentences ✓ using transitions ✓ choosing appropriate paragraph length
10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire some exposure to the various technologies used for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes: (videos, e-mail, word processing, audiotapes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can use technology to communicate to a variety of audiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can compose a correct e-mail message. ✓ I can compose a text using a word processing program.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I can compose an audio text to communicate a message. ✓ I can compose a video text to communicate a message. ✓ I can use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose.
10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can take risks to express myself in writing (e.g. use a new sentence form, use new words, use new formats, and use a variety of genres). ➤ I can revise and edit my work. ➤ I can show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ choosing a topic which is meaningful to me. ✓ willingly editing and revising. ✓ producing a final product. ➤ I can willingly share my writing and other representations with others.
10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I can collect information from interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet. ➤ I can collect information from a variety of five to seven sources. ➤ I can combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).

Appendix I

Analysis of SCO's: Time Spent on Task		
SPEAKING AND LISTENING		Number of Minutes:
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions. 	20
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification; give appropriate responses when asked for the same information 	
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express clearly and with conviction, a personal point of view, and be able to support that position 	
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details 	
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion recognizing that there are a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk 	60
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech, and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking contexts 	
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions and respond to questions and directions 	
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g., repetition, volume, and eye contact) 	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made 	30
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions such that they reflect sensitivity to others, including differences in culture and language 	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate 	
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that different situations {interviews, speeches, debates, conversation) require different speaking and listening conventions {questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situation 	
READING AND VIEWING		Number of Minutes:
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interests 	60
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries 	
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding 	60
4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems (graphophonic, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts 	120

4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts 	10
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and articulate personal needs and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence 	150
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected 	
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use research strategies like issue mapping and webbing to guide research 	
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts 	20
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make evaluations or judgments about texts and express personal points of view 	
6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issues, and situations 	
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view 	155
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors 	
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding 	
WRITING AND OTHER WAYS OF REPRESENTING		Number of Minutes:
8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment with a range of strategies {brainstorming, sketching, freewriting} to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their own and others' ideas, and to identify problems and consider solutions 	150
8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users 	
8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that note-making is purposeful and has many purposes {e.g., personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened and what others have said} and many forms, {e.g., lists, summaries, observations, descriptions} 	90
8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing 	35
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements 	10
9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (i.e., understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting information) 	15

9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an understanding that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiment with using other forms such as dialogue, posters, and advertisements 	5
9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the awareness that content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization need to fit the reader and suit the reason for writing 	20
9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/listener's point of view 	10
10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication 	120
10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts 	
10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire some exposure to the various technologies used for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes: videos, e-mail, word processing, audiotapes 	60
10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations 	
10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication 	
<p>Total Time to Analyze the Grade 7 ELA Outcomes → 1200 minutes = 20 hours</p>		

Appendix J

GCO 1: Students will be expected to speak and listen, to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

1.1 - Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions.					
1.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always state my ideas clearly.	Most of the time, I state my ideas clearly.	I sometimes state my ideas clearly.	I rarely state my ideas clearly.	I never state my ideas clearly.

1.1 - Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions.					
1.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always listen to others' responses about my ideas.	Most of the time, I listen to others' responses about my ideas.	I sometimes listen to others' responses about my ideas.	I rarely listen to others' responses about my ideas.	I never listen to others' responses about my ideas.

1.1 - Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions.					
1.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always address the comments of others about my ideas.	Most of the time, I address the comments of others about my ideas.	I sometimes address the comments of others about my ideas.	I rarely address the comments of others about my ideas.	I never address the comments of others about my ideas.

1.1 - Recognize that contributions from many participants are needed to generate and sustain discussions.					
1.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always comment on the ideas of others after listening to them.	Most of the time, I comment on the ideas of others after listening to them.	I sometimes comment on the ideas of others after listening to them.	I rarely comment on the ideas of others after listening to them.	I never comment on the ideas of others after listening to them.

1.2 Know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification and give appropriate responses when asked for the same information.					
1.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always know when to ask questions.	Most of the time, I know when to ask questions.	I sometimes know when to ask questions.	I rarely know when to ask questions.	I never know when to ask questions.

1.2 Know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification and give appropriate responses when asked for the same information.					
1.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always ask questions when I don't understand.	Most of the time, I ask questions when I don't understand.	I sometimes ask questions when I don't understand.	I rarely ask questions when I don't understand.	I never ask questions when I don't understand.

1.2 Know how and when to ask questions that call for elaboration and clarification and give appropriate responses when asked for the same information.					
1.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always explain things in a different way if people don't understand.	Most of the time, I explain things in a different way if people don't understand.	I sometimes explain things in a different way if people don't understand.	I rarely explain things in a different way if people don't understand.	I never explain things in a different way if people don't understand. I never ask others for clarification.

1.3 - Express clearly and with conviction, a personal point of view, and be able to support that position.					
	5	4	3	2	1
	I always express my point of view and support it with the	Most of the time, I express my point of view and support it	I sometimes express my point of view and support it with the	I rarely express my point of view and support it with the	I never express my point of view and support it with the

	appropriate evidence.	with the appropriate evidence.	appropriate evidence.	appropriate evidence.	appropriate evidence.
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1.4 – Listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details.					
1.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always pick out the main idea of a message.	Most of the time, I pick out the main idea of a message.	I sometimes pick out the main idea of a message.	I rarely pick out the main idea of a message.	I never pick out the main idea of a message.

1.4 – Listen attentively to grasp the essential elements of a message, and recognize and consider supporting details.					
1.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always pick out the details that support the main idea.	Most of the time, I pick out the details that support the main idea.	I sometimes pick out the details that support the main idea.	I rarely pick out the details that support the main idea.	I never pick out the details that support the main idea.

GCO 2: Students will be expected to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

2.1 – Participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion recognizing that there are a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk.					
2.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always participate in small-group/whole-class conversation using some of the following strategies: - I always make eye contact with the	Most of the time, I participate in small-group/whole-class conversation using some of the following strategies: - Most of the time, I make eye contact with	Some of the time, I participate in small-group/whole-class conversation using some of the following strategies: - Some of the time, I make eye contact with	I rarely participate in small-group/whole-class conversation using some of the following strategies: - I rarely make eye contact with the	I never participate in small-group/whole-class conversation using some of the following strategies: - I never make eye contact with the

<p>speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am always focused. - I always show appropriate body language. - I always take turns during a conversation. - I always invite others to participate in discussions. - I always participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are always related to the topic. 	<p>the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the time, I am focused. - Most of the time, I show appropriate body language. - Most of the time, I take turns during a conversation. - Most of the time, I invite others to participate in discussions. - Most of the time, I participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - Most of the time, my comments are related to the topic. 	<p>the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the time, I am focused. - Some of the time, I show appropriate body language. - Some of the time, I take turns during a conversation. - Some of the time, I invite others to participate in discussions. - Some of the time, I participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - Some of the time, my comments are related to the topic. 	<p>speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am rarely focused. - I rarely show appropriate body language. - I rarely take turns during a conversation. - I rarely invite others to participate in discussions. - I rarely participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are rarely related to the topic. 	<p>speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am never focused. - I never show appropriate body language. - I never take turns during a conversation. - I never invite others' to participate in discussions. - I never participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are never related to the topic.
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2.1 – Participate in small-group conversation and whole-class discussion recognizing that there are a range of strategies that contribute to effective talk.					
2.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I always participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I always make eye 	<p>Most of the time, I participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the time, I 	<p>Some of the time, I participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the time, I 	<p>I rarely participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I rarely make eye 	<p>I never participate in whole-class discussion using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I never make eye

<p>contact with the speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am always focused - I always show appropriate body language. - I always take turns during a conversation. - I always participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are always related to the topic. 	<p>make eye contact with the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the time, I am focused. - Most of the time, I show appropriate body language. - Most of the time, I take turns during conversation. - Most of the time, I participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - Most of the time, my comments are related to the topic. 	<p>make eye contact with the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the time, I am focused. Some of the time, I show appropriate body language. - Some of the time, I take turns during a conversation. - Some of the time, I participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - Some of the time, my comments are related to the topic. 	<p>contact with the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am rarely focused. - I always show appropriate body language. - I rarely take turns during a conversation. - I rarely participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are rarely related to the topic. 	<p>contact with the speaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am never focused - I never show appropriate body language. - I never take turns during a conversation. - I never participate in discussions with small groups and larger groups. - My comments are never related to the topic.
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2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the purpose of a communication based on the choice of vocabulary.	Most of the time, I identify the purpose of a communication based on the choice of vocabulary.	Some of the time, I identify the purpose of a communication based on the choice of vocabulary.	I rarely identify the purpose of a communication based on the choice of vocabulary.	I never identify the purpose of a communication based on the choice of vocabulary.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure.	Most of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure.	Some of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure.	I can rarely identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure.	I can never identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on sentence structure.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech.	Most of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech.	Some of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech.	I can rarely identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech.	I can never identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the rate of speech.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the tone during the talk.	Most of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the tone during the talk.	Some of the time, I can identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the tone during the talk.	I can rarely identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the tone during the talk.	I can never identify the purpose of a communication and the audience based on the tone during the talk.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation.	Most of the time, I can select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation.	Some of the time, I can select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation.	I can rarely select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation.	I can never select and use appropriate vocabulary to suit the situation.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation.	Some of the time, I can select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation.	Most of the time, I can select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation.	I can rarely select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation.	I can never select and use appropriate sentence structure to suit the situation.

2.2 – Recognize that different purposes and audiences influence communication choices such as vocabulary, sentence structure, rate of speech and tone during talk; consider appropriate communication choices in various speaking context.					
2.2.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.	Most of the time, I can select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.	Some of the time, I can select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.	I can rarely select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.	I can never select and use an appropriate tone of voice to suit the situation.

2.3 – Follow instruction and respond to questions and directions.					
2.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always respond appropriately to questions.	Most of the time, I respond appropriately to questions.	Some of the time, I respond appropriately to questions.	I rarely respond appropriately to questions.	I never respond appropriately to questions.

2.3 – Follow instruction and respond to questions and directions.					
2.3.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give clear instructions.	Most of the time, I give clear instructions.	Some of the time, I give clear instructions.	I rarely give clear instructions.	I never give clear instructions.

2.3 – Follow instruction and respond to questions and directions.					
2.3.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always ask appropriate questions.	Most of the time, I ask appropriate questions.	Some of the time, I ask appropriate questions.	I rarely ask appropriate questions.	I never ask appropriate questions.

2.3 – Follow instruction and respond to questions and directions.					
2.3.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give appropriate directions.	Most of the time, I give appropriate directions.	Some of the time, I give appropriate directions.	I rarely give appropriate directions.	I never give appropriate directions.

2.3 – Follow instruction and respond to questions and directions.					
2.3.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I always respond appropriately to directions.	Most of the time, I respond appropriately to directions.	Some of the time, I respond appropriately to directions.	I rarely respond appropriately to directions.	I never respond appropriately to directions.

2.4 – Evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g., repetition, volume, and eye contact)

2.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always evaluate the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style.	Most of the time, I evaluate the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style.	Some of the time, I evaluate the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style.	I rarely evaluate the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style.	I never evaluate the effectiveness of a speaker and his or her presentation or style.

2.4 – Evaluate speakers and the effectiveness of their talk in particular contexts; identify the verbal and non-verbal language cues used by speakers (e.g., repetition, volume, and eye contact)

2.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always evaluate the content or message of a speaker.	Most of the time, I evaluate the content or message of a speaker.	Some of the time, I evaluate the content or message of a speaker.	I rarely evaluate the content or message of a speaker.	I never evaluate the content or message of a speaker.

GCO 3: Students will be expected to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.

3.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always listen attentively to others.	Most of the time, I listen attentively to others.	Some of the time, I listen attentively to others.	I rarely listen attentively to others.	I never listen attentively to others.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.

3.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always rephrase what someone else said,	Most of the time, I rephrase what someone	Some of the time, I rephrase what someone	I rarely rephrase what someone else said,	I never rephrase what someone else

	when appropriate.	else said, when appropriate.	else said, when appropriate.	when appropriate.	said, when appropriate.
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3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.

3.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always summarize what someone else said, when appropriate.	Most of the time, I summarize what someone else said, when appropriate.	Most of the time, I summarize what someone else said, when appropriate.	I rarely summarize what someone else said, when appropriate.	I never summarize what someone else said, when appropriate.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.

3.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always make eye contact with the speaker or with the audience, when speaking.	Most of the time, I make eye contact with the speaker or with the audience, when speaking.	Some of the time, I make eye contact with the speaker or with the audience, when speaking.	I rarely make eye contact with the speaker or with the audience, when speaking.	I never make eye contact with the speaker or with the audience, when speaking.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.

3.1.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I always clarify comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	Most of the time, I clarify comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	Some of the time, I clarify comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	I rarely clarify comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	I never clarify comments in a conversation, when appropriate.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.					
3.1.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I always refine comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	Most of the time, I refine comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	Some of the time, I refine comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	I rarely refine comments in a conversation, when appropriate.	I never refine comments in a conversation, when appropriate.

3.1 – Demonstrate active speaking and listening skills such as making eye contact, rephrasing when appropriate, clarifying comments, extending, refining, and/or summarizing points already made.					
3.1.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always summarize what others have said, when appropriate.	Most of the time, I can summarize what others have said, when appropriate.	Some of the time, I can summarize what others have said, when appropriate.	I can rarely summarize what others have said, when appropriate.	I can never summarize what others have said, when appropriate.

3.2 – Demonstrate a respect for others by developing effective ways to express personal opinions such that they reflect sensitivity to others, including differences in culture and language.					
3.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always respect other peoples’ ideas even if they are different from my own.	Most of the time, I respect other peoples’ ideas even if they are different from my own.	Some of the time, I respect other peoples’ ideas even if they are different from my own.	I rarely respect other peoples’ ideas even if they are different from my own.	I never respect other peoples’ ideas even if they are different from my own.

3.3 – Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate.					
3.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify bias, beliefs, and prejudice	Most of the time, I identify bias, beliefs,	Some of the time, I identify bias, beliefs,	I rarely identify bias, beliefs, and prejudice	I never identify bias, beliefs, and

	in an oral text.	and prejudice in an oral text.	and prejudice in an oral text.	in an oral text.	prejudice in an oral text.
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3.3 – Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate.					
3.3.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always produce examples from the text to support my choice.	Most of the time, I produce examples from the text to support my choice.	Some of the time, I produce examples from the text to support my choice.	I rarely produce examples from the text to support my choice.	I never produce examples from the text to support my choice.

3.3 – Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate.					
3.3.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate.	Most of the time, I identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate.	Some of the time, I identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate.	I rarely identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate.	I never identify the forms of oral language used to influence and manipulate.

3.3 – Recognize that spoken language reveals values and attitudes such as bias, beliefs, and prejudice; understand how language is used to influence and manipulate.					
3.3.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.	Most of the time, I identify influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.	Some of the time, I identify influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.	I rarely identify influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.	I never identify influence and manipulation in an oral text and provide evidence of this.

3.4 – Recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversations) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situation.					
3.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always adjust what is said and how it is said depending on the audience.	Most of the time, I adjust what is said and how it is said depending on the audience.	Some of the time, I adjust what is said and how it is said depending on the audience.	I rarely adjust what is said and how it is said depending on the audience.	I never adjust what is said and how it is said depending on the audience.

3.4 – Recognize that different situations (interviews, speeches, debates, conversations) require different speaking and listening conventions (questioning techniques, persuasive talk, formal language) appropriate to the situation.					
3.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.	Most of the time, I can isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.	Some of the time, I can isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.	I can rarely isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.	I can never isolate examples of different speaking and listening conventions while listening to different conversations.

GCO 4: Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

4.1 – Select texts that address their learning needs and range of special interest					
4.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose a “just right” text at my appropriate reading level.	Most of the time, I can choose a “just right” text at my appropriate reading level.	Some of the time, I can choose a “just right” text at my appropriate reading level.	I can rarely choose a “just right” text at my appropriate reading level.	I can never choose a “just right” text at my appropriate reading level.

4.2 – Read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries.					
4.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.	Most of the time, I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.	Some of the time, I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.	I can rarely keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.	I can never keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read a variety of genres.

4.2 – Read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries.					
4.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.	Most of the time, I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.	Some of the time, I can keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.	I can rarely keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.	I can never keep an ongoing reading record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different provinces.

4.2 – Read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries.					
4.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always keep an ongoing record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.	Most of the time, I can keep an ongoing record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.	Some of the time, I can keep an ongoing record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.	I can rarely keep an ongoing record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.	I can never keep an ongoing record that will demonstrate that I have read works of authors from different countries.

4.3 - Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding.					
4.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.	Most of the time, I can tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.	Some of the time, I can tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.	I can rarely tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.	I can never tell why authors use certain pictures to make me understand what they mean.

4.3 - Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding.					
4.3.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, heading, and sub-headings.	Most of the time, I can tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, heading, and sub-headings.	Some of the time, I can tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, heading, and sub-headings.	I can rarely tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, heading, and sub-headings.	I can never tell when a topic changes within a text by finding the title, heading, and sub-headings.

4.3 - Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding.					
4.3.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the titles,	Most of the time, I can make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the	Some of the time, I can make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the	I can rarely make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the titles,	I can never make an outline of the ideas presented within a text by isolating the

	headings, and sub-headings.	titles, headings, and sub-headings.	titles, headings, and sub-headings.	headings, and sub-headings.	titles, headings, and sub-headings.
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4.3 - Demonstrate an awareness of how authors use pictorial, typographical, and organizational devices such as photos, titles, headings, and bold print to achieve certain purposes in their writing, and use those devices more regularly to construct meaning and enhance understanding.

4.3.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.	Most of the time, I can tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.	Some of the time, I can tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.	I can rarely tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.	I can never tell why authors use different print styles to make me understand what they mean.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give an example where two stories are alike in the setting.	Most of the time, I give an example where two stories are alike in the setting.	Some of the time, I give an example where two stories are alike in the setting.	I rarely give an example where two stories are alike in the setting.	I never give an example where two stories are alike in the setting.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give an example of where two	Most of the time, I give an example of where	Some of the time, I give an example of	I rarely give an example of where the	I never give an example of where

	stories are alike in the plot.	the two stories are alike in the plot.	where the two stories are alike in the plot.	two stories are alike in the plot.	the two stories are alike in the plot.
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4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give an example of where two stories have similar characters.	Most of the time, I give an example of where two stories have similar characters.	Some of the time, I give an example of where two stories have similar characters.	I rarely give an example of where two stories have similar characters.	I never give an example of where two stories have similar characters.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always give an example of where two stories are alike in the theme.	Most of the time, I give an example of where two stories are alike in the theme.	Some of the time, I give an example of where two stories are alike in the theme.	I rarely give an example of where two stories are alike in the theme.	I never give an example of where two stories are alike in the theme.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always formulate a question/questions	Most of the time, I can formulate a question/	Some of the time, I can formulate a question/	I can rarely formulate a question/questions	I can never formulate a question/

	about the story before I read the next part.	questions about the story before I read the next part.	questions about the story before I read the next part.	about the story before I read the next part.	questions about the story before I read the next part.
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4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I always formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.	Most of the time, I formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.	Some of the time, I formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.	I rarely formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.	I never formulate a question/questions about the story during my reading.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I always formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.	Most of the time, I formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.	Some of the time, I formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.	I rarely formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.	I never formulate a question/questions about the story after I finish reading.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.8	5	4	3	2	1
	I always explain why I should read this text.	Most of the time, I explain why I should read this text.	Some of the time, I explain why I should read this text.	I rarely explain why I should read this text.	I never explain why I should read this text.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.9	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the characters and their importance in the story.	Most of the time, I identify the characters and their importance in the story.	Some of the time, I identify the characters and their importance in the story.	I rarely identify the characters and their importance in the story.	I never identify the characters and their importance in the story.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.10	5	4	3	2	1
	I always tell why the authors chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.	Most of the time, I tell why the authors chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.	Some of the time, I tell why the authors chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.	I rarely tell why the authors chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.	I never tell why the authors chose a certain time and location for the story to take place.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.11	5	4	3	2	1
	I always isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.	Most of the time, I isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.	Some of the time, I isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.	I rarely isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.	I never isolate the events that contribute to the development of the story.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.12	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the conflict/problem in the story from the information or events I gathered from the story.	Most of the time, I identify the conflict/ problem in the story from the information or events I gathered from the story.	Some of the time, I identify the conflict/ problem in the story from the information or events I gathered from the story.	I rarely identify the conflict/ problem in the story from the information or events I gathered from the story.	I never identify the conflict/ problem in the story from the information or events I gathered from the story.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.13	5	4	3	2	1
	I always tell when the	Most of the time, I tell	Some of the time, I tell	I rarely tell when the	I never tell when the

	conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction – the explanation is complete, all facts are put together.	when the conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction – the explanation is complete, all facts are put together.	when the conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction – the explanation is complete, all facts are put together.	conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction – the explanation is complete, all facts are put together.	conflict is at its maximum (climax)/ Non-fiction – the explanation is complete, all facts are put together.
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4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.14	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.	Most of the time, I identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.	Some of the time, I identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.	I rarely identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.	I never identify the events/emotions after the conflict has been resolved.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.15	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of a character(s).	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of a character(s).	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of a character(s).	I rarely draw a visual description of a character(s).	I never draw a visual description of a character(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.16	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of a scene(s).	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of a scene(s).	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of a scene(s).	I rarely draw a visual description of a scene(s).	I never draw a visual description of a scene(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.17	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of a setting(s).	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of a setting(s).	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of a setting(s).	I rarely draw a visual description of a setting(s).	I never draw a visual description of a setting(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.18	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of an event(s).	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of an event(s).	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of an event(s).	I rarely draw a visual description of an event(s).	I never draw a visual description of an event(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.19	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of a theme(s).	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of a theme(s).	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of a theme(s).	I rarely draw a visual description of a theme(s).	I never draw a visual description of a theme(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.20	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always draw a visual description of the conflict.	Most of the time, I can draw a visual description of the conflict.	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of the conflict.	I rarely draw a visual description of the conflict.	I never draw a visual description of the conflict.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.21	5	4	3	2	1
	I always draw a visual description of the resolution.	Most of the time, I draw a visual description of the resolution.	Some of the time, I draw a visual description of the resolution.	I rarely draw a visual description of the resolution.	I never draw a visual description of the resolution.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.22	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe a character(s).	Most of the time, I orally describe a character(s).	Some of the time, I orally describe a character(s).	I rarely orally describe a character(s).	I never orally describe a character(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.23	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe a scene(s).	Most of the time, I orally describe a scene(s).	Some of the time, I orally describe a scene(s).	I rarely orally describe a scene(s).	I never orally describe a scene(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.24	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe a setting(s).	Most of the time, I orally describe a setting(s).	Some of the time, I orally describe a setting(s).	I rarely orally describe a setting(s).	I never orally describe a setting(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.25	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe an event(s).	Most of the time, I orally describe an event(s).	Some of the time, I orally describe an event(s).	I rarely orally describe an event(s).	I never orally describe an event(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.26	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe a theme(s).	Most of the time, I orally describe a theme(s).	Some of the time, I orally describe a theme(s).	I rarely orally describe a theme(s).	I never orally describe a theme(s).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.27	5	4	3	2	1
	I always orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.	Most of the time, I orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.	Some of the time, I orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.	I rarely orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.	I never orally describe the conflict or a conflict leading to it.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.28	5	4	3	2	1
	I always make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).	Most of the time, I make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).	Some of the time, I make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).	I rarely make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).	I never make a personal conclusion based on the facts so far (not one that is already stated in the text).

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.29	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify which facts I used to make this conclusion based on the facts so far.	Most of the time, I identify which facts I used to make this conclusion based on the facts so far.	Some of the time I identify which facts I used to make this conclusion based on the facts so far.	I rarely identify which facts I used to make this conclusion based on the facts so far.	I never identify which facts I used to make this conclusion based on the facts so far.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.30	5	4	3	2	1
	I always complete a	Most of the time, I	Some of the time, I	I rarely complete a	I never complete a

	diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)	complete a diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)	complete a diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)	diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)	diagram of the story particular to a variety of genres in which I label all the pertinent parts of the story including: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme. (Pragmatic)
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4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.31	5	4	3	2	1
	I always create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.	Most of the time, I create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.	Some of the time, I create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.	I rarely create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.	I never create a visual/verbal representation of the story including all the pertinent parts: characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution, and theme.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.32	5	4	3	2	1
	I always predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)	Most of the time, I predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)	Some of the time, I predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)	I rarely predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)	I never predict what the text is about before I begin reading and I can use this prior knowledge effectively as a reading strategy. (Semantic)

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.33	5	4	3	2	1
	I always use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.	Most of the time, I use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.	Some of the time, I use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.	I rarely use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.	I never use the semantic cueing system by asking myself, What would make sense here? Did that make sense? as I read.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.34	5	4	3	2	1
	I always use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)	Most of the time, I use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)	Some of the time I use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)	I rarely use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)	I never use oral and written cloze activities, focusing on meaning to predict and confirm. (Semantic)

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.35	5	4	3	2	1
	I always predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.	Most of the time, I predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.	Some of the time, I predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.	I rarely predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.	I never predict what the text is about during the reading based on the clues that are given.

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)					
4.4.36	5	4	3	2	1
	I always assess whether	Most of the time, I	Some of the time, I	I rarely assess whether	I never assess

	my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.	assess whether my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.	assess whether my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.	my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.	whether my previous predictions have been correct and develop new predictions.
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4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.37	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	Most of the time, I identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	Some of the time, I identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	I rarely identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	I never identify the parts of a passage that do not sound right so I can develop an awareness of what the term actually means. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)

4.4 - Develop some independence in recognizing and using various reading and viewing strategies (predicting, questioning, etc.) and in using cueing systems, (graphophonics, contextual, syntactic, etc.) to construct meaning; apply and develop these strategies and systems while reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts (increasingly complex print and media text – address in unit/lesson plans by choosing appropriate texts)

4.4.38	5	4	3	2	1
	I always use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a difficult	Most of the time, I use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a	Some of the time, I use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a	I rarely use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a difficult	I never use the read ahead strategy and explain how this helps to predict a

word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)	difficult word based on the structure of the rest of the sentence. (Syntactic, Graphophonics)
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4.5 - Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts.					
4.5.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text: <u>Grade 7:</u> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <u>Grades 7 and 8:</u> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <u>Grade 8:</u>	Most of the time, I identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text: <u>Grade 7:</u> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <u>Grades 7 and 8:</u> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <u>Grade 8:</u>	Some of the time, I identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text: <u>Grade 7:</u> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <u>Grades 7 and 8:</u> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <u>Grade 8:</u>	I rarely identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text: <u>Grade 7:</u> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <u>Grades 7 and 8:</u> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <u>Grade 8:</u>	I never identify orally the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text: <u>Grade 7:</u> - predict & confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <u>Grades 7 and 8:</u> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <u>Grade 8:</u>

- inference, - analyse, - synthesize.	- inference, - analyse, - synthesize.	- inference, - analyse, - synthesize.	- inference, - analyse, - synthesize.	- inference, - analyse, - synthesize.
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4.5 - Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts.

4.5.2	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I always identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text:</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <p><u>Grades 7 and 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inference, - analyse, - synthesize. 	<p>Most of the time, I identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text:</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <p><u>Grades 7 and 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inference, - analyze, - synthesize. 	<p>Some of the time, I identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text:</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <p><u>Grades 7 and 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inference, - analyze, - synthesize. 	<p>I rarely identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text:</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predict and confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <p><u>Grades 7 and 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inference, - analyze, - synthesize. 	<p>I never identify in written form the processes that good readers do and the strategies they use to understand a text:</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predict & confirm, - monitor, - make connections, - visualize <p><u>Grades 7 and 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-correct, - word solve, - sample/gather, - maintain fluency, - question, - determine importance, <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inference, - analyze, - synthesize.

4.5 - Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts.					
4.5.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always tell orally what I did to understand a text.	Most of the time, I tell orally what I did to understand a text.	Some of the time, I tell orally what I did to understand a text.	I rarely tell orally what I did to understand a text.	I never tell orally what I did to understand a text.

4.5 - Talk and write about the various processes and strategies readers and viewers apply when constructing meaning from various texts; recognize and articulate personal processes and strategies used when reading or viewing various texts.					
4.5.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I always tell in written form what I did to understand a text.	Most of the time, I tell in written form what I did to understand a text.	Some of the time, I tell in written form what I did to understand a text.	I rarely tell in written form what I did to understand a text.	I never tell in written form what I did to understand a text.

GCO 5: Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

5.1 - Identify and articulate personal need and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence.					
5.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment.	Most of the time, I can state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment.	Some of the time, I can state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment.	I can rarely state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment.	I can never state clearly the information I need to complete a given assignment.

5.1 - Identify and articulate personal need and personal learning needs with growing clarity and some independence.					
5.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always identify which	Most of the time, I	Some of the time, I	I rarely identify which	I never identify

	source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.	identify which source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.	identify which source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.	source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.	which source(s) of information are necessary to provide the information for which I am searching.
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5.2 - Become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected.					
5.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources.	Most of the time, I choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources.	Some of the time, I choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources.	I rarely choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources.	I never choose from and find information on a single topic in print and non-print sources.

5.2 - Become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected.					
5.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I always choose the right sources of information I need to complete a given assignment.	Most of the time, I choose the right sources of information I need to complete a given assignment.	Some of the time, I choose the right sources of information I need to complete a given assignment.	I rarely choose the right sources of information I need to complete a given assignment.	I never choose the right sources of information I need to complete a given assignment.

5.2 - Become increasingly aware of and use periodically the many print and non-print avenues and sources (Internet, documentaries, interviews) through which information can be accessed and selected.					
5.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I always take the information from its	Most of the time, I take the information from its	Some of the time, I take the information	I rarely take the information from its	I never take the information from its

	source and use it in my given assignment.	source and use it in my given assignment.	from its source and use it in my given assignment.	source and use it in my given assignment.	source and use it in my given assignment.
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5.3 - Use research strategies like issue mapping and webbing to guide research.					
5.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I always complete an appropriate graphic organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.	Most of the time, I complete an appropriate organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.	Some of the time, I complete an appropriate graphic organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.	I rarely complete an appropriate organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.	I never complete an appropriate graphic organizer with the information I have gathered from various sources.

GCO 6: Students will be expected to respond personally to a range of texts.

6.1 - Extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts					
6.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form.	Most of the time, I can give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form.	Some of the time, I can give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form.	I can rarely give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form.	I can never give my first reaction to a text either orally or in written form.

6.1 - Extend personal responses, either orally or in writing, to print and non-print texts by explaining in some detail initial or basic reactions to those texts					
6.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always explain why I feel this way and provide supporting	Most of the time, I can explain why I feel this way and provide	Some of the time, I can explain why I feel this way and provide	I can rarely explain why I feel this way and provide supporting	I can never explain why I feel this way and provide

	evidence from the text.	supporting evidence from the text.	supporting evidence from the text.	evidence from the text.	supporting evidence from the text.
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6.2 - Make evaluations or judgements about texts and express personal points of view aware of and use					
6.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always express a judgement or make a personal evaluation about a text.	Most of the time, I can express a judgement or make a personal evaluation about a text.	Some of the time, I can express a judgement or make a personal evaluation about a text.	I can rarely express a judgement or make a personal evaluation about a text.	I can never express a judgement or make a personal evaluation about a text.

6.3 - While learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issue, and situations					
6.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the theme of a text.	Most of the time, I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the theme of a text.	Some of the time I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the theme of a text.	I can rarely provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the theme of a text.	I can never provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the theme of a text.

6.3 - While learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issue, and situations					
6.3.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the issues in a text.	Most of the time, I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I made about the issues in a text.	Some of the time, I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I made about the issues in a text.	I can rarely provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the issues in a	I can never provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the issues in a

				text.	text.
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6.3 - While learning to express personal points of view, develop the ability to find evidence and examples in texts to support personal views about themes, issue, and situations

6.3.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the situations in a text.	Most of the time, I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the situations in a text.	Some of the time, I can provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I have made about the situations in a text.	I can rarely provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I made about the situations in a text.	I can never provide passages from the text to support an evaluation or judgement I made about the situations in a text.

GCO 7: Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre

7.1 - Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view

7.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing.	Most of the time, I can use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing.	Some of the time, I can use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing.	I can rarely use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing.	I can never use and name various criteria (format, source, location, organizational pattern, layout) to identify at a glance which type of text I am viewing.

7.1 - Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view					
7.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas.	Most of the time, I can list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas.	Some of the time, I can list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas.	I can rarely list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas.	I can never list my expectations of what a particular text should contain relating to content, form, format, and ideas.

7.1 - Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view					
7.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always recognize some organizational and structural techniques used to create a bias.	Most of the time, I can recognize some organizational and techniques used to create a bias.	Some of the time, I can recognize some organizational and techniques used to create a bias.	I can rarely recognize some organizational and structural techniques used to create a bias.	I can never recognize some organizational and structural techniques used to create a bias.

7.1 - Recognize that print and media texts can be biased and become aware of some of the ways that information is organized and structured to suit a particular point of view					
7.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.	Most of the time, I can point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.	Some of the time, I can point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.	I can rarely point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.	I can never point out a biased or non-biased idea and explain my choice.

7.2 - Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors					
7.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the purpose of a text.	Most of the time, I can identify the purpose of a text.	Some of the time, I can identify the purpose of a text.	I can rarely identify the purpose of a text.	I can never identify the purpose of a text.

7.2 - Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors					
7.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading.	Most of the time, I can identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading.	Some of the time, I can identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading.	I can rarely identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading.	I can never identify the intended reader(s) based on the type of text that I am reading.

7.2 - Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors					
7.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions).	Most of the time, I can choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions).	Some of the time, I can choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions).	I can rarely choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions).	I can never choose a text to illustrate or express a specific purpose (i.e. ads, obituaries, opinions).

7.2 - Recognize that print and media texts are constructed for particular readers and purposes; begin to identify the textual elements used by authors					
7.2.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.	Most of the time, I can identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.	Some of the time, I can identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.	I can rarely identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.	I can never identify some textual elements (i.e. quotes, font size, text style, paragraphs, white space) used by authors.

7.3 - Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding					
7.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text.	Most of the time, I can identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text.	Some of the time, I can identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text.	I can rarely identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text.	I can never identify the type of person who wrote a text based on the content of the text.

7.3 - Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding					
7.3.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias.	Most of the time, I can compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias.	Some of the time, I can compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias.	I can rarely compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias.	I can never compose a biased text by pretending to be a person with this particular bias.

7.3 - Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding					
7.3.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author.	Most of the time, I can identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author.	Some of the time, I can identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author.	I can rarely identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author.	I can never identify the words or phrases that give clues to the identity of the author.

7.3 - Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding					
7.3.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify words, phrases sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text.	Most of the time, I can identify words, phrases sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text.	Some of the time, I can identify words, phrases sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text.	I can rarely identify words, phrases sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text.	I can never identify words, phrases sentences, and ideas that express bias in a text.

7.3 - Develop an ability to respond critically to various texts in a variety of ways such as identifying, describing, and discussing the form, structure, and content of texts and how they might contribute to meaning construction and understanding					
7.3.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.	Most of the time, I can identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.	Some of the time, I can identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.	I can rarely identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.	I can never identify the clues that determine whether a specific culture and reality are being portrayed in a text.

GCO 8: Students will be expected to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imagination.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.	Most of the time, I can brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.	Some of the time, I can brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.	I can rarely brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.	I can never brainstorm (web, cluster, map, flow chart) to formulate global ideas.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always sketch to formulate global ideas.	Most of the time, I can sketch to formulate global ideas.	Some of the time, I can sketch to formulate global ideas.	I can rarely sketch to formulate global ideas.	I can never sketch to formulate global ideas.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always freewrite to formulate global ideas.	Most of the time, I can freewrite to formulate global ideas.	Some of the time, I can freewrite to formulate global ideas.	I can rarely freewrite to formulate global ideas.	I can never freewrite to formulate global ideas.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination					
8.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use the ideas generated by a brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.	Most of the time, I can use the ideas generated by a brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.	Some of the time, I can use the ideas generated by a brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.	I can rarely use the ideas generated by a brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.	I can never use the ideas generated by a brainstorming session to formulate an outline for my topic.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination					
8.1.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always produce a first draft from my outline.	Most of the time, I can produce a first draft from my outline.	Some of the time, I can produce a first draft from my outline.	I can rarely produce a first draft from my outline.	I can never produce a first draft from my outline.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination					
8.1.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify and note problems in my work.	Most of the time, I can identify and note problems in my work.	Some of the time, I can identify and note problems in my work.	I can rarely identify and note problems in my work.	I can never identify and note problems in my work.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination					
8.1.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the	Most of the time, I can participate in a discussion about the	Some of the time, I can participate in a discussion about the	I can rarely participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the	I can never participate in a discussion about the

	ideas in my work.	pros and cons of the ideas in my work.	pros and cons of the ideas in my work.	ideas in my work.	pros and cons of the ideas in my work.
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8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.8	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in others' work.	Most of the time, I can participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in others' work.	Some of the time, I can participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in others' work.	I can rarely participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in others' work.	I can never participate in a discussion about the pros and cons of the ideas in others' work.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.9	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.	Most of the time, I can consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.	Some of the time, I can consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.	I can rarely consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.	I can never consider solutions to solve the problems in my writing.

8.1 - Experiment with a range of strategies (brainstorming, sketching, freewriting) to extend and explore learning, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination

8.1.10	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.	Most of the time, I can offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.	Some of the time, I can offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.	I can rarely offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.	I can never offer solutions to solve the problems in others' writing.

8.2 - Become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users					
8.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.	Most of the time, I can use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.	Some of the time, I can use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.	I can rarely use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.	I can never use the required writing strategies at the appropriate stage.

8.2 - Become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users					
8.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.	Most of the time, I can describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.	Some of the time, I can describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.	I can rarely describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.	I can never describe the writing strategies used to produce specific pieces of writing.

8.2 - Become aware of and describe the writing strategies that help them learn; express an understanding of their personal growth as language learners and language users					
8.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.	Most of the time, I can keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.	Some of the time, I can keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.	I can rarely keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.	I can never keep a log to reflect my growth as a language learner and a language user.

8.3 - Understand that note-making is purposeful and has many purposes (e.g., personal use, gathering information for an assignment, recording what has happened and what others have said) and many forms (e.g., lists, summaries, observations, descriptions)					
8.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose and complete an appropriate graphic organizer, to generate information in the right format for a required writing assignment. (use a rubric to determine if the ideas in the organizer are used in the final draft).	Most of the time, I can choose and complete an appropriate graphic organizer, to generate information in the right format for a required writing assignment. (use a rubric to determine if the ideas in the organizer are used in the final draft).	Some of the time, I can choose and complete an appropriate graphic organizer, to generate information in the right format for a required writing assignment. (use a rubric to determine if the ideas in the organizer are used in the final draft).	I can rarely choose and complete an appropriate graphic organizer, to generate information in the right format for a required writing assignment. (use a rubric to determine if the ideas in the organizer are used in the final draft).	I can never choose and complete an appropriate graphic organizer, to generate information in the right format for a required writing assignment. (use a rubric to determine if the ideas in the organizer are used in the final draft).

8.4 - Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing					
8.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always “show, not tell” with words by: including sensory language (sight of, sound of, taste of, touch of, smell of) of a subject in my writing. - including ideas to	Most of the time, I can “show, not tell” with words by: - including sensory language (sight of, sound of, taste of, touch of, smell of) of a subject in my writing.	Some of the time, I can “show, not tell” with words by: - including sensory language (sight of, sound of, taste of, touch of, smell of) of a subject in my writing.	I can rarely “show, not tell” with words by: - including sensory language (sight of, sound of, taste of, touch of, smell of) of a subject in my writing.	I can never “show, not tell” with words by: - including sensory language (sight of, sound of, taste of, touch of, smell of) of a subject in my

	show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.	- including ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.	- including ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.	- including ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.	writing. - including ideas to show my thoughts and feelings about a subject in my writing.
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8.4 - Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing

8.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always focus on one main idea that makes sense.	Most of the time, I can focus on one main idea that makes sense.	Some of the time, I can focus on one main idea that makes sense.	I can rarely focus on one main idea that makes sense.	I can never focus on one main idea that makes sense.

8.4 - Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing

8.4.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify and take out ideas that are not related to the main idea of the piece.	Most of the time, I can identify and take out ideas that are not related to the main idea of the piece.	Some of the time, I can identify and take out ideas that are not related to the main idea of the piece.	I can rarely identify and take out ideas that are not related to the main idea of the piece.	I can never identify and take out ideas that are not related to the main idea of the piece.

8.4 - Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing					
8.4.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose the most effective word choice (words and phrases) to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	Most of the time, I can choose the most effective word choice (words and phrases) to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	Some of the time, I can choose the most effective word choice (words and phrases) to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	I can rarely choose the most effective word choice (words and phrases) to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	I can never choose the most effective word choice (words and phrases) to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.

8.4 - Demonstrate an ability to integrate interesting effects in imaginative writing and other forms of representation, such as consider thoughts and feelings in addition to external descriptions and activities; integrate detail that adds richness and density; identify and correct inconsistencies and avoid extraneous detail; make effective language choices relevant to style and purpose; select more elaborate and sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing					
8.4.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use sentence fluency to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	Most of the time, I can use sentence fluency to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	Some of the time, I can use sentence fluency to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	I can rarely use sentence fluency to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.	I can never use sentence fluency to improve the style and support the purpose of my writing.

GCO 9: Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements

9.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and demonstrate the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	Most of the time, I can write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and demonstrate the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	Some of the time, I can write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and demonstrate the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	I can rarely write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and demonstrate the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	I can never write a story that will include the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, climax, resolution) and demonstrate the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements

9.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing (ideas,	Most of the time, I can write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing (ideas,	Some of the time, I can write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing (ideas,	I can rarely write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing (ideas,	I can never write a cartoon that will include the proper format for a cartoon and the six traits of writing (ideas,

	organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).
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9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing.	Most of the time, I can write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing.	Some of the time, I can write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing.	I can rarely write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing.	I can never write a journal that will include the proper format for a journal and the appropriate traits of writing.

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing.	Most of the time, I can write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing.	Some of the time, I can write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can rarely write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can never write a letter that will include the proper format for either a personal or a business purpose using the appropriate traits of writing.

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing.	Most of the time, I can write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing.	Some of the time, I can write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can rarely write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can never write a report that will include the proper format for a report using the appropriate traits of writing.

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview using the appropriate traits of writing.	Most of the time, I can write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview using the appropriate traits of writing.	Some of the time, I can write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can rarely write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can never write an interview that will include the proper format for an interview using the appropriate traits of writing.

9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate	Most of the time, I can write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate	Some of the time, I can write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate	I can rarely write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate	I can never write a message that will include the proper format for a message using the appropriate

	traits of writing.	traits of writing.	traits of writing.	traits of writing.	traits of writing.
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9.1 - Produce a range of writing forms; stories, cartoons, journals, business and personal letters, speeches, reports, interviews, messages, poems, and advertisements					
9.1.8	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a variety of poems which will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing.	Most of the time, I can write a variety of poems which will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing	Some of the time, I can write a variety of poems which will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can rarely write a variety of poems which will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing.	I can never write a variety of poems which will include the proper format for each using the appropriate traits of writing.

9.2 - Recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (i.e., understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting information).					
9.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose the most effective organizational pattern for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe).	Most of the time, I can choose the most effective organizational pattern for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe).	Some of the time, I can choose the most effective organizational pattern for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe).	I can rarely choose the most effective organizational pattern for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe).	I can never choose the most effective organizational pattern for a text depending on its purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe).

9.2 - Recognize that a writer's choice of form is influenced by both the writing purpose (to entertain, inform, request, record, describe) and the reader for whom the text is intended (i.e., understand how and why a note to a friend differs from a letter requesting information).					
9.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	Most of the time, I can identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	Some of the time, I can identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	I can rarely identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).	I can never identify the purpose of a text and its intended reader based on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, conventions, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice).

9.3 - Begin to understand that ideas can be represented in more than one way and experiment with using other forms such as dialogue, posters, and advertisements					
9.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose the effective organizational pattern for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).	Most of the time, I can choose effective organizational pattern for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).	Some of the time, I can choose the effective organizational pattern for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).	I can rarely choose the effective organizational pattern for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).	I can never choose the effective organizational pattern for a text depending on the reader for whom the text is intended (friend, parent, teacher, business associate).

9.4 - Develop the awareness that content, writing style, tone of voice, language choice, and text organization need to fit the reader and suit the reason for writing					
9.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).	Most of the time, I can produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).	Some of the time, I can produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).	I can rarely produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).	I can never produce various text forms to relay the same message (dialogue, posters, and advertisements).

9.5 - Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view					
9.5.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft.	Most of the time, I can ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft.	Some of the time, I can ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft.	I can rarely ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft.	I can never ask for reader feedback after completing my first draft.

9.5 - Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view					
9.5.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use reader feedback when writing later drafts.	Most of the time, I can use reader feedback when writing later drafts.	Some of the time, I can use reader feedback when writing later drafts.	I can rarely use reader feedback when writing later drafts.	I can never use reader feedback when writing later drafts.

9.5 - Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view					
9.5.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always complete	Most of the time, I can	Some of the time, I can	I can rarely complete	I can never complete

	one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text.	complete one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text.	complete one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text.	one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text.	one-half of a T-Chart to assess the individual traits of writing in my text.
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9.5 - Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view

9.5.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart.	Most of the time, I can listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart.	Some of the time, I can listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart.	I can rarely listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart.	I can never listen to a reading of my self-generated draft and complete the second half of the T-Chart.

9.5 - Ask for reader feedback while writing and use this feedback when shaping subsequent drafts; consider self-generated drafts from a reader's/viewer's/ listener's point of view

9.5.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.	Most of the time, I can compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.	Some of the time, I can compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.	I can rarely compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.	I can never compare and contrast both parts of the T-Chart.

GCO 10: Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness

10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts

10.1.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose	Most of the time, I can	Some of the time, I can	I can rarely choose and	I can never choose

and use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts: brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting.	choose and use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts: brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting.	choose and use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts: brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting.	use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts: brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting.	and use prewriting strategies to effectively produce various texts: brainstorming, webbing, story mapping, reading, researching, interviewing, and reflecting.
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10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts					
10.1.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts: - focusing on getting ideas on paper, - taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary, - experimenting with new forms/techniques, - keeping audience in mind, - using a word processor to compose.	Most of the time, I can choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts: - focusing on getting ideas on paper, - taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary, - experimenting with new forms/techniques, - keeping audience in mind, - using a word processor to compose.	Some of the time, I can choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts: - focusing on getting ideas on paper, - taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary, - experimenting with new forms/techniques, - keeping audience in mind, - using a word processor to compose.	I can rarely choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts: - focusing on getting ideas on paper, - taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary, - experimenting with new forms/techniques, - keeping audience in mind, - using a word processor to compose.	I can never choose and use drafting strategies to effectively produce various texts: - focusing on getting ideas on paper, - taking risks with temporary spelling when necessary, - experimenting with new forms/techniques, - keeping audience in mind, - using a word processor to

					compose.
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10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts					
10.1.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts: - reading/re-reading, - adding ideas, - crossing out repetition or unnecessary information, - sequencing ideas/information, rearranging, - using feedback from conferences to help revise.	Most of the time, I can choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts: - reading/re-reading, - adding ideas, - crossing out repetition or unnecessary information, - sequencing ideas/information, rearranging, - using feedback from conferences to help revise.	Some of the time, I can choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts: - reading/re-reading, - adding ideas, - crossing out repetition or unnecessary information, - sequencing ideas/information, rearranging, - using feedback from conferences to help revise.	I can rarely choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts: - reading/re-reading, - adding ideas, - crossing out repetition or unnecessary information, - sequencing ideas/information, rearranging, - using feedback from conferences to help revise.	I can never choose and use revising strategies to effectively produce various texts: - reading/re-reading, - adding ideas, - crossing out repetition or unnecessary information, - sequencing ideas/information, rearranging, - using feedback from conferences to help revise.

10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts					
10.1.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce various texts:	Most of the time, I can choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce various texts:	Some of the time, I can choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce various texts:	I can rarely choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce various texts:	I can never choose and use editing strategies to effectively produce

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by: circling words that don't fit/look right, - trying them another way, - checking with a resource such as dictionary; - using an editing checklist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by: circling words that don't fit/look right, - trying them another way, - checking with a resource such as dictionary; - using an editing checklist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by: circling words that don't fit/look right, - trying them another way, - checking with a resource such as dictionary; - using an editing checklist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by: circling words that don't fit/look right, - trying them another way, - checking with a resource such as dictionary; - using an editing checklist. 	<p>various texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking punctuation and language usage; checking spelling by: circling words that don't fit/look right, - trying them another way, - checking with a resource such as dictionary; - using an editing checklist.
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10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts					
10.1.5	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I can always effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can proofread my work in progress after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft. 	<p>Most of the time, I can effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can proofread my work in progress after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft. 	<p>Some of the time, I can effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can proofread my work in progress after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft. 	<p>I can rarely effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can proofread my work in progress after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft. 	<p>I can never effectively produce various texts by choosing and using proofreading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can proofread my work in progress after prewriting, after first and subsequent drafts, after the final draft.

10.1 - Recognize and begin to use more often the specific prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and presentation strategies that most effectively help to produce various texts					
10.1.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts: - a word processor to publish - illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate - sharing writing/representing orally - publishing online - submitting work to school/district newsletter.	Most of the time, I can choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts: - a word processor to publish - illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate - sharing writing/representing orally - publishing online - submitting work to school/district newsletter.	Some of the time, I can choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts: a word processor to publish - illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate - sharing writing/representing orally - publishing online - submitting work to school/district newsletter.	I can rarely choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts: - a word processor to publish - illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate - sharing writing/representing orally - publishing online - submitting work to school/district newsletter.	I can never choose and use presentation (publishing) strategies to effectively produce various texts: - a word processor to publish - illustrations, charts, and diagrams to enhance writing where appropriate - sharing writing/representing orally - publishing online - submitting work to school/district newsletter.

10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to	Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to	Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to	I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to	I can never demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling

spell familiar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies in the prewriting stage - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.	spell familiar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies in the prewriting stage - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.	spell familiar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies in the prewriting stage - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.	spell familiar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies in the prewriting stage - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.	conventions to spell familiar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies in the prewriting stage - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.
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10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues	Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues	Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues	I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues	I can never demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to attempt to spell difficult/unfamiliar words correctly by: - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.
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10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.3	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I can always demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) - Computer “spell 	<p>Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) - Computer “spell 	<p>Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) - Computer “spell 	<p>I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.) - Computer “spell 	<p>I can never demonstrate my understanding of the use of spelling conventions to check for correctness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using meaning, patterns, and sound cues - using a range of spelling strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllibication - Mnemonics - Visualization (anecdotal and shape) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile practice - Flash cards - Phonetic and structural generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written drill - Dictionary Search - Common irregularly spelled

<p>checkers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<p>checkers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<p>checkers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<p>checkers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling. 	<p>words (e.g. weird, a lot, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer “spell checkers - Personal spelling lists - spelling many words conventionally - using a variety of strategies to edit for spelling.
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<p>10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication</p>					
10.2.4	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I can always demonstrate my understanding of punctuation by using appropriate punctuation.</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters at the first of a sentence - Use of capital letters on Proper Nouns - Use of capital letters on “T” 	<p>Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of punctuation by using appropriate punctuation.</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters at the first of a sentence - Use of capital letters on Proper Nouns - Use of capital letters on “T” 	<p>Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of punctuation by using appropriate punctuation.</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters at the first of a sentence - Use of capital letters on Proper Nouns - Use of capital letters on “T” 	<p>I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of punctuation by using appropriate punctuation.</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters at the first of a sentence - Use of capital letters on Proper Nouns - Use of capital letters on “T” 	<p>I can never demonstrate my understanding of punctuation by using appropriate punctuation.</p> <p><u>Grade 7:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters at the first of a sentence - Use of capital letters on Proper Nouns

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence - Use of commas in a list - Use of commas with transitions <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters in dialogue - Use of commas in dialogue - Use of quotation marks in dialogue - Use of commas in appositives - Use of commas in transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence - Use of commas in a list - Use of commas with transitions <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters in dialogue - Use of commas in dialogue - Use of quotation marks in dialogue - Use of commas in appositives - Use of commas in transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence - Use of commas in a list - Use of commas with transitions <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters in dialogue - Use of commas in dialogue - Use of quotation marks in dialogue - Use of commas in appositives - Use of commas in transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence - Use of commas in a list - Use of commas with transitions <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters in dialogue - Use of commas in dialogue - Use of quotation marks in dialogue - Use of commas in appositives - Use of commas in transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters on “I” - Use of period, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence - Use of commas in a list - Use of commas with transitions <p><u>Grade 8:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of capital letters in dialogue - use of commas in dialogue - Use of quotation marks in dialogue - Use of commas in appositives - Use of commas in transitions.
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10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.5	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing by using a	Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing by using a	Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing by using a	I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing by using a	I can never demonstrate my understanding of standard grammatical structures in writing

	consistent verb tense and correct subject-verb agreement.	consistent verb tense and correct subject-verb agreement.	consistent verb tense and correct subject-verb agreement.	consistent verb tense and correct subject-verb agreement.	by using a consistent verb tense and correct subject-verb agreement.
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10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.6	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).	Most of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).	Some of the time, I can demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).	I can rarely demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).	I can never demonstrate my understanding of a variety of sentences using different patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).

10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.7	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing by taking risks related to word choice and by using a thesaurus to enhance my writing.	Most of the time, I can use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing by taking risks related to word choice and by using a thesaurus to enhance	Some of the time, I can use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing by taking risks related to word choice and by using a thesaurus to enhance	I can rarely use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing by taking risks related to word choice and by using a thesaurus to enhance my writing.	I can never use grade appropriate vocabulary in my writing by taking risks related to word choice and by using a thesaurus to

		my writing.	my writing.		enhance my writing.
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10.2 - Understand and use conventions for spelling familiar words correctly; rely on knowledge of spelling conventions to attempt difficult words; check for correctness; demonstrate control over most punctuation and standard grammatical structures in writing most of the time; use a variety of sentence patterns, vocabulary, and paragraphs structures to aid effective written communication					
10.2.8	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: - using topic sentences - expanding on the topic sentences - using transitions - choosing appropriate paragraph length.	Most of the time, I can write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: - using topic sentences - expanding on the topic sentences - using transitions - choosing appropriate paragraph length.	Some of the time, I can write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: - using topic sentences - expanding on the topic sentences - using transitions - choosing appropriate paragraph length.	I can rarely write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: - using topic sentences - expanding on the topic sentences - using transitions - choosing appropriate paragraph length.	I can never write a paragraph using appropriate paragraph structures: - using topic sentences - expanding on the topic sentences - using transitions - choosing appropriate paragraph length.

10.3 - Acquire some exposure to the various technologies used for communicating to a variety of audiences for a range of purposes: (videos, e-mail, word processing, audiotapes)					
10.3.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always use technology to communicate with a variety of audiences. - compose an e-mail message that considers my audience and purpose.	Most of the time, I can use technology to communicate with a variety of audiences. - compose an e-mail message that considers my audience and purpose.	Some of the time, I can use technology to communicate with a variety of audiences. - compose an e-mail message that considers my audience and purpose.	I can rarely use technology to communicate with a variety of audiences. - compose an e-mail message that considers my audience and purpose.	I can never use technology to communicate with a variety of audiences. - compose an e-mail message that considers my audience and purpose.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compose a text using a word processing program. - compose an audio text to communicate a message. - compose a video text to communicate a message. - use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compose a text using a word processing program. - compose an audio text to communicate a message. - compose a video text to communicate a message. - use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compose a text using a word processing program. - compose an audio text to communicate a message. - compose a video text to communicate a message. - use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compose a text using a word processing program. - compose an audio text to communicate a message. - compose a video text to communicate a message. - use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compose a text using a word processing program. - compose an audio text to communicate a message. - compose a video text to communicate a message. - use the internet to gather information for a specific purpose.
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10.4 - Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations					
10.4.1	5	4	3	2	1
	<p>I can always take risks to express myself in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a new sentence form, - using new words, - using new formats, - using a variety of genres. 	<p>Most of the time, I can take risks to express myself in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a new sentence form, - using new words, - using new formats, - using a variety of genres. 	<p>Some of the time, I can take risks to express myself in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a new sentence form, - using new words, - using new formats, - using a variety of genres. 	<p>I can rarely take risks to express myself in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a new sentence form, - using new words, - using new formats, - using a variety of genres. 	<p>I can never take risks to express myself in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a new sentence form, - using new words, - using new formats, - using a variety of genres.

10.4 - Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations					
10.4.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always revise and edit my work.	Most of the time, I can revise and edit my	Some of the time, I can revise and edit my	I can rarely revise and edit my work.	I can never revise and edit my work.

		work.	work.		
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10.4 - Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations					
10.4.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing a topic meaningful to me - willingly editing and revising - producing a final product. 	Most of the time, I can show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing a topic meaningful to me - willingly editing and revising - producing a final product. 	Some of the time, I can show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing a topic meaningful to me - willingly editing and revising - producing a final product. 	I can rarely show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing a topic meaningful to me - willingly editing and revising - producing a final product. 	I can never show pride in and ownership of my writing by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choosing a topic meaningful to me - willingly editing and revising - producing a final product.

10.4 - Demonstrate a commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations					
10.4.4	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always willingly share my writing and other representations with others.	Most of the time, I can willingly share my writing and other representations with others.	Some of the time, I can willingly share my writing and other representations with others.	I can rarely willingly share my writing and other representations with others.	I can never willingly share my writing and other representations with others.

10.5 - Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication					
10.5.1	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always collect information from interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet.	Most of the time, I can collect information from inter-views, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet.	Some of the time, I can collect information from inter-views, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet.	I can rarely collect information from inter-views, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet.	I can never collect information from interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts and the internet.

10.5 - Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication					
10.5.2	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always collect information from a variety of five to seven sources.	Most of the time, I can collect information from a variety of five to seven sources.	Some of the time, I can collect information from a variety of five to seven sources.	I can rarely collect information from a variety of five to seven sources.	I can never collect information from a variety of five to seven sources.

10.5 - Collect information from several sources (interviews, film, CD-ROMs, texts) and combine all ideas in communication					
10.5.3	5	4	3	2	1
	I can always combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).	Most of the time, I can combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).	Some of the time, I can combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).	I can rarely combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).	I can never combine the collected information in a communicative text (research paper).