A DESCRIPTION OF TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND TRANSLATION OF ADULT EDUCATION/LEARNING AND WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORY TO TEACHING PRACTICE

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A DESCRIPTION OF TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND TRANSLATION OF ADULT EDUCATION/LEARNING AND WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORY TO TEACHING PRACTICE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with teachers' awareness of theory and the translation of theory into teaching practice. Specifically, it described ten Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level I teachers' awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy; the teachers' expression of this awareness in their teaching practice; the degree of consistency between and among teachers in their awareness and expression in their practice of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy; and the degree of consistency of their views as expressed in their practice with those views expressed in the related literature.

A literature review of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy was undertaken within the framework of the Handbook for Teachers (1990). This handbook was designed to provide guidance to teachers in the ABE Level I program.

The data for the study was collected through a teacher selected class observation period and teacher interviews. The findings indicated that although commonalities existed, there was much variability between and among both, teachers' reported awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy, and their reported teaching behaviours/activities. It was also found that teachers' practice is guided, at least in part, by factors other than their knowledge of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For my mother

Nora Mackey Ralph

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The field of Adult Literacy is a relatively new field of study and is sometimes included under the umbrella of what is termed Adult Basic Education (ABE).

Definitions of literacy were relatively consistent in the western world up to the 1920s - a person who could read and write was literate (Thomas, 1989). Since then much attention has been given to defining literacy with little consensus being reached (Thomas, 1989; Limage, 1988; Sabto, 1988; Norman & Malicky, 1986). ABE has existed for several decades and according to Thomas (1989), is defined by its name:

    -it defines the target population: adult,
    -it defines the program: basic education, and
    -it implies the delivery of that program (p. 3).

While it is true that one could argue over more precise definitions of "adult", "basic education", and "program delivery" it remains that the term ABE carries its own definition. In general it is accepted that ABE refers to programming designed for people above school leaving age who have not completed school. It attempts to redress deficits in language arts, reading, mathematics, and social studies for those adults who have recognized the need for "more education".

It becomes complicated when, with adult beginning readers, one has the additional concern of literacy defined in its most simplest form, "the ability to read and write". With regard to ABE at this most basic level it becomes necessary to be more precise about how programs get delivered.

Norman & Malicky (1986) asked adult beginning readers why they wanted to learn to read. The responses they got were similar to those classified within Scribner's (1984) framework as, "literacy as adaptation", "literacy as power", and "literacy as a state of grace". The responses were linked to the learners' self-concepts, to their ability to function in society, and to employment. When learners were asked what they thought reading was, responses were consistent with other research findings that link learners' concepts of reading with word identification rather than with meaning. Norman & Malicky go on to say that a focus on decoding skills for beginning adult readers does little to help learners become part of the literate culture (p.13). They suggest that adult beginning readers need to plan and direct their own programs and further, that assimilation into the "culture of literacy" will not occur until these kinds of decisions are passed over to the learners (p.13).

The Adult Basic reading and language program in use in basic education programs within Newfoundland and Labrador prior to September, 1990, was an example of a hierarchically structured skills-oriented approach, following a child-centred philosophy. The program was divided into areas of Language, Comprehension, and Vocabulary with a focus on "decoding".

Research like that of Norman & Malicky provided the impetus for the shift to a more adult education/learning focus which encouraged participation by learners in their own learning.

The new ABE program is divided into Levels I, II, and III. Level I is focused on beginning readers up to those reading at an approximate reading level of Grade VII. ABE Levels II and III are concerned with high school equivalency. This study is interested in the ABE Level I program.

This new ABE Level I reading and language program in use within Newfoundland and Labrador as of September, 1990 attempts to be reflective of adult education/learning philosophy. It is expected that teachers using the program will apply this philosophy in their teaching. It is further expected that this philosophical orientation will directly affect the content and delivery of the instruction.

The ABE program also proposes to be reflective of a whole language philosophy, though this is not directly stated anywhere in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u>. The program, however, encourages self-direction, language experience activities, and emphasizes seeking meaning from reading as opposed to decoding symbols. (Handbook for Teachers, ABE, Level I, 1990) These principles are reflective of whole language philosophy and methodology and are also meant to provide <u>guidance</u> to the instructor in the implementation of the program.

PURPOSE

This study was concerned with the identification and translation of theory about reading, writing, and learning into teaching behaviours in adult literacy

education. More specifically, its purpose was to identify the principles of adult education/learning and whole language of which teachers are aware; and to describe how teachers' practice, as reported by the teachers, is reflective of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy.

The study made clear distinctions between this andragogical approach to adult basic education and that of a hierarchical pedagogical approach. In addition, congruence or incongruence between the philosophy espoused in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> and the teachers' practice (as reported by them), and among the teachers themselves, was sought. The review of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy provided a definition of the parameters used to measure of the consistency or inconsistency of the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> and the teachers' practice and with the literature.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used in the study as defined:

<u>Philosophy</u> a means of informing practice; "a set of motivating beliefs, concepts, and principles" (Long, 1983 p. 294).

<u>Theoretical principles</u> a means of guiding behaviour (Long, 1983); guidelines that set parameters for the application of theory.

Adult education/learning the process of adults learning; "....more technical meaning, 'adult education' describes a set of organized activities carried on by a wide variety of institutions for the accomplishment of specific educational objectives" (Knowles, 1980 p. 25).

Whole language a philosophy of learning and teaching based on acceptance of some fundamental assumptions which include: learning requires risk-taking and experimentation; involves constructing meaning and relating new information to what is already known; requires learners to be actively involved with real purposes; is social; and uses language and other communication systems (Newman & Church, 1990).

Translate/make operational express sense in another form of representation; provide another kind of framework; reflect on teaching.

Instructional behaviours/Teaching behaviours/activities/Teaching practice management of the learning process - creation of a learning environment and guidance to optimize learning (Knowles, 1980).

Andragogy term used in adult education to indicate individualized, less formal, and more self-directed learning. A philosophy and methods of education that are most conductive to teaching adults.

Pedagogy term used to indicate more formal learning environment, teacher directed; associated with teaching children.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level I program provides basic reading and writing skills to adults; designed for learners who are non-readers to about a grade VII-VIII reading level as developed by the Department of Education in Newfoundland.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) Levels II and III self-paced programs designed for adults leading to the completion of high school- Math, Science, and Communications.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were formulated to guide the research. They are reported in the **Findings** section of the thesis under headings of Part I and Part II to aid clarity and are thus presented the same way here to provide consistency.

Part I

1. Are teachers aware of theoretical principles of adult education/learning and whole language? Of which principles are they aware?

2. To what extent are these theoretical principles of adult education/learning and whole language similar between and among teachers, and similar to those described in the literature?

3.   How does a teacher reflect on her teaching or translate his/her awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy to his/her teaching practice?

4.   To what extent are teaching behaviours/activities denoting teaching practice similar between and among teachers and to adult education/learning and whole language philosophy.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with ten Level I teachers employed in the regional college system in St. John's, Newfoundland. When the research was conducted five of the teachers were working full-time in literacy programs and five were working on a part-time basis. The teachers were identified on the basis of availability though every effort was made to include all teachers working full-time in Level I. Data were collected on teachers through a combined procedure of observing a teacher-selected time in the classroom and by interviewing teachers. Audio-tapes of interviews were reviewed and coded as to the type of information contained (i.e. which question(s) does this statement(s) address?). Categories of responses were derived and used to tabulate data to provide a description of the adult education/learning and whole language philosophy and theory that was in action. Data collected from the

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observation period were compared with the interview data and the consistency among them determined.

In conducting this study the following assumptions were made:

-Teachers have knowledge of theoretical principles that influence their actions.

-Teachers are metacognitively aware of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy; and of activities associated with learning to read/write. Further, they are able and willing to discuss them in an interview.

-Information given by teachers is truthful.

LIMITATIONS/DELIMITATIONS

- The nature of the study, focused as it was on reading and writing, did not permit discussion of other aspects of literacy such as oral (listening and speaking) and visual (viewing and representing).

- The sample size and selection procedures prohibited any generalizing of results to "all" teachers using the new Level I ABE program. The emphasis, rather, was on understanding practice in a specific context.

- Also because of the open-ended nature of the questions, teachers interviewed may not have reported all of their instructional behaviours in translating theory to practice nor can it be assumed that they reported the behaviours they most commonly used.

- Labels used by the researcher for particular theoretical concepts and methods may have been unfamiliar to teachers or held different meanings for them.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 gives a brief description of the study, its purpose, design, the research questions proposed, states its limitations, and outlines the organization of the thesis. Chapter 2 provides a background to the study by means of a concise discussion of the philosophical stances of andragogy and of pedagogy. It also includes a brief overview of the <u>ABE Program Guide Level I</u> and the <u>Handbook for Teachers.</u> Chapter 3 reviews the literature which identifies related areas of the study: the philosophies and principles of adult education/learning and whole language. Chapter 4 describes the research design utilized in the study. It includes information on the teachers, instruments, the pilot study, procedures, and the coding and analysis of data. Chapter 5 presents the findings of classroom observations, teachers' background data and interviews. These are discussed within the context of the research questions. Chapter 6 contains a short summary of the study, its conclusions, and the implications of the findings for Level I teachers, administrators, and those involved in professional development of literacy teachers. It also contains recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To provide a background for the discussion of adult education/learning philosophy in the context of the revised ABE Level I program some further exploration of the concept of andragogy in relation to pedagogy is necessary.

The Greek word "andros", meaning man, is the root of the term andragogy. It is used to describe an approach to education which is distinct from "pedagogy" (from the Greek word "paidos", meaning boy). Pedagogy is generally synonymous with the education of children. The two terms have been used by adult educators to represent two different philosophical orientations to teaching and learning - andragogy being the more closely related to individualized, self-directed, and less formalized learning and pedagogy representing a more traditional approach to education, that of transmission of knowledge - teacher to student (Knowles, 1980).

The distinctions between the two philosophies become somewhat blurred when one considers the philosophy of a "progressive" like John Dewey. He had little to say about adult education but a great deal to say about cooperative, collaborative learning - a concept which has been embraced by adult educators. (Dewey, 1926/1984)

However, the differences between the philosophies of andragogy and pedagogy as summarized by Draper (1988) and cited in the Handbook for Teachers (ABE Level 1, 1990) are :

- the concept of the learner within the pedagogical framework is that of a dependent learner, whereas in the andragogical framework, the learner is increasingly self-directed and independent;

- pedagogically, motivation is based on external rewards as compared with internal incentives and curiosity within andragogy;

- the climate for learning is characterized, for pedagogy, by one of formal authority, competitiveness and judgment, as compared with an informal climate with andragogy, which is mutually respectful, consensual, collaborative, and supportive;

- planning is primarily done by the pedagogue as compared with andragogy where participation in decision-making prevails;

- in pedagogy, the diagnosis of needs is done primarily by the teacher as compared with mutual assessment in andragogy;

- learning activities are either transmittal techniques and assigned readings as compared with inquiry projects, independent study and experimental techniques within andragogy;

- in pedagogy, evaluation is primarily external to the student and done by the authority teacher, as compared with self-assessment which characterizes the andragogical approach. (p. 12-13)

A quick perusal of the foregoing by any teacher familiar with current pedagogical thinking on language across the curriculum, resource-based learning, student-centred learning, and whole language, could dispute the uniqueness of the adult learner philosophy. It is not the uniqueness of these andragogical concepts but rather their multi-dimensional appropriateness to the way the adult learns that makes adult education more "consensual", "collaborative" and less concerned with the "teacher as authority" than child-centred education has traditionally been.

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ABE LEVEL I REVISED PROGRAM

Andragogy has provided adult education/learning principles which serve as a guide for many adult literacy programs. A second movement within education which also is having an impact on adult literacy program development is the whole language philosophy. Both the adult education/learning principles and whole language have much in common and are quite compatible in the direction which they provide for adult literacy programs.

As noted in the Introduction to this thesis it is the information provided by andragogical research which led to the revision of the ABE program.

The <u>ABE Program Guide Level I</u> is one of a series of three ABE program outlines (the other two are revised versions of Levels II and III) prepared for the Post Secondary Division of the Department of Education of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Guide presents an outline and list of suggested resource materials for the Level I section of the ABE program (ABE Program Guide Level I 1991). The Level I <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> was developed to support the implementation of the revised ABE Level I program in the province's Community College system (ABE Handbook for Teachers, Level I, 1990).

The <u>ABE Program Guide Level I</u> provides general learning objectives which outline minimum competencies required by learners who want to receive an ABE Level I completion certificate. The objectives are designed to be general enough to

allow for a high degree of flexibility in delivery within institutions and among institutions. There is no requirement for learners to work within the formal Level I program if they come to the program with very specific needs, such as a short preparation for entering Level II. The Guide recommends that institutions provide a flexible structure which would allow for:

- individualized learner-centered programming
- instruction in groups of various sizes, in one-to-one arrangements, or in a combination of the two
- instruction in on-campus or outreach centers
- continuous enrolment
- part-time or full-time courses of study
- adaptation of objectives to a distance learning option
- adaptation of objectives to a wide range of teaching/learning resources (print, computer, audiovisual) which suit the needs and interests of the students, which can include resources from the community, and which can be changed and updated as needed (ABE Program Guide Level I 1991, p. 5)

The Level I program outline has three components: General learning objectives; Suggested activities/skill areas; and Skills taxonomies. Communications and Program content areas are organized under General learning objectives. Communications is further subdivided into critical reading skills; purpose of reading; and oral and written communications. The Program content areas are: mathematics; science; government and law; social studies; consumer education; and occupational knowledge. The General learning objectives serve to describe **end** objectives of the Level I program. The Guide recommends that all areas of the program be **integrated** for the purpose of teaching. For example, communications skills are taught through

reading and writing in the program content areas. (See Appendix 1 for an example of a General learning objective under Communications - critical reading skills)

Accompanying each General learning objective are Suggested activities and/or skill areas which may help towards the achieving of the objective. This list is designed to help teachers "teach towards the objective". However, it is noted that these lists are "not definitive nor are they intended to limit the teacher or the student". (See Appendix 1 for an example of a Suggested activities/skills area)

The Skills taxonomies section forms the third component of the Level I program. This section provides a catalogue of skills for each of the skill areas listed in the Suggested activities/skill Areas. Some of the skills in a taxonomy might be: pre-reading skills; phonics; vocabulary development; spelling. The Skills taxonomies are used as a reference. They are not check lists. "Properly used, the taxonomies can become an aid to help teachers plan ways of approaching specific learning tasks and problems which have been identified in the course of working towards the accomplishment of the general learning objective(s)" (Level I Program Guide 1991, p. 13).

The Handbook for Teachers accompanies the Program Guide and provides guidance and support material for the implementation of the revised program. "The Handbook is not intended to be prescriptive. Teachers, coordinators and colleges are ultimately responsible for the shape which their ABE programming takes" (Handbook for Teachers Level I, 1990, p. 5).

The first chapter of the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> uses a question/answer format. These questions describe which materials to use, when and how to evaluate learners, and how to decide when learners are ready to go to Level II. The second chapter centers on the teaching of adults. This chapter provides the review of the application of adult education/learning methods and "learner-centered" or whole language philosophy from which this study is drawn. The philosophy is outlined in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> in terms of principles of adult education/learning and a "learner-centred" orientation to teaching, and is discussed in this thesis against the background of the Literature Review in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 of the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> looks at Student Assessment and Placement giving samples of how in-take interviews can provide much needed information without alienating the learner. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide guidance and suggested resources for an integrated approach to teaching, writing, and spelling respectively. Chapter 7 looks at evaluation of reading and writing, suggesting that it be an everyday on-going process. It also gives recommendations for more formal evaluations. The final chapter provides general guidelines for working with learning disabled learners.

Although Chapter 2 focuses on teaching adults, the philosophy expressed in that chapter permeates the entire <u>Handbook for Teachers</u>. There is always present the view of respect for the learner as an independent, resourceful, and decision-making person.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As stated earlier, this study is concerned with translating the theory of adult education/learning and whole language into instructional behaviours. To provide a theoretical foundation for the study, the literature on adult education/learning is reviewed within the context of those principles referred to in the <u>ABE Handbook for Teachers, Level I</u> as consistent with adult education/learning philosophy.

Adult Education/Learning Principles

Adults come to class already equipped with various experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and ideas. Each person organizes and absorbs new knowledge and ideas in an individual way (Draves, 1984). Recognition of this fact, however, has not prevented researchers and educators from seeking to explain how adults learn nor from trying to discover what characteristics are common to that learning (Brown, 1987).

Acknowledging that most teachers come from a pedagogical background and need a different framework from which to teach adults, the Level I <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> addresses the issue of those characteristics that make the adult learning experience different. For example, "The majority of students are mature intellectually, socially and emotionally; and for the majority of students, upgrading their education is only one of many demands they are currently meeting including earning a living and contributing to the running of a household" (p. 11).

There is also acknowledgment that most learners will have experienced only the pedagogical approach to learning and that part of the teacher's role is to help learners to take responsibility for their own learning (Handbook for Teachers Level I ABE, 1990, p. 13).

Several lists of adult education/learning principles by varied educators, such as Draper's (previously referred to Chapter 2), describe the ideal conditions under which learning occurs. Houle (1961), Kidd (1973), Knowles (1980) and Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) have written on the program applications of adult education/learning principles. Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) have drawn together this research and detail common characteristics of adult learners. They warn, however, that these characteristics do change and should not become fixed labels. They discuss a total of 36 learning principles. This study will consider these principles as they relate to self-direction, motivation, climate, decision-making, needs assessment, learning activities, and evaluation, as these are the principles referred to in the Handbook for Teachers.

Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) provide a summary of the 36 learning principles with implications for facilitating learning and planning programs. In some cases, the discussion on facilitating or planning seems more relevant to this study than the actual learning principles they cite. Where that occurs, reference is made to the "facilitating implications" or "planning implications" rather than to the principle itself.

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With regard to adults being <u>self-directed</u>, Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) note that adult behaviour is not fixed but changes in response to internal and external pressures. They suggest that facilitating adult learning is not done through the teacher's motivating and initiating the learning process, but rather through the teacher's being able to remove or reduce obstacles to learning for each learner. As well, they note that adults learn both "for autonomous mastery of one's life and for belonging to and participating in groups" (p. 115). They recognize that both are important and that one without the other will result in dissatisfaction for the learner. One of the implications for facilitating, they note, is that planned activities should provide a balance between "autonomous, independent functioning and interdependent, interpersonal relationships" (p.115).

Draves (1984) supports the premise that the learner is responsible for her own learning. He notes that adults are self-motivated, eager to participate, and interested (p.16). He also suggests that small groups work well in adult learning settings because they "...are settings for building self-esteem, having purposeful interactions with peers, and learning in an atmosphere where people can differ and question, yet value and respect, one another" (p.11).

Barer-Stein (1989) sees the focus of learner-centred approaches as engaging the learner in increasingly responsible participation within that learning. She advocates group discussions for "... mutual contribution of knowledge and skills from life experience..." (p. 348)

Alan Thomas (1983) lists among his "universal facts of learning" that learning is a matter of personal choice. It is generally accepted that adult learning must have some degree of self-direction if the adult learner is to feel successful.

<u>Motivation</u> is dealt with in two of Brundage and MacKeracher's (1980) learning principles:

> 11. Adult learning tends to focus on the problems, concerns, tasks, and needs of the individual's current life situation. Adults are highly motivated to learn in areas relevant to their current developmental tasks, social roles, life crises, and transition periods.

and:

> 12. When adult learning focuses on the personal problems of an individual learner, the solutions to those problems must come from his own personal values and expectations, be implemented through his personal resources and skills, and be congruent with his personal meanings, strategies, and life-style (p. 103).

Draves (1984) also acknowledges that adults come to the learning situation wanting to solve a particular problem, apply their learning to everyday experiences, and be practical in their approach.

Bock (1979) expresses the adult's strong motivation to learn as a reason to have adult learners actively involved in the learning process. She suggests that this motivation comes from a "concern with upward occupational mobility, and a sense of personal achievement, satisfaction, and self-fulfilment". She also notes a need on the part of the adult learner to understand and deal with situations she faces in daily life, a need to be able to apply what is being learned.

Draper's (1988) principle of an _informal climate_ with characteristics of mutual respect, consensus seeking, and collaboration is referred to either directly or indirectly in nine of Brundage and MacKeracher's (1980) learning principles. The nine include: concern for the adult's immediate and personal needs; the creation of a climate which supports individual learners and assists in reducing their internal feelings of threat; providing time for adult learners to set their own pace for learning; concern for the physical and emotional well-being of learners; provision of environmental conditions that would reduce the distortion in sensory information; developing strategies to deal with the stress of forgetting; selection of adult teachers who are sensitive to individual needs and concerns; valuing the self-concept and self-esteem of each learner as they are presented by the learner; and providing time to allow for reflection of past experience, integration of new learning, and a threat-free learning environment where interpersonal relationships are based on trust.

Draves (1984) is less detailed in his comments on climate setting but not less inclusive: "[it is important] to build and maintain a positive learning climate and an atmosphere in which your students feel comfortable, are both part of the group and maintain their own individuality, respect and enjoy your leadership and the talents of the other members of the class, and are able to learn through positive reinforcement and caring" (p.20).

Bock (1979), as well, is very inclusive in her summation of an adult learning environment or climate for learning. She notes that the ..." setting should be

comfortable and should be characterized by trust and respect, helpfulness, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences". (p.1)

The principle of <u>participation in decision making</u> about the program - content and structure - is referenced four times in Brundage and Mackeracher's 1980 study. Their eighth learning principle stresses that the component of the self-concept which is essential to learning is the past experiences one attaches to the role of learner. They note that a learner learns best when the role of learner is valued in its self. As well, the experiences of being a competent learner, of being able to manage one's own learning, of valuing the status of learner, and of using the resources of others while being a resource for others all contribute to one's learning. Further, under "facilitating implications" for that principle, they state:

> Adult learning is facilitated when each learner can participate in and be responsible for the planning and implementing of his own learning objectives, activities, and assessment--that is, when he assumes the role of interdependent learner as much as possible. (p.101)

and, under "planning implications" for that principle:

> Planning should include opportunities for learners to participate in and accept responsibility for planning and implementing their own learning objectives, activities, and assessment. A collaborative planning process is required.

Learning principle 14 focuses on transformation. The reference to collaborative decision-making here is in the planning implications. Any program, it is noted, should include learner-centred content and processes. "The learning objectives and needs must be established by collaborative planning and should not be

presupposed by the teacher" (p. 104). While learning principle 22 is primarily related to the adult's need to engage in learning that is immediate and has pragmatic application to daily life, implicit in it is the concern with the learner learning what is needed, "as defined by his needs and problems" (p.109).

Learning principle 34 makes explicit the sharing of teaching processes and planning activities between teachers and learners.

> ....Teaching and learning are both enhanced when teachers and learners share in choosing directions, providing input, designing and implementing activities, and assessing outcomes. These shared aspects of teaching and learning reduce the need for one or the other to accept full responsibility for the interaction and therefore reduce the threat for both (p.114).

Draves (1984) also acknowledges the benefit of collaborative decision-making. "The ideal way to meet your learners' goals is to sit down with them before the class starts and invite them to help plan the course with you" (p. 24).

As well, Bock (1979) makes reference to the need for teacher/learner collaboration, linking it to learner motivation. "Because of their strong motivation to learn, adult students should be actively involved in the learning process and, where possible, should set goals for themselves" (p. 2).

Draper's (1988) fifth principle - <u>diagnosis of needs as mutually assessed</u> is referenced in three of the Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) learning principles. This fifth principle is addressed in learning principle 13 which focuses on the learner's self-assessment. Under facilitating implications we are told that "Adult

skill learning is facilitated when individual learners can assess their own skills and strategies to discover inadequacies or limitations for themselves" (p. 104). Again, in learning principle 15 under facilitating implications:

> Adult learning will be more satisfying for the learner when he assesses his own learning needs and selects his own learning objectives and direction. If this is not possible, then the learner should have a full understanding of the objectives already selected for the learning program, should be able to accept these, and should become committed to them (p. 105).

Building on self-assessment, this principle goes one step further to say that where this is not possible, objectives should be acceptable to the learner. Mutual assessment by teacher and learner is not mentioned until learning principle 31. This principle in a facilitating implication says:

> Adult learning is facilitated when the teacher assists individual learners to assess their meanings, values, skills, and strategies to determine which essential components are missing and which might be required for further learning. Remedies for identified deficits should then be integrated into planned learning activities (p.113).

Draves (1984) sees the teacher helping the learner to "reorganize" skills and thoughts so as to absorb new knowledge "in his or her own way".

Bock (1979) is more explicit:

> Because learning is likely to be more effective if there is a similarity between your purposes, as teacher, and the goals of the learner. It is important to involve the students in a mutual process of formulating learning objectives in which the needs of the students, of the institution, of the teacher, and of the subject matter are taken into account (p. 5).

How the learning is carried out characterizes the next learning principle, as put forward by Draper (1988); that is, in andragogy the learning is done through inquiry projects, independent study, and experimental techniques.

Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) made pointed reference to <u>learning activities</u> that are applicable to adults in three of their learning principles. In another seven they talk about the need to understand and account for different learning styles.

In learning principles 9, 33, and 36 comments are made that learning activities that do not require "finalized" or "correct" answers and that "promote question-asking and -answering" facilitate adult learning. As well, it is suggested that "program plans which enhance coping with paradox are based on inquiry processes and open-ended questions, on opportunities for clarifying issues, and on tentative summaries followed by testing and experimenting activities" (p. 102).

Learning principles 4, 5, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 all relate to the need to consider past experiences and learning styles, both those of the learner and those of the teacher. These principles refer to understanding the adult's need to place current learning in the context of past experience or learning. There is explicit acknowledgement that respecting and valuing past learning is inexorably linked to a person's self-esteem. To ensure that this process is facilitated, teaching activities must reflect these principles. Learning principle 5 is quoted in full to illustrate how Brundage and Mackeracher present these ideas:

When past experience can be applied directly to current experience, learning is facilitated. When past experience can be applied only indirectly, the adult learner may have some difficulty perceiving connections and making transfers.

Facilitating Implications:

Adult learning is facilitated when past experience is applied to current learning through divergent, non-sequential, analogical cognitive processes. These include metaphors, analogies, graphs, figures, drawings, games, and so on.

Adult learning is facilitated when the learner can focus on his own personal meanings and values through self-reflection in an environment which is free from threat and in which interpersonal relationships are based on trust.

Planning Implications:

Planned activities should include divergent, non-sequential, global, analogical cognitive activities which allow the learner to reflect on the connections, both explicit and implicit, between his past experience and present learning.

Planned learning processes should appear to the learner to be relevant to life experiences, both past and present. Learning content should bear some relationship to the learner's past experience and current concerns.

Planned activities should provide opportunities for learners to reflect on their own past experience without the threat of being judged or evaluated (p. 99).

Learning principle 27, in its planning implications, notes that "Programs should begin with activities which respond to the current cognitive and learning style of learners. Initial activities should be designed to provide the teacher with information about the cognitive and learning styles of each learner" (p. 111). Each of the other five principles referred to above elaborates further on the relationship of learning to past experience, or the relationship of learning to individual learning style, and the need to consider these in planning teaching activities.

Draves (1984), as well, sees the value of capitalizing on past experience and of using a variety of teaching and learning activities. He advocates using the diversity of people in the group as a learning tool. "Your learning situations will differ from a traditional classroom. There will be many kinds of people with different backgrounds. That variety can be turned into an exciting learning process by playing on the worldliness of the people in the group. Every person in the group has had some life adventures, and just as important, relates to what you are discussing from his or her own perspective" (p.54-55). Draves also suggests bringing "students' experiences to bear on the subject; have them discuss in small groups; have participants give short presentations". He mentions the "over-the-shoulder demonstration" format as well as a "show-and-do" method.

Bock (1979) also notes that adults enter a learning situation with many experiences that can be incorporated into the current new learning. She also advocates learning activities that are centered on experience.

> It is important to provide the kinds of learning activities that will help the learners to relate their experiences to the concepts you wish them to learn. This can be done in several ways. Discussion is a very useful teaching method to establish relationships between the past experience of the learner and the concepts you wish to explore. Materials should be applicable to situations or problems with which the learners can identify. Individualization is important because of the variability among adult students. One way to achieve individualization is to allow the learner to select specialized topics of particular interest to him/her. Another way to individualize instruction is to help learners adapt materials for their own use (p. 2).

The final principle put forward by Draper and quoted in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> (1990) is that self-assessment is central to any <u>evaluation procedures</u>.

Not surprisingly, Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) agree. They use the term "feedback" rather than evaluation and link it to a positive self-concept. In learning principle seven they note that learners should be assisted to "specify and clarify behaviours to be learned or changed". They should also "specify and describe desired outcomes". Plans need to include activities which "provide descriptive feedback that does not imply value judgments and that suggests possible future changes". Learning principle 17 elaborates on the concept of feedback. "Feedback is essential if the adult learner is to modify his behaviour in an ongoing way. Feedback can only be given when the learner has acted in ways which can be observed by others. He must perform the skill or strategy to be learned or reproduce the knowledge or values in representational form (talking, writing, drawing, and so on)" (p. 106). They go on to say that "Feedback which is immediate has greater potential for affecting learning". They also comment on the kind of feedback that is most helpful. "Feedback which is descriptive and implies a possible correction is more helpful than feedback which is judgmental and demands correction." While, again, they avoid the word "self-assessment", it is implied in the learning principle under Planning Implications:

> Program plans should include activities which allow the learner to specify and clarify his own learning objectives; to specify the type of feedback he prefers or needs; to test new behaviours; to receive feedback in non-threatening ways; and to modify his objectives and behaviours in an ongoing way (p. 106).

Draves (1984) makes it clear that evaluation is the learner's responsibility. He notes that learning is the learner's responsibility as is the assessment of progress. He modifies that a little later by saying that both teacher and learner are involved in the ongoing evaluation of progress.

Bock (1979) includes feedback among her characteristics for teaching adults. She says, "Adults learn more effectively when they receive feedback regarding how well they are progressing". She suggests using "self-assessment forms that enable the students to keep track of their own progress" (p. 3).

The research on adult education/learning principles contains innumerable references to self-concept (or self-esteem) and to valuing past experiences. Although both are mentioned in the various learning characteristics and principles cited above, they require additional attention because they are not given the coverage in this study that their importance would seem to warrant in the literature. For example, in the Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) study, a major reference to self-concept or self-esteem is made in four principles and, in another four, to the value of past experience for teaching and learning. An additional five principles sees the combination of self-concept or self-esteem with past experience. In yet another four principles there is reference made to learners needing to "work on their own relevant problems", to sharing "current concerns and expectations", and to "reducing anxiety about learning", as well as an admonition to teachers to "avoid labelling childish behaviours". Although Draper does not refer directly to self-concept or self-esteem in

his list of principles, the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> (1990) notes that there should be "sensitivity and respect for the student's maturity" and a "recognition of the experience and knowledge which the student brings to the class".

The role ascribed to the teacher of adults is also not made explicit in Draper's principles but is discussed at some length in the literature. The teacher of adults should be accepting, genuine, empathetic toward others, respectful, understanding of the adult learner's situation, and knowledgeable of the content being taught (Draves, 1984; Brundage & Mackeracher, 1980).

Whole Language

The "learner-centred" approach to teaching as mentioned in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> is discussed in this thesis in terms of the whole language philosophy of which it is indicative.

Beginning reading instruction, whether in the adult or child, cannot be treated as a philosophical debate of whole language versus skills instruction. Rather, the important point is that instruction begins with the learner's language and relates new words to what is already known. The whole language approach, simply stated, is that reading will occur as the learner is exposed to print in meaningful situations. (Collins & Cheek, 1989)

The whole language philosophy integrates oral and written language, and it integrates development in both, with learning across the curriculum. (Goodman,

1986) Whole language approaches do not require special instructional materials.
They instead rely on a range of reading materials in the language of the learner.
Goodman (1986) refers to immersion programs in second-language learning where
learners are involved in "real speech" and "literacy events" to support this use of
"meaningful wholes first".

More important to adult literacy programs is that whole language encourages
that curriculum be organized through shared planning between teachers and learners
around "real problem-solving, real ideas, and real relevant issues" (Goodman, 1986
p.43). Further Goodman says:

> Literacy development is a matter of getting the processes together:
> learning, in the context of reading and writing real language, to use just
> enough print, language structure, and meaning, and to keep it all in the
> proper personal and cultural perspective (p.43).

As noted earlier the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> (1990), which is the reference
point of this study, does not identify principles of "whole language". Rather a whole
language approach is implicit in the references to self-direction, language experience,
and seeking meaning in reading.   The term actually used in the <u>Handbook for
Teachers</u> is "a learner-centered approach". This term is found in the adult literacy
literature as frequently as "whole language". It appears that the terms are used to
refer to essentially the same process. It might be speculated that "learner-centered"
serves as a further distinction between andragogy and pedagogy since "whole
language" gained prominence initially as a child-focused concept.

The Complete Theory-to-Practice Handbook of Adult Literacy (Strickland, D.S. & Genishi, C. (Eds.) 1990) does use the term "whole language" in advocating a whole language framework for adult literacy instruction. "The phrase 'whole language' summarizes the basic principle that language is the medium for the learning and teaching of all content and is meaningful only when it is **whole**" (p.10). Whole Language is this framework is not using bits and pieces but rather, "Whole words, whole sentences, whole paragraphs, and whole texts ...." (p. 10). All language areas are seen as interrelated and interdependent. The idea is that the interaction among the learner, the content, and the context will be maximized.

Strickland & Genishi (Eds.) (1990) go on to note that learners and teachers are engaged in collaborative efforts and that language is the vehicle of expression for learners' needs and interests. The learning tools - reading, writing, listening and speaking - are basic to all lessons in all subjects.

Goodman (1986) has devised a list of fifteen principles for teaching and learning the whole language way. Strickland & Genishi (Eds.) (1990), with an extensive survey of the literature, provide eight "guiding principles" for a whole language framework for literacy instruction. The following discussion will consider the "learner-centered approach" of the Handbook for Teachers against the background of these two sets of principles.

The Handbook for Teachers begins its discussion of a "learner-centered approach" with a note on the difficulty of following through on a promise that the

program will center on the learner's needs and interests. "Students and teachers will need to understand the difference between 'learner-centered' and a 'do whatever you like, and nothing if you please' approach" (p.15). The handbook goes on to explain that there are objectives to be met, depending on the learner's intentions (i.e. wanting to pursue school completion or meeting a particular need like taking a driving test), but that there is no "prescribed" way of meeting these objectives. The teachers and learners have ".... the latitude to make the program learner-centered".

The program attempts to meet learners' needs by tapping into their personal objectives. This is in keeping with the first of Goodman's principles which says that literacy programs should build on existing learning using learners' motivations, insuring that the language is relevant and functional, and with the sixth of Goodman's principles which says that "Literacy develops in response to personal/social needs". These principles, of course, are re-inforced by the use of "language experience" activities, advocated in the Handbook for Teachers, which draw heavily on the learners' past experiences and learning.

The philosophy behind these principles is well established in the literature and precedes the use of the terms "language experience" or "whole language". Freire (1975), Berthoff (1990), Gaber-Katz & Watson (1989), Norman & Malicky (1986), Goudreau (1986), and Goudreau (1987), all recognized the need to build on existing learning.

In literacy building on existing learning, using "functional, real and relevant" language, has its roots in community development activities. Freire (1974, 1975) saw it as a need to awaken a "critical social consciousness" among the poor and disenfranchised so that they are able to intervene in their own reality and not remain mere onlookers. He talks of education as "cultural action for freedom". Freire taught people to read and write by taking words that had important meaning to them and associating these words with things that were happening to them in their lives. He used dialogue and participation as tools to increase knowledge, linking it to expression through language. People learned to understand what was going on around them and to recognize how they could intervene and make their lives more tolerable. Fundamental to this belief is the idea that learning takes place as a naturally evolving process. People build on what they know using their experience and learn, during this process, how to learn the things they consider important to them.

Freire's view is supported in this belief at least, from educational theorist John Dewey who accepted that education cannot be separated from life experiences, "Education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and goal of education are one and the same thing" (Dewey, 1938 quoted in Miller & Sellar, 1985 p. 73).

Closer to home, the late Florence McNeil, Newfoundland's foremost adult educator and Canada's first doctorate in Adult Education, used the same philosophy when teaching basic literacy skills to adults on the Port au Port peninsula in the

1940s. She was hired to teach children; this was her day job. In the evenings she taught their parents to read, using the tools of the fisherman to provide meaning to what they were learning (Halsom, 1990).

Though neither Freire, Dewey, nor McNeil would have used the terms "whole language" or "language experience", they would recognize and applaud the philosophy behind them.

Language is considered the natural vehicle for social exchange. Programs based on a whole language framework first encourage learners to talk about what they already know about a topic. Learners recognize that they know quite a lot and they learn more from listening to one another. Questions are raised and hypotheses are put forward about the topic. Reading is done to add information or to reconstruct meaning. Writing helps the learners to organize and interpret the information gained, to provide new meanings, and to apply these to their own lives (Strickland & Genishi (Eds.) 1990; Goudreau, 1986). Thus, the programs provide real and relevant learning situations.

Goodman's second principle, that literacy develops from "whole to part", ".....from highly concrete and contextualized to more abstract, from familiar contexts to unfamiliar", follows naturally from the first. The content must be authentic language, "everyday, useful, relevant functional language", which gradually will "move through a full range of written language - in all its variety" as the learner gains competence and experiences success (Goodman, 1986).

The <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> as noted earlier, advocates a language experience approach to learning to read. This approach requires using the learner's "everyday, useful, relevant functional language". The learner is asked to dictate short statements that relate to experiences or circumstances in her own life. Some prompting may be done by a teacher to help get started. Learner statements are then recorded by the teacher, usually on tape. The recording is played back to the learner for approval. The statements are then typed. So that the connection remains strong with the learner's spoken language, the syntax of the printed version is preserved exactly as it was spoken (Jones, 1986).

Goodman's third, fourth and fifth principles,

- Expression (writing) and comprehension (reading) strategies are built during functional, meaningful, relevant language use.
- Development of the ability to control the form of reading and writing follows, and is motivated by, the development of the functions for reading and writing.
- There is no hierarchy of sub-skills, and no necessary universal sequence"; are inherent in language experience use (p. 39).

Goodman's principles, seven through eleven, focus on the role of the teacher. The teacher "motivates, arranges the environment, monitors development..." (p.40). The learners are concerned with "what they are using reading and writing for" while the teachers "focus on development and use". Risk-taking and motivation must come from the learners. The teacher's role is encouragement and support.

The guidance in the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u> is in keeping with these principles. Climate setting, including the physical set-up of the classroom, is

arranged in a way that makes "the promise of a mutually respectful and supportive relationship between student and teacher, as well as among students, achievable" (Handbook for Teachers, p. 14).

Goodman's remaining four principles, twelve to fifteen, deal with the materials used in whole language settings. The focus is on "whole texts that are meaningful and relevant". Exercises that would require practice of language segments in isolation from a whole text are unacceptable, as are materials that "divert the attention of writers from expression and readers from comprehension" (p. 40).

The Handbook for Teachers is not as specific about the exclusive use of "whole" texts as is Goodman, though the tone of the handbook certainly provides encouragement for the use of whole text materials and discourages the use of "drill" exercises. Specific sample lesson plans and reference materials that are in keeping with whole language philosophy are found in the Program Guide. The handbook states that "It should be established from the outset that there are no required textbooks and that the learning objectives of the program can be accomplished through using a wide variety of print and non-print material" (p. 14). However the handbook does not state as Goodman does, that any deviation from "whole" texts is unacceptable. The Complete Theory to Practice Handbook for Adult Literacy (Strickland & Genishi (Eds.) 1990), mentioned earlier, sets out eight guiding principles. Whole language for the authors of this handbook "encompasses fundamental beliefs about learners, teachers, learning and teaching". This purpose is

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not unlike Goodman's except that the language used to express the principles is less specific. They resemble adult education/learning principles:

1. Education empowers people. It gives people the means to make rational decisions for themselves about their lives and their educational endeavour.

2. Learners are whole people whose wholeness must be consciously recognized. Their educational backgrounds, their personal experiences, their work situations, and particularly their language and cultural backgrounds must be respected.

3. Success is imperative from the beginning. Experiencing immediate success helps adults view themselves as learners and creates positive self-concepts.

4. Adults are responsible for their own learning. Strategies that foster self-determination are essential.

5. The teacher serves as a facilitator who plans and guides instruction. The learner is viewed as an equal, working with the teacher toward shared goals. Often teacher and learners are learning together.

6. Teachers must model and provide guided practice with specific strategies in all content areas. Teachers must be carefully selected for their understanding of adult learners, for their familiarity with teaching and learning strategies, and for their knowledge of specific content.

7. The environment has a strong influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Both the physical and the psychological climate are important.

8. Learners and teachers need to be aware of progress. Assessment is an ongoing process with both instructor and student involved. The celebration of successes is the focus of evaluation (pp. 13-14).

Again, the <u>Handbook for Teachers</u>, while not naming the philosophy of whole language, is concerned that the learner use their own experience and interests when

learning to read and write. It emphasizes that the teacher must ensure that the environment is conducive to learning; that the teacher must serve to help plan and guide the instruction; and that essentially learners are responsible for their own learning.

Because the Level I program Contains content needed by learners who seek to prepare to move to Level II and so on to a more traditional style of teaching and learning, evaluation may be more formalized than if the learner's objectives are more personal or social. Testing of skills is still through reading and writing assessments and on-going evaluation charts. In this, as well, it does not differ from the application of whole language evaluation for promotion purposes.

Linkages – Adult Education/Learning with Whole Language

The adult education/learning principles outlined earlier in the chapter and the whole language principles discussed above have much in common even at a cursory glance. The Handbook for Teachers, in fact, treats its presentation of adult education/learning principles as a framework for the presentation of its "learner-centered approach". The idea works. The philosophies are compatible. Drawing on the learner's background knowledge, and using everyday meaningful reading and writing situations to encourage learning, are but two principles which are present in both philosophies. There is further overlap in how learning is viewed, that is, moving from the concrete or from what is known, to the more abstract or to what is

yet unknown. As well, in both sets of principles there is the emphasis on independent learning so as to foster learners' responsibility for their own learning. The role of the teacher is similar in both philosophies, i.e. as a facilitator who plans and guides instruction. Both also recognize the need to respect and foster the learners' abilities, encouraging and validating a positive self-concept. In other words, whole language principles may be seen as relatively synonymous with adult education/learning principles though they are focused on language learning. Throughout the remainder of this thesis the philosophies of adult education/learning and whole language will be considered to be representative of one philosophical approach to teaching adults.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to describe how adult education/learning and whole language theory is reflected on by teachers in their teaching practice. The literature review was undertaken to identify and discuss principles associated with an adult education/learning and whole language philosophy in relation to those in the Handbook for Teachers, which provides guidance to teachers in the ABE Level I program.

The literature on adult education/learning and whole language principles is extensive. There is consensus, however, on core principles which identify an adult education/learning orientation to teaching. These include that learners are inclined to favour directing their own learning experience; that they draw on their own

experience and build on past learning; that the learner is equal with the teacher in the sense that both are learners; and that the materials of the learning environment must be relevant and useful to the learner. These principles, expressed with a somewhat different emphasis, are also descriptive of a whole language orientation to teaching.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Qualitative methods for collection and analysis of data were used because of the descriptive nature of this study.

As a distinctive research methodology, qualitative survey research owes much of its development to anthropology and sociology though it has gained acceptance in educational research as demonstrated by its widespread use. Borg and Gall (1989) note that a content analysis of educational research appearing in 40 journals in 1964 provided evidence that a third of them involved use of the qualitative method (p. 416). The survey defined by Marsh (1982) as "an inquiry which involves the collection of systematic data across a sample of cases" (p. 9) was admirably suited to the purpose of this study.

Information collected using this methodology can be of various types. It involves considerably more than merely administering a questionnaire to describe a phenomenon.

In this study the interview was selected as the main research tool because unlike a questionnaire, which gives no immediate feedback, the interview allows for follow-up questions, thus permitting the researcher to collect data that contains greater clarity. Borg & Gall (1989) note that the interview usually allows for much more depth than other methods of collecting research data (p. 447). They also point out that the questionnaire is often criticized as shallow, not probing deeply enough to provide a true picture of opinions and feelings; but a "skilled interviewer, through the

careful motivation of the subject and maintenance of rapport, can obtain information that the subject would probably not reveal under any other circumstances" (p.447).

The assumption that "observer reports" give accurate accounts of what happens in the classroom lends support to the technique of "observation".

Since this study was concerned with how teachers reflect on their teaching, the interview was selected as the primary research tool with observation as the secondary tool.

This chapter describes the selection of subjects, the instruments used, the data collection procedure, the pilot study, and the coding and analysis of data.

Selection of Subjects

Ten Level I teachers working within the public regional college system in St. John's, Newfoundland were selected for the study on the basis of availability and willingness to participate. At the time of the study there were eight full-time Level I teachers in daytime literacy programs and nine part-time teachers in part-time evening Level I literacy programs. Five of the teachers who participated in the study were working full-time in daytime literacy programs. Of those five, one teacher was working with physically handicapped adults in a Community Learning Centre attached to a college campus. The other five teachers were working in the part-time evening program. One of these five part-time teachers had recently transferred to a Level I outreach program from a full-time daytime Level I program.

Instruments

    Contact Summary Sheet

        This recording sheet (Appendix 2), from Brimacombe (1991), was used by the researcher to focus observation on descriptions of the physical characteristics of the classroom, lesson/activities observed, nature of classroom interaction, and to take key statements about written language made by learners and teachers. It included a section for follow-up questions that might need to be asked in teacher interviews.

    Teacher Interview Schedule

        The Teacher Interview Schedule (see p.) was adapted by the researcher from Brimacombe (1991), to assist in ensuring that similar areas o: adult education/learning and whole language were discussed by all teachers. The questions were deliberately devised to be open-ended in order to reduce the influence of the questions on teachers' responses.

Data Collection Procedure

        Data were collected from teachers during the months of June, September and October, 1992. Data collection began with the classroom observation period by the researcher followed by the interview with the teacher. Because of scheduling difficulties this order was changed with Teacher #9, where the observation occurred after the interview. In this case, questions that arose out of the observation, that had

not been dealt with in the interview, were handled immediately after the observation period.

Observation

The researcher observed one class time of each teacher in order (1) to become familiar with the classroom atmosphere, interactions between learners and teachers, and among learners, and with the materials used; (2) to meet and develop rapport with the teacher; (3) to take note of any statements or activities for the follow-up interview; and (4) to increase the probability of extracting reliable data. It has been noted by researchers that higher levels of agreement between teachers and observers occur when observation takes place before teachers report about their practices (Burns & Koziol 1984; Hardebeck, Askbaugh, & McIntrye 1974, cited in Burns & Koziol 1984; Newfield 1980, cited in Burns & Koziol 1984; all cited in Brimacombe 1991 p. 48).

Teacher Interview

The teacher interviews which formed the core of the data collection were private, tape-recorded sessions. They took approximately one to one and a half hours to complete. They consisted of two parts.

In the first part the researcher asked for general information about the teachers' professional background, specifically their years of teaching experience, grade levels taught, whether they came to this position with adult education

experience, and the general nature of professional development they had completed in the area of adult education/learning and whole language. In addition to acquiring this necessary information this part of the interview also allowed the teachers to ease into the interview process by beginning with a comfortable subject - themselves.

This part of the interview also focused on open-ended questioning designed to draw out in the teachers' own "language" how they defined adult education/learning and whole language principles. Originally used by anthropologists to learn about the belief systems of other cultures, this "eliciting heuristic technique" (Black, 1969; Black & Metzger, 1969, Kay & Metzger, 1973; Metzger, 1973; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Richardson-Koehler & Hamilton, 1988; all cited in Brimacombe, 1991 p. 48-49) required the interviewer to then use closed questions to determine the validity of her understanding of the information gathered. It was most important that the interviewer be aware that the interviewee determined the "language" in describing concepts of adult education/learning and whole language. The interviewer's understanding of these concepts was not to be permitted to impose on the descriptions offered by the interviewees. The interviewer was to be "trained by the informant to believe to behave linguistically or verbally in ways which the informant considers appropriate" (Black & Metzger 1969, p. 142 cited in Brimacombe 1991 p. 49) and should "avoid a priori assumptions as to what are the relevant questions" (Black & Metzger 1969, p. 158 cited in Brimacombe 1991 p. 49).

With this concept in mind, the second part of the interview required that the interviewer ask questions which elicited responses that demonstrated how teachers made operational (reflected on their teaching) the concepts of adult education/learning and whole language as they described them. Here, teachers were encouraged to discuss how they teach reading and writing on a day-to-day basis. They were asked: what fostered learning? what materials did they use? how and why did they use them? In addition they were asked about their interactions with learners as these interactions pertain to reading and writing.

Pilot Study

Prior to the main study a pilot study was conducted in order to field-test the interview procedures and to determine the potential of teachers to understand and respond to questions in the Teacher Interview Schedule. The teacher used in the pilot study was a Level I teacher assigned to the Literacy Office of the College. The teacher had no difficulty understanding the questions posed. In some cases word changes were made to clarify questions. No questions were added or deleted.

Coding and Analysis of Data

The procedures for coding and analyzing the data again followed a design similar to that used by Brimacombe (1991). Teacher audiotapes were assigned a number from one to ten to provide a measure of anonymity to those teachers

participating in the study. This number will be used throughout the thesis to distinguish one teacher from another.

Audiotapes of the ten teachers' interviews were reviewed to gain an initial understanding of their contents. The tapes were then played again and coded as to the type of information they contained (i.e. which question(s) did this statement(s) address?) The tape of one interview was given to a second person, knowledgeable in the area, to examine and recode. Coding of information between the researcher and the second person reached 80 per cent agreement. The researcher and second person discussed the discrepancies or issues that arose and reached agreement. The tapes were then reviewed again and adjustments made based on this agreement. After coding and reviewing each teachers's interview data, categories of responses to questions emerged. These categories were recorded on individual checklist matrices pertaining to the various aspects of adult education/learning and whole language. This type of analysis allowed the researcher to look at similarities and differences among teachers as well as at the degree of consistency between teacher practice and adult education/learning and whole language philosophy as reported in the literature.

Summary

Ten teachers working full-time or part-time in Level I at a regional college campus were selected on the basis of availability and willingness to participate. Data were collected in the main through teacher interviews. Prior to the interviews, the

researcher observed one teacher-selected class "time" in each classroom. Teacher interviews used open-ended questions to elicit each teacher's theoretical understanding of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy and to gauge how this understanding emerged in their teaching practices.

Teacher interview data were coded, categorized, and tabulated. The tables enabled data collected to be compared and contrasted.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The results of the analysis and interpretation of the data collected are summarized and discussed in this chapter.

The classroom observations were useful in helping the researcher obtain a general understanding of how teachers conducted their classes, how they interacted with learners and how learners interacted among themselves. The observations also provided the opportunity of viewing the teaching materials in use. However, the findings of this one observation period did not yield data that could usefully be analyzed as part of the study. For example, it was observed that the atmosphere was very relaxed and informal in all classes. In the evening program, the teacher sat at a specific table with one to six learners, while in the day program the teacher moved among three to six tables with from two to four learners per table. Teachers and learners addressed one another by first names. Prior to class both teachers and learners engaged in "small talk", related to the weather or shopping. Sessions varied from a discussion of the circulatory system in a science class to reading an newspaper article on AIDS. Use of the integrated units (i.e. using consumer education materials, readings in government and law) as outlined in the Program Guide, was evident. Discussion was the usual opening to most sessions with the teacher introducing a topic and asking learners what they knew about it. The session then proceeded with the introduction of reading materials, brainstorming and flip-charting ideas, leading to writing activities or to further discussion. Sessions were always teacher led. The

observation periods served the purpose as well of helping the researcher to develop a rapport with the teacher before the interview and provided the opportunity to note anything of interest that might be useful in the follow-up interview.

The interview data are presented in two parts. Part I addresses, as well as the more detailed descriptive background information on teachers, the findings of the research question of teachers awareness of theoretical principles of adult education/learning and whole language, and of which principles they are most aware. How a teacher reflects on his/her teaching, how he/she translates an awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy to teaching practice, is summarized and discussed in Part II. Part II also addresses the central research question : to what extent are teaching behaviours/activities consistent among teachers; and to what extent are they congruent with adult education/learning and whole language philosophy. The **Teacher Interview Schedule** used to collect the data follows to provide an overview of the questions asked.

For clarity, the **findings** for each question are presented in tabular form, followed by a summary which provides examples, and assistance in interpreting the findings.

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Background Information

Tell me about the following:

- Your teacher education

- Any reading/language arts courses taken at university

- Your teaching career (years and grade levels taught, location; include years teaching
adult literacy)

- Your history of interest and involvement in adult education/learning

- The most influential factors on your development as an adult educator

- Your history of interest and involvement in whole language

- Is there one book, article, or event that has had a significant influence on you as an
adult educator; as a whole language instructor?

Introduction to the Remainder of the Interview

Part I

     The new Adult Basic Education program has been in use for a year now. I
want to gain an understanding of how you incorporate into your teaching principles of
adult education/learning and whole language as outlines in this new program.

     What I want to get you to do is to talk about what adult education/learning and
whole language mean to you. How you teach reading and language arts in your
classes/groups; and what kind of things guide you in your teaching?

I don't want to influence you with specific questions so I would like to start with you telling me as much as you can about: first, adult education/learning; and second, whole language.

When you have said all you can off the top of your head, I will prompt you with further questions. Whenever you are ready please begin to tell me about first, adult education/learning. How about whole language.

Part II

1. I have a copy here of the <u>Level I Program Guide</u>. Would you select some topic and tell me how you would go about teaching it?

2. Tell me about the focus of your reading/writing program.

3. When you think of whole language what does the word "whole" mean to you?

4. When you think of adult education/learning what does the word "adult" mean to you?

5. What does the term "process" mean to you with respect to adult education/learning? With respect to whole language? (Do you also relate "process" to reading? to writing?)

6. How are learning goals set?

7. What is the overall goal of the reading component of your program?

8. What is the overall goal of the writing component of your program?

9. How does whole language relate to phonics, literature, other aspects of the curriculum?

10. How is evaluation usually handled in your program?

11. What materials form the basis of the reading component of you program?

12. When reading and a learner stumbles or doesn't know a word, what do you do?

13. What is the relationship between word recognition and comprehension?

14. What is the relationship between active involvement in reading and tasks assigned after the reading task such as answering questions?

15. What is the most important aspect of the reading component of your program?

16. How are reading topics chosen?

17. What materials form the basis of the writing component of your program?

18. Tell me about the sequence of the writing act in terms of how it is brought to its completion.

19. How does whole language relate to spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting?

20. What is the most important aspect of the writing component of your programme?

21. How are writing topics chosen?

22. How does your reading/language arts program differ from a child centred program?

23. Is there anything else that I haven't mentioned that you would like to say about your program?

Findings

Background Information

The Teachers

Following is the more descriptive profile of each teacher. Each profile provides a detailed view of educational and professional background, information about the teacher's education, years and type of teaching experience, and history and involvement in adult education/learning, and whole language.

Teacher #1

Teacher #1 has a B.A. (U. of A.) in Political Science, a major in International Relations, and a B.A. (M.U.N) in English. She has completed a number of courses from Memorial University in Special Education because of her work with physically and mentally handicapped learners.

She came to Newfoundland originally for a summer job with Frontier College She worked in a fish plant in Gaultois during the day and taught literacy at night. She noted that this job with Frontier College was a turning point in her life and eventually led to her moving to Newfoundland. Beyond teaching Grade 3 in Saskatchewan, all of her teaching experience has been in Newfoundland with adults. She started teaching in adult education on a part-time basis in 1981 and has, since then, been employed on both a part-time and full-time basis.

The extent of her preparation in adult education /learning theory has been in St. John's through ABE in-service workshops which were directly related to teaching literacy and included working with learners who experienced learning disabilities. She credits Susan Hoddinott, Literacy Coordinator at Cabot College, with having had the greatest influence on her teaching practice. Susan, she says, was the first to teach her that it was "okay" to change the learning materials available for teaching. Susan encouraged her to re-write materials that were too difficult for learners or that had too much American content. She also noted that Susan is responsible for making sure that relevant up-to-date materials are available in the Literacy Office.

Teacher 2

Teacher #2 holds B.A.(English) and B.Ed. degrees from Memorial University. Because she did the high school program she was not required to do any specific reading or language arts courses. She taught high school for 2 1/2 years on the Coast of Labrador and for a short period in Gander as a replacement teacher. She worked in Africa as a volunteer teacher and developed an interest in English as a Second Language (ESL) because of the learners she encountered who spoke tribal languages. On her return to St. John's she obtained a part-time position as an ESL teacher in adult education. Because of her literacy work in ESL she was also able to find part-time work in ABE Level I. Since the mid-eighties she has worked part-time at night as well as in some day full-time replacement positions in both ESL and ABE Level I.

This teacher noted that her interest in adult education/learning stemmed from a recognition that there was a significant difference between teaching adults and adolescents. She said there was more allowance for learners' differing learning styles in the adult system and a greater emphasis on concern for the development of the person, apart from school work completion. Her experience in ESL instruction grounded her in whole language use. "Everything is contextually based"; storytelling and theatre are used to relate to the whole person's experience. She acknowledged that ABE Level I workshops had some influence on her practice. However, she attributes her adult education/learning and whole language approach to teaching to the influence of Eileen Bragg, a fellow teacher and ESL Coordinator, who worked alongside her in ESL classes.

Teacher #3

This teacher has a B.Ed. (M.U.N.) degree in the primary area. She completed language arts and reading courses as part of her degree program. She learned phonics at M.U.N.; "At the time I went teaching phonics was half of the reading program". She worked for seven years as a Grade 2 teacher and then substituted in Grades 1, 2, and 3 for a number of years at various schools in St. John's. She then taught ages 5-9 at the M.U.N. Pre-school and Activity Centre before going to California for a year. While in California she was Acting Director of a pre-school. She said that she was looking for a change and actually tried to find

work in adult education while in California. When she returned to St. John's she volunteered with the Teachers-on-Wheels program. She started to work with Cabot College in 1990 part-time evenings, teaching ABE Level I. The influences on her teaching practice are the new curriculum, other teachers, and workshops. She enjoys the working atmosphere and the "very professional staff" with whom she works. She gives full credit to Susan Hoddinott for "pulling it all together". She made particular mention of how valuable the new books on banking, history and consumer affairs, recently put out by the Literacy Office, are to her teaching.

Teacher #4

This teacher has a B.A. in Sociology, a B.Ed. high school emphasis, and an M.Ed., all from Memorial University. No language arts nor reading courses were required as part of her degree programs. She taught music in Mount Pearl to grades K to 8 for seven years. She then retired from teaching for some years. She returned to university to do an M.Ed. so that she could work with learning resource materials and teach adults. She obtained a replacement position with Cabot College in a Job Readiness Training course (JRT). This course runs for twenty weeks; the client group are "disadvantaged" adults who require a combination of academic refresher, life skills, and job search skills. Since 1989-90 she has continued her employment at the College on an irregular basis as a replacement teacher. She has worked in ABE Levels II and III in the College's program at the Provincial Penitentiary and at the

time of this interview was entering her fifth month in a Level I program at the Parade Street campus.

She noted that she was not particulary interested in teaching Level I, preferring Levels II and III. She left the regular school system because she "wanted to teach people who wanted to be there". She said that she felt adults were more motivated. She was not familiar with the concept of whole language. She did not feel that she could point to any particular influences in her teaching except the guidance she received from the Program Guide. She also noted that she tried to respond to the needs of her students which set a direction for much of her teaching.

Teacher #5

A primary teacher in Hermitage for eight years, teacher #5 holds a B.A.(Ed.) degree from Memorial University. A major in psychology, she had a special interest in reading and did many courses in reading and language arts. During her teaching career in Hermitage she developed reading materials which were used throughout the primary area.

She said she didn't know that adult education existed until she moved to St. John's and couldn't find work in the regular school system. A friend suggested she apply to teach adults. She did some research in the area and decided to apply. She was successful and in 1985 started work as a teacher in Work Orientation programs. These programs were designed to help people return to the work force after an

absence of several years. At this interview she had been working full-time in a Level I program for two years.

She noted that in-service workshops, information sharing among teachers, and classroom experience provided the greatest influences on her teaching practice. She was not sure of the concept of whole language but noted that the learners' language provides the basis for learning.

Teacher # 6

This teacher holds B.A. and B.Ed. degrees from Memorial University with a major in French. As part of her education degree she took several reading and language arts courses. She has been teaching evening classes in ABE since graduating in 1986. She substituted in the regular school system 1986-88 teaching French in grades K to 9. She has taught the bridging class: Level I to Level II. This class is short term, usually about six weeks, and is designed to help fill in gaps in knowledge for those people moving to Level II from Level I. It is not required but is offered to learners who might need some extra help making the transition from the more informal Level I class to the more structured Level II class. At the time of this interview she was teaching Level I classes at night.

When asked about influences on her teaching practice she credits the in-service workshops as most important. She noted that working evenings does not allow for the kind of access to resources that day-time teachers take for granted. She finds her years of experience in conjunction with discussion with other teachers are helpful

when she encounters problems in the classroom. She noted that Level II, though individualized, operates more like the regular school system. Level I has a much more informal atmosphere where the self-esteem of the learners is most important.

Teacher #7

This teacher has completed Arts and Education degrees - B.A. with an English major and B.Ed. in the High School program, both from Memorial University. She also holds a Certificate in ESL from Carleton University where she is currently, during the summers and by correspondence courses, working on an M.Ed. with an adult literacy and ESL emphasis. She said she "lucked into" a job with ESL while she was still completing her Education degree. She has, since 1980, been working evenings with ESL and Level I programs. Her day-time position is with a School Board where she works with teachers who have new immigrants in their classes; in some cases she works with the children themselves in ESL programming. She has been working in the regular school system for three years. She has completed a number of reading and language arts courses as part of her Master's work.

She enjoys her work with adults where she is "not restricted to a text" and can respond to learners' needs. She noted that it is rare to repeat a lesson. She also enjoys making up materials for use in classes commenting, "You learn a lot - it's exciting". She recognized the term whole language, noting that at Carleton they refer to it as the "natural approach", which may be more of an ESL concept. University

work has provided the greatest influence on teaching practice, along with exchanges and interactions with other teachers.

Teacher #8

This teacher works mostly in Levels II and III but has been working with Level I learners in the bridging program to Level II. She holds a B.A. in English and a B.Ed. from Memorial University - completing some courses in reading and language arts as required by the program. She has worked exclusively in the adult system except for a brief stint at the Virginia Waters School for handicapped children. For the past thirteen years she has worked mainly in the evenings but has also accepted full-time short-term replacement positions. She has returned to Memorial on several occasions to complete several courses offered in adult education.

She was familiar with the concept of whole language, noting that the entire Level I program is based on a whole language premise. She enjoys working with adults because of their determination in going back to school with all the family and job responsibilities that they have. She said that though the bridge program is more structured than the regular Level I classes, she still tries to make it relevant to the learners. She said that the greatest influence on her teaching practice is "...my interest in wanting to help".

<u>Teacher #9</u>

Teacher #9 went back to university "late in life" to complete a B.Ed. from Memorial. She feels that in some ways the degree is more valuable, having had so much experience and therefore knowing what she needed to learn. She did a number of reading and language arts courses as part of the requirements for her degree. She also did several adult education courses because she wanted to teach in adult education. She taught ESL first in the evening program and later as a full-time replacement teacher. From ESL literacy she moved to the Level I program, again as a full-time replacement teacher.

The greatest influence on her teaching practice, she feels, was the first adult education course she completed. "All these things that I had a gut feeling about worked; for example, the general idea of showing respect for students in class." She also credits a course in learning theories as an important influence because "...it emphasized perception of learning".

<u>Teacher #10</u>

This teacher has completed a B.A. with a major in Psychology; a B.Ed. with a major in English; a B.Spec. Ed.; an M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction in the area of language arts and reading; and a Certificate in Criminology with another in Bliss Symbolics which is an augmentative type of language system used with people who have little or no speech. All of his academic work has been completed at Memorial

University. He has not completed any courses in adult education nor has any of his academic work had an adult emphasis. He started his teaching career in 1975 with the Waterford Hospital education program where he worked in life skills/social programs with mentally handicapped adults as well as in the then-academic Basic Training for Skills Development (BTSD) program. He later moved to teaching Levels I, II and III at a city campus of the college, as well as teaching Level I in a college sponsored community outreach program two evenings a week. At the time of this interview he was teaching full-time in Levels II and III and evenings in Level I.

He said that at the time of employment in 1975 he had no particular interest in teaching adults. He was familiar with Waterford Hospital, having worked there in the summers as an untrained nursing assistant. He chose that teaching position over others he was offered because he was interested in doing something that was different. He notes that Level I learners come with more needs than Level II and III learners. He suggested that generally Level I learners have failed in the regular school system "...and often the reasons are evident". He said, "I had an interest in working with people that I figured did need that extra little bit of something. I felt I could give it."

For him, the significant influence on his teaching practice is his seeing people reach goals that are important to them, and their attesting to the value of the type of teaching that he does. He is very familiar with the concept of whole language, noting that "Things like spelling shouldn't be taught in isolation". He agrees that Level I should have a whole language focus.

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Summary Table - Teacher Background Information
Table 1

Teacher	Education	Teaching Experience	Familiar with Adult Ed/L.	Familiar with Whole Lang
1	B.A. (Pol.Sci); B.A. (English); Course work in Spec. Ed.	Approx. 12 years - all but 1 year in adult system (evenings and full time days)	Through Adult Basic Education(ABE) in-service workshops and Susan Hoddinott (Literacy Office)	Through ABE in-service workshops
2	B.A.; B.Ed.	Approx. 9 years - all but 2 1/2 years in adult system	Influence of Eileen Bragg one time English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator	Experience in ESL
3	B.Ed.	Approx. 12 years in pre-school to Gr. 3; 2 years in adult system (evenings)	Influences - new curriculum; other teachers; workshops	Influences - new curriculum; other teachers; workshops
4	B.A.(Soc.); B.Ed.; M.Ed.	7 years K-8 music; since 1989-90 replacement positions in adult system	Influences - curriculum and responding to learners' needs	Not familiar with concept
5	B.A (Ed.)	8 years as a primary teacher; 7 years in adult system	In-service workshops; other teachers; classroom experience	Not very familiar with concept
6	B.A.; B.Ed.	7 years in adult system (evenings)	In-service workshops; other teachers	In-service workshops; other teachers
7	B.A.; B.Ed.; Certificate in ESL; currently working on M.Ed.	12 years in adult system (evenings); 3 years full time in regular school system	University; exchanges and interactions with other teachers	Familiar with it as "natural approach" ESL concept in use at Carleton University
8	B.A.; B.Ed. several courses in Adult Education	13 years evenings and replacement positions in adult system	Influence - "My interest in wanting to help".	Very familiar - entire Level I program is based on whole language premise
9	B.Ed.; several adult education courses	Approx. 3 years evenings in adult system	Influences - first adult education course and a course in learning theories	Fairly familiar with concept
10	B.A.; B.Ed.; B.Spec.Ed.; M.Ed.; Certificates in Criminology and Bliss symbolics	18 years - all in the adult system	Influences - experience; in-service workshops	Very familiar with concept; experience; in-service workshops

Six of the ten teachers involved in the study reported completion of B.A., B.Ed. degrees, with two of those six having completed M.Ed. degrees, and a third enroled in an M.Ed. program. Two teachers reported completing B.Ed. degrees and one a B.A. with a major in education. Only one teacher does not have a teacher training background, having completed two Bachelor of Arts degrees, though she has completed some education courses. Combined teaching experience ranged from 3 years to 18 years, with an average of 7.6 years teaching in the adult system, including years teaching part-time only. Seven teachers reported completing reading and language arts courses as part of their professional training. Two reported completing at least one adult education course at the university level. All teachers have participated in at least one in-service session on the Level I program, which would have included discussion of content and suggestions for teaching. All were familiar with the concept of adult education/learning. Nine of the ten teachers were familiar, to varying degrees, with the concept of whole language.

The Research Questions

Research questions: 1. Are teachers aware of theoretical principles of adult education/learning and whole language? Of which principles are they aware? and 2. To what extent, if any, are these theoretical principles of adult education/learning and whole language similar between and among teachers, and similar to those

described in the literature? are addressed in this section. As noted earlier, the results are presented in tabular form.

Findings

The tables are drawn from teachers' responses to the request, made during the introduction to the interview, "....to talk about what adult education/learning and whole language mean to you". Teachers did not always discriminate between adult education/learning and whole language but responded to the general question. Where this occurred, responses were assigned to the adult education/learning or the whole language table by the researcher on the basis of which seemed more appropriate from the comment.

The data are coded in terms of adult characteristics and adult education/learning principles, as it became evident from the data that teacher responses included characteristics of adult learners as well as principles of adult education/learning. Four characteristics of adults that teachers should recognize emerge from the Handbook for Teachers (Handbook for Teachers, ABE Level I 1990 p.11), while the seven principles of adult education/learning come from Draper's work on adult education/learning as cited in the Handbook (pp. 12-13).

The responses to the general question regarding whole language are coded in terms of Goodman's principles of whole language (Goodman, 1986). As noted in

Chapter 3, Goodman lists fifteen principles; four of these, numbers twelve to fifteen, deal with the materials used in whole language settings. They are:

> 12. Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant. From the first school experiences, they must have all the characteristics of real functional language. There is no need for special texts to teach reading or writing.

> 13. Away with exercises that chop language into bits and pieces to be practised in isolation from a whole text!

> 14. Predictability is the real measure of how hard a text is for a particular reader. The more predictable, the easier.

> 15. No materials are acceptable if they divert the attention of writers from expression and readers from comprehension. (Goodman, 1986, pp. 39-40)

In the interest of preserving brevity without losing meaning, these four principles have been combined to form one which appears in the table for coding as: Materials that are used in whole language settings are whole texts that are meaningful and relevant.

The tables are structured as follows:

Column 1 down: List of characteristics of adult education or adult education/whole language principles.

Column 2 down: Comments by teachers pertaining to the characteristic or principle.

Column 3 down: Teacher #(s) mentioning that characteristic; Total number of teachers mentioning that characteristic or principle.

Columns across: characteristic/principle; comment; teachers.

A sample portion of a table follows to illustrate:

Sample Table

Characteristic	Comment	Teacher(s)
1. Mature intellectually, socially and emotionally	"The learner is mature enough to define what he wants."	6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 5.

Adult Characteristics and Adult Education/Learning Principles

In general, all teachers reported being familiar with the concept of adult education/learning (see Table 2). However, Teacher #3 did not respond to the general question, commenting that she thought the answers would come out in her responses to the specific questions. Teacher #4 acknowledged familiarity with the concept but was not prepared to respond with a list of principles or to comment on specific characteristics. Another teacher, #5, noted that the question was "difficult to answer" but responded with a couple of comments on learner participation in decision-making and teacher/learner, saying both are responsible for assessing learner needs. Those teachers who responded to the question by listing a number of principles and characteristics did so very readily.

Adult Characteristics
Table 2

Characteristic	Comment	Teacher(s)
1. Mature intellectually, socially and emotionally	"The learner is mature enough to define what he wants".	6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 5.
2. Wealth of experience and knowledge	"You recognize that they are coming to you with all kinds of experience."	6, 7, 8, 9 10. Total: 5
3. Accustomed to responsibilities eg. home, job, community	"Adult learners are use to taking responsibility."	1, 8, 10. Total: 3
4. Up-grading only one of many demands on time	"You have to be careful to recognize that the learner has other responsibilities."	1, 8. Total: 2

Only one teacher, Teacher # 8, mentioned all four characteristics. Adult characteristics #s 1 and 2 were mentioned by half of the ten teachers. As noted earlier Teachers #s 3 and 4 did not respond to the question directly. Teacher # 5 made two comments that were more appropriate to Adult education/learning principles.

Overall, half of the teachers mentioned half of the characteristics.

Adult Education/Learning Principles
Table 3

Principle	Comment	Teacher (s)
1. Learner is increasingly self-directed and independent.	"It's a different way of teaching - more concerned with responding to the learner rather than directing."	2, 9, Total: 2
2. Motivation is through internal incentives and curiosity.	"Adults are more motivated - they want to be here."	7, 8 Total: 2
3. An informal learning climate which is mutually respectful, consensual, collaborative, and supportive.	"Level I is more informal, friendly; more person to person than learner to teacher."	1, 6 Total: 2
4. Teachers and learners participate in planning and decision-making.	"I think the whole idea of meeting the students where they are and teaching them things that they present to you as being deficiencies in their life, that's a very strong adult education principle."	1, 2, 5, 8, 10 Total: 5
5. There is mutual assessment and diagnosis of needs.	"Adults take more responsibility for what they need to learn."	5, 8, 10 Total: 3
6. Learning activities are more independent - inquiry projects, experimental techniques.	"Interesting to work with adults you're not restricted to a text - making up materials with learners you learn a lot".	7 Total: 1
7. Evaluation is by self-assessment.	"It's pretty subjective. You ask the student how they feel - what's progress for one may not be for another."	10 Total: 1

As noted in Table 3, the highest number of principles mentioned by any one teacher was three.

Three of four teachers who responded readily with a number of characteristics and principles, #s 7, 8, and 9, are the same teachers who reported having completed at least one adult education course at the university level. Interestingly, the fourth teacher, #10, is the one who reported having completed all of his academic work without reference to adult education/learning. He is, however, also the teacher with the most teaching experience, (eighteen years), all of which was accumulated in an adult setting.

Of the seven principles listed, only one, principle # 4 - " Teachers and learners participate in planning and decision-making" - was mentioned by at least five of the ten teachers. The response, this time, could not be attributed to having taken adult education courses since three of the respondents, teachers #s 1, 2, and 5, did not take these courses. It is possible that the responses could be attributed to experience teaching adults. Three years' experience teaching adults, in the case of one teacher, was the least amount among this group of five.

Two teachers, #s 8 and 10, included the most varied number of characteristics and principles in their responses, each mentioning seven and six respectively of the eleven listed. Both of these teachers have taught almost exclusively in the adult system. Two other teachers, #s 1 and 7, each noted four of the eleven characteristics and principles. Two teachers, #s 6 and 9, each made reference to three; while

teachers #s 2 and 5 each noted two. As mentioned earlier, teachers #s 3 and 4, did not respond to the question.

Whole Language Principles

With regard to the concept of Whole Language (Table 4), two teachers reported being very familiar with it; another three were somewhat familiar with it; four had heard the term used but were unsure of its meaning; and one teacher, # 4, was not at all familiar with the term and did not attempt to make any general comments in response to the question.

Teacher #6 made reference to eleven of the twelve principles. Interestingly, she was among those teachers who said that they were "somewhat familiar" with the concept of whole language. She graduated from Memorial University in 1986 with an Elementary Education degree and was probably exposed to the concept of whole language during her course work. Coupled with her seven years of teaching adults, this exposure may have given her a firmer grounding in the practice of whole language principles than she thought. It should also be noted that under Adult characteristics she was able to refer to two of the four, and under Adult education/learning principles she mentioned only one. The two teachers, #s 7 and 10, who reported being "very familiar" with the concept of whole language, each made reference to nine of the twelve principles. Under Adult characteristics, Teacher # 7 made reference to two of the four characteristics; and under Adult education/learning principles, two of the seven principles. Teacher # 10, under Characteristics, noted

three of four; and under Education/learning principles, he mentioned three of the
seven.

Whole Language Principles
Table 4

Principle	Comment	Teacher(s)
1. Literacy programs must build on existing learning and utilize intrinsic motivations. It is an extension of whole language learning: it is functional, real, and relevant.	"Low-level readers use discussion first then from their interest, from what they relate we write a paragraph together."	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 9
2. Literacy develops from whole to part; from vague to precise; from gross to fine; from highly concrete and contextualized to more abstract; from familiar contexts to unfamiliar.	"In literacy, especially ESL (English as a Second Language) everything is contextualized then you move to the more unfamiliar."	1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10. Total: 6
3. Expression (writing) and comprehension (reading) strategies are built during functional, meaningful, relevant language use.	"They write their own language, they learn through their own language."	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 8
4. Development of ability to control the form of reading and writing follows and is motivated by, the development of the functions of reading and writing.	"Learners develop confidence in reading and understand more what they can learn from reading".	2, 3, 6. Total: 3
5. There is no hierarchy of sub-skills and no necessary universal sequence.	"We try for a total approach to language rather than breaking it into small bits."	1, 2, 3, 6, 7 Total: 5
6. Literacy develops in response to personal/social needs.	"If the reader is past beginning reading then the focus is on their goal."	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10. Total: 7
7. There is no one-to-one correspondence between teaching and learning. The teacher invites learners to participate in and plan literacy events and opportunities.	"Very flexible program, able to respond to students' needs, for example lessons on cod moratorium."	1, 2, 6, 8, 10. Total: 5
8. As teachers monitor and support the development of reading and writing strategies, learners focus on the communication of meaning.	"Have them read on an appropriate level so they understand what they read."	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 8
9. Risk-taking is essential. Developing readers must be encouraged to predict and guess as they try to make sense of print.	"I tell them they are much too intelligent to follow anyone and answer so they rise to the challenge."	9 Total: 1
10. Motivation is always intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards have no place in a whole language program.	"Adult are more motivated by things they want for themselves."	1, 6, 7, 8, 10 Total: 5
11. The most important question a teacher can ask a reader or writer is, "Does that make sense?"	"Meaning is the important thing."	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 8
12. Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant.	"Most of the work is developed - lots from Newfoundland folklore."	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Total: 9

As noted in Table 4, principles one and twelve were mentioned by all nine of the teachers who responded. As well, principles three, eight, and eleven were mentioned by eight of nine teachers. Principles four and nine received the fewest mentions with three and one occurrences respectively.

Summary Tables

The following provide summary tables of the findings which are organized as follows:

Column 1 denotes the teacher;

Column 2 - the Adult characteristics mentioned by the teacher; Column 3 - the Adult Education/learning principles mentioned by the teacher;

Column 4 - the Whole Language principles mentioned by the teacher;

Column 5 gives the total of Characteristics, Adult Education/Learning, and Whole Language principles mentioned by the teacher.

The last row provides the totals it was possible to get for each column. Table 6 provides the same information in percentages.

Comparison Summary Table - Characteristics/Principles
Table 5

Teacher	Character.	Adult Ed/L.	Whole Lang.	Total
1	3, 4	3, 4	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10,11,12	14
2	0	1, 4	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,11,12	11
3	0	0	1,3,4,5,6,8,11,12	8
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	4, 5	1, 6, 12	5
6	1, 2	3	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12	14
7	1, 2	2, 6	1,2,3,5,6,8,10,11,12	13
8	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 4, 5	1,3,7,8,10,11,12	14
9	1, 2	1	1,2,3,6,8,9,11,12	11
10	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 7	1,2,3,6,7,8,10,11,12	15
Totals Possible	4	7	12	23

Comparison Summary Table in Percentages
Table 6

Teacher	Character.	Adult Ed/L.	Whole Lang.	Total
1	50%	29%	83%	61%
2	0	29%	75%	48%
3	0	0	67%	35%
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	29%	25%	22%
6	50%	14%	92%	61%
7	50%	29%	75%	57%
8	100%	43%	58%	61%
9	50%	14%	67%	48%
10	75%	43%	75%	65%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is immediately evident from summary tables 5 and 6 is the variation in teacher awareness of theory. Of the nine teachers who responded to the question, the difference ranges from a low of 22 per cent reporting of combined characteristics and principles, to a high of 65 per cent. The other point that is equally evident is the greater awareness of whole language principles rather than adult characteristics/principles. This may very well reflect teacher training which is grounded in primary/elementary/high school where there has been some emphasis on whole language principles.

Summary Findings - Part I

The findings of Part I indicate that 80 per cent (at least 8 of the 10 teachers reporting) were able to give responses that had similarity to five theoretical principles of whole language. No adult characteristic or adult education/learning principle met this 80 per cent criterion.

The whole language principles are #'s:

1. Literacy programs must build on existing learning and utilize intrinsic motivations. It's an extension of whole language learning; it is functional, real and relevant.

3. Expression (writing) and comprehension (reading) strategies are built during functional, meaningful, and relevant language use.

8. As teachers monitor and support the development of reading and writing strategies, learners focus on the communication of meaning.

11. The most important question a teacher can ask is "Does it make sense?"

12. Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant.

Two adult characteristics, one adult education/learning principle and ten whole language principles were identified by 50 per cent (at least 5 of 10 teachers reporting) of the sample. They are:

Adult Characteristics #'s:

1. Adults are mature intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

2. Adults bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the learning experience.

Adult Education/Learning Principle #:

4. Teachers and learners participate in planning and decision-making.

Whole Language Principles #'s:

1. Literacy programs must build on existing learning and utilize intrinsic motivations. It's an extension of whole language learning: it is functional, real, and relevant.

2. Literacy develops from whole to part; from vague to precise; from gross to fine; from highly concrete and contextualized to more abstract; from familiar contexts to unfamiliar.

3. Expression (writing) and comprehension (reading) strategies are built during functional, meaningful, relevant language use.

5. There is no hierarchy of sub-skills and no necessary universal sequence.

6. Literacy develops in response to personal/social needs.

7. There is no one-to-one correspondence between teaching and learning. The teacher invites learners to participate in and plan literacy events and opportunities.

8. As teachers monitor and support the development of reading and writing strategies, learners focus on the communication of meaning.

10. Motivation is always intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards have no place in a whole language program.

11. The most important question a teacher can ask a reader or writer is, "Does that make sense?"

12. Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant.

Part II

This part summarizes and discusses the findings of the second part of the interview, addressing the research questions: 3. How does a teacher reflect on his/her teaching or translate his/her awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy to his/her teaching practice? and 4. To what extent are teaching behaviours/activities denoting teaching practice similar between and among teachers, and to adult education/learning and whole language philosophy?

The questions were designed to elicit as much information as possible from teachers about how they conducted their program. It was not intended to tie each teaching behaviour/activity to a specific principle, but rather to determine whether the behaviours/activities were in keeping with the adult education/whole language philosophy within the framework of the principles as discussed in the literature review. In general, then, the teachers' responses to questions are discussed in terms of adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles. However, in some instances some teaching behaviours/activities relate to more than one principle, and in other cases the connection to a principle is tenuous, though the intent of the behaviour/activity may be very much in keeping with the general philosophy. For example, in response to the question, "What is the overall goal of the reading component of your program?" three teachers responded, "Move to Level II". Taken by itself, this response may seem to have little relationship to adult

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education/learning and whole language principles. However, viewed in the context of the role of self-concept and self-esteem as discussed by Brundage & Mackeracher (1980), a move to Level II from Level I carries a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Where it seems more appropriate, then, the discussion following a question may make reference to the philosophy of adult education/learning and whole language as well as, or instead of, the principles of adult education/learning and whole language.

Findings

The first question invited respondents to choose a selection from the <u>Program Guide</u> and talk about how they might teach it. There was some discomfort on the part of some teachers with this approach. No pressure was exerted on teachers to respond and some chose to move directly into the more specific questions.

To account for responses where teachers showed a reluctance to respond or felt that the substance of their answer would be had been dealt with in responses to other questions, a descriptor: "Felt the question was answered elsewhere", was added to the list of teaching behaviours/activities.

Again, for clarity the information is presented in tabular form, organized as follows:

Column 1 denotes the teaching behaviour/activity mentioned;

Column 2 shows the teacher(s) noting that teaching behaviour/activity;

Column 3 provides a total number of teachers mentioning that teaching behaviour activity.

<div align="center">Question #1
Table 7</div>

Choose a Selection from the Program Guide - How would you teach it?		
Teaching/behaviour activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Choose from curriculum	1, 3, 4, 5, 10	5
Discuss the topic - start with what they know	2, 7, 8, 9	4
Write - questions learners have made up; responses to the topic; answering teacher made questions	2, 6, 9	3
Choose something learners are interested in or something they need knowledge of	6, 9	2
Practical application e.g., visit a museum; take learners to a science laboratory	2, 8	2
Consider other relationships - topic; to other material studies; to other curriculum topics; to self	2, 9	2
Pre-reading: look at pictures, title important sentences	9	1
Framework of what to look for in reading: guide and scan	9	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 3, 4, 5, 10	5

This question (see Table 7) was answered directly by only half of the teachers. As well, of the five who answered it directly, only one teacher, # 9, gave a detailed description of how she handled a specific class. The other four provided varying degrees of detail in their comments. Three teachers, #s 2, 6, and 8, selected specific

subjects and gave a general description of how they would conduct a class, while teacher # 7 was more general in her comments. Only teacher # 6 did not make reference to the <u>Program Guide</u> when talking about how topics are selected. She noted that the topic would come from the learners' interests. Though learners' interests were accounted for in responses made to other questions, in this instance only teacher # 6 and teacher # 9 referred to it. Four teachers mentioned that a discussion is the starting point for a topic. "Discuss common diseases. We start with what they already know and then fill in what's missing." Teacher # 9 noted the importance of a framework and introduced it in the lesson she described.

> I had a comprehensive worksheet made up. I asked them to what did they think was the most important sentence in a paragraph. Someone answered that it was the first sentence. Then we started reading. I told them they were not expected to remember everything but there are a few things that they might want to remember. I told them there are five or six questions that you might like to get answers for. I suggested that they might get answers from the title before we began to read the article and from the pictures. They had half the answers before they started the article. It was just a matter of filling in the rest. The framework was given - remember key words, Inuit, Nunnivut, 1999 - they could understand anything in the news.

Tell me about the focus of your reading and writing program.		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Teaching materials are developed in class rather than pre-packaged	1, 2, 3, 9, 10	5
Read fluently and understand what is read	3, 4, 6. 7. 10	5
Participation by learner at own skill level	2, 5, 6, 7, 9	5
Development of confidence and interest in reading	2, 3, 9, 10	4
Ability to express thoughts in writing	3, 4, 5	3
Based on content areas and objectives in Program Guide	2, 8	2
Increased vocabulary	1, 9	2

Five of ten teachers mentioned three teaching behaviours/activities, which refer to the importance of using materials developed in class by learners, comprehension, and participation by the learner regardless of skill level (see Table 8). A fourth teaching behaviour/activity, regarding the development of confidence and interest in reading, was mentioned by four teachers. These responses are in keeping with both adult education/learning and whole language philosophies, which advocates an integrated approach to language arts instruction within a context that is meaningful for learners.

When you think of whole language what does the word "whole" mean to you?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Achieve language development through whatever you are teaching, e.g., science	6, 10	2
Developing an understanding of language and how it is used	1	1
All of the ways you communicate - gestures, symbols, body language, listening	2	1
Whole words instead of sounds	3	1
Relating what is read or written to something that is already known	8	1
Total approach to language rather than breaking it into small segments	9	1
Whatever you are doing make it whole, realistic, and meaningful	10	1
Doesn't know concept	4	1
Felt question was answered elsewhere	5	1

As shown by the teaching behaviours/activities listed in Table 9, all ten teachers had some trouble articulating what is meant by "whole language". The seven teachers who answered the question did come close to the central concept that students need to experience language as an integrated whole. Number 6 teacher stated, "It's different from when I was in school, language objectives are not taught separately. You achieve language development through whatever you're teaching for

example, science. Hopefully something meaningful to the student". Three other teachers also made the connection with the role of language in the content areas. No one actually mentioned language being learned whole to part. However, teacher # 9 did say, "It's a total approach to language rather than breaking it into small segments".

Two teachers felt that the question had already been answered in their responses to the question on the focus of their reading and writing program. One teacher stated frankly that she was not familiar with the concept.

Question #4
Table 10

When you think of adult education/learning what does the word "adult" mean to you?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
All kinds of experience; a lot to offer	2, 4, 9, 10	4
Chronological age: over 17 and out of school one year	3, 5, 8, 9	4
Mature requiring respect	4, 5, 9, 10	4
It means autonomous; can set own objectives	2, 6	1
Adults are hungry for knowledge	1	1
Respond to learner's needs, collaborative goal setting	6	1
Need to account for what else is going on in their lives	8	1
Felt question answered elsewhere	7	1

Responses to #4 question (Table 10) touched on most of the salient points of adult education/learning philosophy. However, what was surprising was that each teacher only noted, at the most, two of seven teaching behaviours/activities. A central theme in adult education/learning is the acknowledgement that learners bring a wealth of experience to any learning situation. Yet this concept was mentioned by only four teachers as evidenced in the first row. Similarly, the concept of respect for the adult learner pervades the literature. Again, however, it is mentioned by just four teachers. Teachers 4, 9, and 10 noted both of these teaching behaviours/activities but missed the collaborative goal setting, the learner's autonomy, and the need to account for the adult's life outside of the learning environment. Teacher # 6 mentioned the learner's autonomy and collaborative goal setting but missed the adult's motivation to learn.

Question #5
Table 11

What does the term "process" mean to you with respect to adult education/learning and whole language?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Build on what is known	1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10	6
Steps to work through	4, 5, 6, 8	4
Feel good about learning; develop self-esteem	1, 3, 9	3
Learning how to learn; finding own style	2, 9	2
Natural development of writing; expressing what they want leads to development	7	1
Should be individualized	10	1

Question #5 was a difficult one for the teachers. A number of hesitated before answering and two said, "I'm not sure what you mean" (see Table 11). Six teachers related "process" to building on what is already known. "Start where they are and begin to introduce what they should know." Four teachers noted a step-by-step approach to learning to read and write. "You don't learn everything one day to the next. It's slow. It takes time." Teacher # 7 noted that writing has a natural development and that encouraging expression leads to developing skill. Three teachers related "process" to feeling good about learning. One of these three, and one other, noted its relationship to learning style and to learning how to learn.

Whole language theory sees language development as empowering: the learner, by making the decisions about when to use it and for what to use it, owns the "process". This understanding may be implicit in teachers' responses especially where the learner is the focus, as in the comments around feeling good about learning. However, the concept does not seem to be readily understood on an explicit level. No one contrasted process with product.

Question #6
Table 12

How are learning goals set?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Set by learners	2, 3, 4, 5, 10	5
Collaborative effort individualized and based on curriculum, set with teachers	6, 7, 8, 9	4
Objectives and goals come out of the curriculum	2	1
Felt question answered elsewhere	1	1

Question #6, Table 12, was split almost evenly between two teaching behaviours/ activities: set by the learners, or set with the teacher. Two teachers acknowledged that the curriculum sets goals for learners to accomplish, especially where the learners want to move on to Level II. "It [this class] is preparing learners for the next level. Objectives and goals are coming more out of the curriculum." At the same time there is recognition that learners are capable of setting their own goals. "I interview at the beginning to get a fair idea of their goals. Then I try to coordinate it with the objectives of the program. It's important to know what you can expect from them and how long you have together."

Five teachers noted that goals are set by the learners.

Whole language philosophy says that language should be kept whole and used functionally and purposefully to meet the needs of learners as set by learners. Adult education/learning refers to the learner's intrinsic motivation to learn. Teachers seem to understand the value of having learners set their own goals, while expecting that at least some of these learners will need help in making these decisions. With reference to the curriculum goals, the focus is on amassing enough credits to move on to the next level. These goals, set by the educational institution, are not in keeping with whole language philosophy. However, they are more acceptable in terms of the reality of adult education/learning where the goal is viewed more through the learner's decision to up-grade rather than through the program the learner chooses to reach her goal.

What is the overall goal of the reading component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
To be able to read independently and understand what is read	5, 8, 9	3
Move to Level II	6, 8, 10	3
As outlined in the curriculum	2	1
Overall goal is to educate	3	1
To relate to what they read	4	1
To have learners write for self-expression	2	1
To be able to write what they read in their own words	5	1
To be able to read any information handed to them - to participate in every aspect of life in Canada - do taxes, vote, take control of their lives	9	1
Enrich personal lives	10	1

Whole language theory states that comprehension of meaning is always the goal of reading. As noted in question #7, Table 13, teachers 5, 8, and 9 specifically mentioned reading for understanding in response to question #7. The others all mentioned ability in some context, i.e. three teachers noted a move to Level II as a goal of the reading program.

Two teachers, #s 2 and 10, mentioned affective goals; teacher #2 linked reading to writing expressively and teacher #10 linked it to enriched personal lives.

What is the overall goal of the writing component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Uses punctuation - mechanics of writing	3, 9	2
Write in own words; be able to write what is assumed from what they read	5, 9	2
Writing at a level where they can communicate	3	3
Able to write legibly and write simple sentences - subject, predicate	4	1
Progressing from complete sentences to paragraphs - defining the form of writing	9	1
Individual - help children with homework, basic skills for jobs	10	1
Felt that the question was answered elsewhere	1, 2, 6, 7, 8	5

Interestingly, five teachers felt that they had already answered question #8 in responses to earlier questions (see Table 14). Some aspects of writing have been mentioned but in very non-specific terms.

Three teachers linked writing to communicating - writing in simple sentences with enough of the mechanics to be understood. "To get writing at a level where they can communicate and go on. I want them to use punctuation and capitalization. The last workshop pointed out this is secondary which is fine, they should write. I like them to learn the skills." Whole language does see the mechanics of writing as secondary to the goal of expression. Only two teachers made expression distinct from

function. "[The goal is the] same as reading. They should write in their own words. Be able to read between the lines and understand it and write what is assumed from what they read."

Question #9
Table 15

How does whole language relate to phonics, literature - other aspects of the curriculum?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Use phonics to some degree - not drill; integrate it into the lesson	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10	6
Incorporate literature - short stories, poetry, drama	2, 6, 10	3
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 7, 8	3
Use learner generated materials	4, 9	2
Use literature creatively - get learners thinking about things	6	1

Six teachers admitted to using phonics to some degree in their teaching practice in response to question #9 (see Table 15). Most noted that it was not used in isolation with particular letter sounds but integrated as another strategy learners might use to understand a word in the context of their reading. While no one mentioned the controversy over the use of phonics in whole language there was a tone to the responses that acknowledged it was out of favour. "Any reading teacher uses phonics whether they know it or not e.g. sound it out. I don't believe in drill phonics."

Literature was noted as important by three teachers who focused on the use of short stories, poetry and drama. One teacher noted that literature was useful in stimulating creativity in learners. Two teachers noted they mostly use learner generated materials.

Responses to the use of literature and other aspects of the curriculum in the program might have been overshadowed by putting the use of phonics in the same question.

Question #10
Table 16

How is evaluation usually handled in your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Observation of learners' work - subjective and ongoing	3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10	6
There is no formal testing	1, 3, 6, 7, 8	5
Subjective evaluation, learner and teacher together discuss progress	1, 2, 5, 7, 10	5
Informal reading and writing assessment	2, 4, 5, 6	4
Move to Level II made on subjective basis - consultation with learner	1, 3, 6	3
Testing in Math if learner wants - Levels I and II have same Math curriculum	5, 9	2
Evaluate on progress no accumulated knowledge	7, 10	2
Consultation with other Level I and Level II teachers	2, 3	2
Bridge addresses gaps between Levels I and II including testing; at the end of a 10-12 week Bridge class, learners will have had to write at least one test	7, 8	2

Question #10, Table 16, provided the greatest degree of consistency among teachers with a whole language philosophy. All ten teachers mentioned at least one of

three teaching behaviours/activities: no formal testing, subjective collaborative evaluation, and ongoing observation of learners. All three teaching behaviours/activities are consistent with a whole language philosophy, which is concerned with keeping evaluation within a context of "real" reading situations. However, because some learners want to move to Level II, there is a little more attention paid to accumulated knowledge and skills levels attained by these learners. Four teachers noted that this decision to move learners to Level II is done on a subjective basis after consulting with the learner and with other Level I and Level II teachers. This is in keeping with whole language practices. However, some learners attend a 10-12 week Bridging Class which is designed to address gaps in knowledge between Levels I and II. This class introduces tests which are graded and used to evaluate learners. This is not in keeping with whole language practices but may find acceptance in adult education/learning philosophy which would view it, as it is intended to be, as assisting the adult learner to make a successful transition from one program to another, a transition which requires other skills. Learners may also, if they choose to, take exams in Math in Level I. They are given credit for these exams in Level II if they complete them successfully.

What materials form the basis of the reading component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Books in resource area - geography; <u>World History</u> vols. I & II; Science - <u>Wonder Series</u>; <u>It's Your Right!</u>; <u>Can We Make a Deal?</u>; <u>Power English</u>; short stories; novels; student writings	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10	7
Newfoundland writers, newspapers, local resources	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10	6
Core books developed by Literacy Office, e.g., Occupational Knowledge	2, 3	2
Language experience - learners' dictation (depends on level of learner)	1, 7	2
Authentic material - e.g., if topic is addictions then materials from Addictions, Department of Health	9	1

All of the materials mentioned in response to question #11, with the exception of <u>Power English</u>, (a workbook that provides practice in grammar), are authentic reading materials (see Table 17). If used appropriately, they would be considered consistent with whole language and adult education/learning philosophy. These responses provide another instance where there is consistency among teachers and with whole language and adult education/learning theory.

When reading and a learner stumbles or doesn't know a word, what do you do?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Give the reader a chance to use any word attack skills they have	3, 4, 5, 6, 10	5
Supply the correct word if it is natural to do so	1, 5, 8	3
Ask the reader to sound it out or try to sound it out	2, 4, 7	3
Let other learners help	4, 5, 7	3
If it doesn't change the meaning and the reader goes on, leave it	7, 8, 9	3
Have learners make a running list of words they missed for further work, e.g., puzzles	2, 10	2
Supply the word if the reader is not confident or is shy	6	1
If the learner stops and asks I assist	9	1
If it is in isolation and doesn't change the meaning, leave it and mention it in passing when the reader is finished	10	1

Five teachers suggest allowing the learner a chance to use any "word attack" skills they have (see question #12, Table 18). It is not clear whether these skills would encompass reading strategies such as predicting, or risk-taking such as guessing. Four teachers note that if the miscue does not change the meaning they do not draw attention to it, though one teacher said he would mention it "in passing"

when the reader was finished. Three teachers said they would supply the word if it seems "natural". "Usually leave them to sound it out or check the context - it depends if the person stumbles but it doesn't change the meaning e.g. home for house I usually leave it. If it's a key word to meaning then I would stop and point out the word. Sometimes other students will jump in with the word." Since meaning is the ultimate reading goal in whole language, this view is consistent with the philosophy. As well, one teacher noted that if the learner is shy or not confident, she supplies the word. This is in keeping with adult education/learning where it is important to maintain a safe learning environment.

Two teachers mentioned making running lists of words that learners missed. These lists would be used later in puzzles or other kinds of learning activities. Depending on how they are used this kind of activity could be inconsistent with whole language where lists are inappropriate because they tend to isolate words.

What is the relationship between word recognition and comprehension?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Sometimes a word is recognized but the meaning is unknown to the learner	3, 6, 7, 8, 10	5
Words are not recognized but in context meaning is understood	5, 7, 10	3
No comprehension without word recognition	2, 6	2
More important to get whole meaning then individual words	6, 9	2
Listening comprehension is related; reading comprehension is much better when listening is good	2, 7	2
Close; encourage learners to not differences made by emphasis and context	4	1
Most learners who have good word recognition skills also have good comprehension	10	1

In response to question #13, Table 19, two teachers felt that without word recognition there could be no comprehension. However, both teachers made the connection between recognizing the word and understanding its meaning with the text. "Don't want students concentrating on words - comprehension is most important. Try to get the meaning of the sentence before specific words." This seems to change what the teachers initially stated. When they elaborated on their responses they allowed for deriving meaning from the text, rather than prohibiting it; this is keeping with whole language theory where the original teaching behaviour/activity seemed in direct opposition to the theory. Five teachers noted that learners sometimes recognize words but do not know what the words mean. Three teachers noted that sometimes, when individual words are not recognized, they become clear to the learner when read as part of a text. Two teachers, 2 and 7, mentioned that reading comprehension is much better when learners have good listening comprehension. Teacher #10 noted a positive correlation between word recognition and comprehension - when one is good so is the other. The responses made by the teachers, in general, are not inconsistent with whole language philosophy which holds that language learning occurs while learners are engaged actively in purposeful language activities.

What is the relationship between active involvement in reading and tasks assigned after the reading task such as answering questions?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Pre-reading, discussion, pictures before the reading so that comprehension is aided	7, 9	2
Activity after reading should be based on the level of the learner	2	1
If properly assigned the tasks are very helpful in increasing learning	2	1
Answering questions helps them learn - think in another way	4	1
Active is more productive	5	1
Don't give them anything to do unless they know how to do it	7	1
Activities that have them go back to the reading helps them get "right" answers which helps to build confidence	7	1
One is important to the other - activities have them go back to the reading and have them answer questions or write in their own words	3	1
Active reading process - how well words are recognized and understood; reading tasks test comprehension	8	1
Group discussion is sometimes better than having questions answered as it allows more opportunity to assess comprehension	10	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 6	2

The one characteristic that is evident in teachers' responses to question #14 is diversity (see Table 20). Only one teacher, # 3, referred directly to a relationship between reading and tasks assigned after reading. "One is pretty important to the other". One teacher, # 8, defined what the terms meant to her but did not make an explicit connection between them. "Active reading process - how well a student recognizes words and understands what was read. Tasks, test comprehension and retention - what did they get out of it?"

Two teachers, #s 7 and 9, described a process: pre-reading, discussion, and use of pictures when applicable so that learners comprehend as much as possible before the reading is begun. Interestingly, only three teachers made direct reference to answering questions. One of these, #10 noted that answering questions did not always follow reading as sometimes group discussion elicited a greater understanding of whether comprehension occurred. "[I] don't always have students answer questions after they read something. Group discussion is sometimes better - someone may pipe up with something completely off the wall - you know they missed something in the story." Another teacher noted that one of the tasks she has given learners is to be critical of what they read. "I once gave them something that was poorly written and we analyzed it to see how it could have been written better." One teacher noted that "Active is more productive. Some people can work on their own but others learn by sharing and doing."

What is the most important aspect of the reading component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Interesting materials	3, 10	2
Building on knowledge	3, 9	2
Understanding what is read	5, 9	2
Reading, reading	4, 7	2
Desire to read	3	1
Making it as personal to each learner as possible	10	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 2, 8	3

Responses to question #15, as to the previous one, were varied (see Table 21). Three teachers responded that they felt they had answered the question when responding to other questions. They may have interpreted the question as concerning the goal of reading instruction rather than eliciting that part of the reading program that is most necessary. Teachers # 5 and 9, it seems, were thinking of instruction goals when they replied, "understanding what is read". Apart from those instances cited above, only three teaching behaviours/activities were used by more than one teacher. "Interesting materials", " building on knowledge", and "reading, reading" were each noted by two teachers.

How are reading topics chosen?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Opportunity for learners to choose own topics	1, 2, 4, 5, 9	5
Based on content of program	3, 4, 9	3
Teacher usually chooses topic	1, 2	2
Teacher or learner chooses on the basis of learners' interests	7, 10	2
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	6, 8	2

Five teachers mentioned that the program provides an opportunity for learners to choose their own reading topics. Of those five, two teachers noted that the teacher usually does the choosing (see question 16, Table 22). One of that five, # 4 and two others, #s 3 and 9, mentioned that topics are chosen "based on content of the program". Two other teachers, #s 7 and 10, noted that the "teacher or learner chooses on the basis of learners' interests". The teaching behaviour/activity which refers to program content appears to breach the spirit of whole language theory. However, since the program content as outlined in the <u>Program Guide</u> was designed to reflect whole language and adult education/learning philosophies, the teachers may have interpreted their response as being in keeping with those philosophies.

What materials form the basis of the writing component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Varied - from readings; respond, write questions, paragraphs	2, 3, 4, 5, 10	5
Some personal and school stories	1, 3, 7	3
Journal writing	4, 5, 7	3
Write Now! book	1	1
Issues, ideas - to help analyze writing	1	1
Book reviews, films	1	1
Lots of writing - particular attention to grammar (Bridge program)	8	1
Anything they write	9	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	6	1

Interestingly, all teachers interpreted "materials" in question #17 as meaning the passages, books, subjects, and so on used to stimulate writing rather than the actual implements of writing, such as pens, pencils, computers, and paper. The teaching behaviour/activity that was mentioned most frequently (five teachers) was "Varied - from readings; respond, write questions, paragraphs" (Table 23). Journal writing was noted by three teachers. "Some personal and school stories" was also mentioned by three teachers, #7 providing the only consistency in the two responses. One teacher, who was responsible for the Bridge program, noted that particular

attention was given to grammar. The focus on grammar is not in keeping with whole language theory though it could be argued that learners at this level are beyond "the learning to read and write" stage and are in need of specialized teaching to refine their language skills in order to meet their goals.

Question #18
Table 24

Tell me about the sequence of the writing act in terms of how it is brought to its completion.		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Brainstorm a topic; build a web; write about one aspect; share it; then edit it	5, 7, 9	3
It's finished when they say it is	4, 10	2
One whole piece of writing is not always the responsibility of one person - a group will do the editing	2	1
Read it and discuss it with them - is it logical?	3	1
Walk through the process; scratch down notes, do a first draft, revise; take advantage when possible to point our capitalization, punctuation or subject - verb agreement	10	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 6, 8	3

As noted in Table 24 teacher responses to this question (#18) varied widely. The greatest agreement among teachers occurred in two responses, in the first of which teachers # 1, 6, and 8 felt that they had said what they had wanted to say on

this subject. The other agreement occurred among three teachers who described the teaching behaviour/activity, "Brainstorm a topic; build a web; write about one aspect; share it; then edit it." A similar teaching behaviour/activity was used by teacher #10 though with a little more emphasis on the mechanics of writing. "Walk through the process: scratch down notes, do a first draft, revise; take advantage when possible to point out capitalization, punctuation or subject-verb agreement". Two teachers noted that the writing act is completed when the learners are satisfied that it is. "It's finished when they say it is". Another teacher mentioned that sometimes a group will have input. The group will collectively edit a piece of writing that might have been started by an individual. One teaching behaviour/activity mentioned by teacher # 3 may not be in keeping with whole language philosophy. This teacher noted that she reads and discusses the piece of writing with the learner to determine whether it is logical. If this is done as part of the editing process with the end goal of perhaps "publishing" then it would meet whole language criteria. Those teachers who responded to this question discussed, at least to some degree, the aspects of the writing process as set out in the literature.

How does the whole language relate to spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Draw attention to aspect only when it arises naturally as part of the lesson	4, 5, 7, 10	4
Integrated - each addressed as part of the writing	2	1
Only concern with handwriting is that it's legible	3	1
Encourage learners to get it written then work on spelling, the mechanics, the handwriting	9	1
Relate all in whole language so that it goes full circle	10	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 6	2

Four teachers responded that attention is given to aspects of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting only when it is natural to do so during a lesson. "Their language, you take what they want, for example, spelling, and correct it. You teach punctuation the same, from their writing" (see question #19, Table 25). One teacher used the teaching behaviour/activity "integrated". "Integrated, not emphasized but usually addressed as part of the writing. You don't take a piece of writing and address each area. You choose what seems to be the biggest handicap to that person being understood." One teacher, # 9, noted that it is important to encourage learners to get things written, then work on "the mechanics". The teaching

behaviours/activities used by the teachers express concepts that are appropriate to whole language philosophy. What is not clear is whether these teaching behaviours/activities express how spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting are taught in whole language theory. Beyond the integration of the activities learners are encouraged to express themselves by inventing spellings where the words are not known. Grammar and punctuation are learned through modelling behaviours from teachers and from print materials. Learners' handwriting or letter formation is standardized only as part of expressing themselves in print.

Question #20
Table 26

What is the most important aspect of the writing component of your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
Able to express in writing what they fell, what they want to say	4, 5, 9	3
Be able to write a complete sentence with capital letters and periods appropriately placed	3, 4	2
Before going to Level II be able to write a paragraph	3	1
Write legibly	4	1
Writing - you can't write unless you write	7	1
Have a sequence of ideas - have the ideas tied together	9	1
Make the connection between reading and writing - the written word is the spoken word of someone	10	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 6, 8	3

The teaching behaviour/activity that best describes the adult education/learning and whole language theoretical approach to writing is that expressed by teachers # 4,

5, and 9: learners are able to express in writing what they feel, what they want to say (see question #20, Table 26). Teacher # 7 noted that the most important aspect is "Writing - you can't write unless you write". This teaching behaviour/activity is also appropriate to whole language. Less appropriate are the teaching behaviours/activities about writing complete sentences with correct punctuation and legible handwriting. Teacher # 4 addressed the mechanics of writing before she noted the need for expression. Some of the emphasis on mechanics may be explained by the teaching behaviour/activity "Before going to Level II be able to write a paragraph". Some instructors may have interpreted "most important aspect" as "goals of the writing program" and, even further, that the goal is moving on to Level II. Only teacher # 10 noted the connection between speaking, writing and reading.

Question #21
Table 27

How are writing topics chosen?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
From reading	3, 4, 10	3
Ask them to write about themselves, events in their lives	3, 4, 7	3
From topic under discussion	5, 8	2
From students' interests	5, 8	2
Topic sentences from books	3	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1, 2, 6, 9	4

Three teachers noted that writing topics come naturally from reading (see question #21, Table 27). Two others noted that they come from topics under discussion in class. "Writing is sometimes very spontaneous - may come from the topic under discussion." Teachers # 3, 4, and 7 mentioned that they ask learners to write about themselves or events in their lives, while, two others, teachers # 5 and 8, noted that writing topics come from the learners' interests. Only one acknowledged taking topic sentences from books. "[Writing topics come] out of reading; topic sentences - some books have good ones. I use them for self-expression".

Question #22
Table 28

How does your reading/language arts program differ from a child centred program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
More individual learning style - more independent in adults	2, 4, 5, 6	4
Content materials are different	5, 7, 8	3
More learner directed than teacher directed	2, 6	2
Needs are more clearly defined - they (adults) know what they want	7, 9	2
Adults are more motivated	7, 9	2
Teaching methods are the same	5, 7	2
Experience that an adult brings is the important difference	9, 10	2
Relate to adults on own level	3	1
Felt the question was answered elsewhere	1	1

There was much variability among answers to question #22 (see Table 28). Only one teaching behaviour/activity was mentioned by four teachers, the responses relating to independent learning style. The other teaching behaviours/activities were mentioned by, at most, two teachers. Interestingly, only two teachers, #s 9 and 10, noted that the experience an adult has is an important difference. This is contrasted with the response to the general question, regarding adult education/learning where teachers #s 6, 7, and 8 as well as 9 and 10 noted the importance of experience. In response to that general question "participation in planning and decision making" was mentioned by five teachers. It was not mentioned at all in response to this question. As well, only three teachers noted that content materials are different for adult and child-centred programs. Yet many of the answers given to earlier questions regarding the reading program noted the need to attend to the adult's interests. Two teachers saw no difference in teaching methods for adults, though they are two of the three teachers who noted a difference in content materials. "Not that different. Materials are different. Adults bring a lot more baggage with them. Their needs are more clearly defined. Adults know more what they want. The approach to learning to read - adults are more motivated but you go through the same steps." Clearly, these two teachers intend to treat adults differently from children.

Is there anything else that I haven't mentioned that you would like to say about your program?		
Teaching behaviour/activity	Teacher(s)	Total
No, everything's been covered	2, 3, 5, 7	4
Phonics has a place in adult up-grading	1, 4	2
Time restricting - perhaps homework is an answer	1	1
Budget should include honorariums for guests and materials development specific to Newfoundland	1	1
Educators should draw from past - develop a cultural literacy	1	1
Program incorporates more than you see in the curriculum	2	1
Objective is to be more effective, more confident to take part in class, in the province or country	2	1
No choice between teacher directed and self-paced in Level II now; all is self-paced, therefore, my teaching has changed - more self-directed	6	1
Class last year (Bridging) preferred teacher directed classes	6	1
Careful about grammar but also have journal writing where no corrections are made	8	1
Concerned to have fun	9	1
Like the idea of integrated units; life is integrated	9	1
Individualize the program as much as possible - meet the needs of the learners	10	1
Program is more teacher directed than learner directed	4	1

Question #23, Table 29, elicited a great deal of variability in the answers. Four teachers, including # 2, noted that they felt they had covered what they had wanted to say. Five teachers, #s 1, 2, 4. 8, 9, and 10, mentioned particular areas of concern that had in fact been covered by earlier questions and answers. Teachers # 1 and 6 took the opportunity to comment on what might be considered shortcomings of the program from their points of view. Cultural literacy, budgeting and the need for more time (night school program) were issues mentioned by Teacher # 1. Teacher # 6 noted that her teaching style has changed to being more self-directed since Level II instruction is all self-paced. She noted that the Bridging class she had last year preferred a more teacher-directed approach.

Summary Findings - Part II

No teaching behaviours/activities met an 80 per cent criterion of agreement (at least 8 of 10 teachers reporting). However, a 50 per cent criterion of agreement (at least 5 of ten teachers reporting) was met by fifteen teaching behaviours/activities. They are:

1. Teaching materials are developed in class rather than prepackaged.

2. The goal is to read fluently and understand what is read.

3. There is participation by learner at own skill level.

4. Build on what is known.

5. Learning goals are set by learners.

6. Use phonics to some degree; do not drill but rather try to integrate it into lesson.

7. There is no formal testing.

8. Employ subjective evaluation; learner and teacher together discuss progress.

9. The observation of learners' work is subjective and ongoing.

10. The materials used emphasize Newfoundland writers, newspapers, and local resources.

11. The materials used are those books in the resource area: geography; World History vols. I & II; science - Wonder Series; It's Your Right!; Can We Make a Deal?; Power English; short stories; novels; student writings.

12. Readers are given a chance to use any word attack skills they have.

13. Sometimes a learner will recognize a word but will not know the meaning.

14. The program provides an opportunity for learners to choose their own reading topics.

15. Writing ideas come from readings; respond to questions, make up questions, and write paragraphs.

These fifteen teaching behaviours/activities correspond to one adult characteristic, four adult education/learning principles, and ten whole language principles. A list follows, along with the number assigned to them in Part I for easier identification and comparison.

Adult Characteristic:

2. Adults bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the learning situation.

Adult Education/Learning Principles:

1. Learner is increasingly self-directed and independent.

4. Teachers and learners participate in planning and decision-making.

6. Learning activities are more independent: inquiry projects, experimental techniques.

7. Evaluation is by self-assessment.

Whole Language Principles:

1. Literacy programs must build on existing learning and utilize intrinsic motivations. It is an extension of whole language learning: it is functional, real, and relevant.

3. Expression (writing) and comprehension (reading) strategies are built during functional, meaningful, relevant language use.

5. There is no hierarchy of sub-skills and no necessary universal sequence.

6. Literacy develops in response to personal/social needs.

7. There is no one-to-one correspondence between teaching and learning. The teacher invites learners to participate in and plan literacy events and opportunities.

8. As teachers monitor and support the development of reading and writing strategies, learners focus on the communication of meaning.

9. Risk-taking is essential. Developing readers must be encouraged to predict and guess as they try to make sense of print.

10. Motivation is always intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards have no place in a whole language program.

11. The most important question a teacher can ask a reader or writer is, "Does that make sense?".

12. Materials for instruction must be whole texts that are meaningful and relevant.

Table 30 following, may be helpful in clarifying the relationship of teaching behaviour/activity to adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles. The numbers used in the table correspond to those given above for teaching/behaviours/activity, adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles. The table also identifies the teachers making mention of the teaching behaviour/activity.

Comparison of Teaching Behaviours/Activities to Characteristics Principles
Table 30

Teaching behaviour/activity	Adult Character.	Adult Ed/L	Whole Lang.	Teacher(s)
1			12	1,2,3,4,5,10 Total: 6
2	2		1	1,3,4,7,8,10 Total: 6
3			3, 5	2,3,4,5,6,10 Total: 6
4		7	7,8	3,4,6,8,9,10 Total: 6
5			12	1,2,3,4,5,10 Total: 6
6		6	1, 12	1,2,3,9,10 Total: 5
7			5, 11	3,4,6,7,10 Total: 5
8		4	6, 7	2,5,6,7,9 Total: 5
9		1	6, 8	2,3,4,5 Total: 5
10		7	7, 8	1,3,6,7,8 Total: 5
11		7	7, 8	1,2,5,7,10 Total: 5
12			3, 9, 10	3,4,5,6,10 Total: 5
13			3, 9, 10	3,6,7,8,10 Total: 5
14		1	1, 12	1,2,4,5,9 Total: 5
15			1, 3	2,3,4,5,10 Total: 5
Totals	1	4	10	10

As noted earlier some teaching behaviours/activities were indicative of more than one principle.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The observation period was useful in providing general information on how classes were conducted and in helping the researcher to develop rapport with teachers.

In Part I, the findings indicate an awareness of five theoretical principles of whole language by 80 per cent (at least 8 of 10 teachers reporting), while 50 percent (at least 5 of 10 teachers reporting) indicated an awareness of two adult characteristics, one adult education/learning principle, and ten whole language principles.

With regard to responses to the questions in Part II, denoting teaching practice, all teaching behaviours/activities reported by all teachers were generally consistent with adult characteristics and/or adult education/learning and/or whole language principles. The one possible exception was the teaching activity of choosing topics for writing. There were some teaching behaviours/activities that might be considered inconsistent if used inappropriately. These are discussed in the chapter; one such example is the concentration on grammar in the Bridging Level I to Level II. This degree of concentration on grammar might not be acceptable in a whole language context unless the learner determined the concentration was needed "in response to personal/social needs", and provided the materials used were "whole texts

that are meaningful and relevant". However, these inconsistencies are few in number and are explicable in the teaching context.

No teaching behaviour/activity met an 80 per cent criterion of agreement. However, a 50 per cent criterion of agreement on teaching practice was met by fifteen teaching behaviours/activities. These fifteen teaching behaviours/activities correspond to one adult characteristic, four adult education/learning principles, and ten whole language principles.

The summary table following makes a comparison between the findings of Part I (awareness and knowledge) and those of Part II (teaching behaviours) with regard to the 50 per cent criterion of agreement.

Comparison of Part I to Part II Summary Findings
Table 31

Findings	Adult Characteristics #'s	Adult Ed/L Principles #'s	Whole Lang. Principles #'s
Part I	1, 2	4	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10,11,12
Part II	2	1,4,6,7	1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12

It is evident from Table 31 that at least 50 per cent of the sample reported knowledge of a combined thirteen adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles. These principles were, with only slight variation, consistent with reports of teaching practice reflective of a combined fifteen adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles. This thirteen

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and fifteen represent 57 per cent and 65 per cent respectively of the possible total of twenty-three combined adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles.

What is not evident from Table 31, but is evident from a general perusal of the findings, is the variation in teacher responses. This variation is most evident in Part I in the number of characteristics and principles enumerated by teachers. In Part II, it is most evident in the variety of teaching behaviours/activities used.

Teacher # 4 (who did not respond at all to Part I) and Teacher # 10 (who responded with the most characteristics and principles, fifteen of a possible twenty-three) serve to illustrate this variation.

Although Teacher # 4 did not respond to Part I with a list of adult characteristics/principles, she did acknowledge an awareness of adult education/learning principles. At the same time, she expressed no familiarity with the term "whole language". To the twenty-three questions asked in Part II, Teacher # 4 responded with thirty-six teaching behaviours/activities. She shared fourteen of these teaching behaviours/activities with Teacher # 10. His teaching behaviours/activities totalled thirty-eight in response to the twenty-three questions in Part II. Only nine of the fourteen teaching behaviours/activities that these two teachers shared formed part of the fifteen teaching behaviours/activities which guided 50 per cent of the sample.

The types of teaching behaviours/activities reported by teachers varied as greatly as their responses. They did not always fully address any principle and were

sometimes only generally reflective of an adult education/learning and whole language philosophy. For example, in response to the question, "What is the overall goal of the reading component of your program?", Teacher # 2 responded, "As outlined in the curriculum" and "To have learners write for self-expression". The first response presupposes a familiarity with the curriculum, and the second, while valid, is not as key an element as "reading for meaning" would be. To the same question, Teacher # 3 responded, "Overall goal is to educate". Again, this response is not inconsistent in a general sense but it does not provide much information.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a brief summary of the study, followed by a concise discussion of the research findings, conclusions based upon a synthesis of these findings, and implications for stakeholders in adult education, including teachers, those involved in the professional development of teachers, and administrators. Some suggestions for further research are offered at the end of the chapter.

Summary

This study was concerned with an awareness or knowledge of, and the translation of theoretical principles of reading, writing, and learning into teaching practice. The purpose was to describe: (1) teachers' awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy; (2) how teachers expressed this awareness in their teaching practice; (3) the degree of consistency between and among teachers in their awareness and expression in their practice of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy; the degree of consistency of their views as expressed in their practice with those views expressed in the related literature. Data for analysis were generated by interviews with ten ABE Level I teachers employed in the regional college system. The researcher observed a teacher-selected class period in each teachers's classroom which enabled the researcher to develop rapport with the

teachers and to gain general information on how classes were conducted. Audiotapes of interviews were reviewed, coded, categorized, and tabulated.

Discussion

The addition of the category "adult characteristics" to those of adult education/learning and whole language principles was helpful in tabulating all teachers' responses to Part I, thus providing a more complete view of teachers' knowledge.

Awareness of adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles, as discussed in Chapter 5, varied greatly between and among teachers. Only five whole language principles were known by at least 8 of 10 teachers reporting. With regard to adult characteristics and adult education/learning principles, none met the 80 per cent criterion. When the criterion of agreement was set at 50 per cent or 5 of 10 teachers reporting, rather than 80 per cent, five more whole language principles were added for a total of ten. In addition, at least 5 of 10 teachers had knowledge of two adult characteristics and one adult education/learning principle. As we see, at least 50 per cent of the sample had knowledge of thirteen characteristics/principles. Taylor says that a set of adult learning principles reflect guidelines towards greater effectiveness for practitioners. (Taylor, 1992) At least 50 per cent of the research sample had a set of principles which reflected guidelines towards effective practice. However, at least 50 per cent of the sample did not have

such a set of principles. The question is then, what is the source of guidance for this 50 per cent of the sample?

As well, in Part II, where teaching behaviours/activities denoting translation of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy to teaching practice was considered, the 80 per cent criterion of agreement was not met. So while 80 per cent of the sample had an awareness of five principles, these five principles did not affect teaching practice to the same degree. However, the 50 per cent criterion of agreement was met by fifteen teaching behaviours/activities. These teaching behaviours/activities were reflective of one adult characteristic, four adult education/learning principles, and ten whole language principles, for a total of fifteen. Consequently, fifteen principles guide the teaching practice of 50 per cent of the sample. Again, the question is, what guides the teaching practice for the remaining 50 per cent of the sample?

In part, the answer to both questions may be found at the beginning of Chapter 5 in Teacher Background Information. Although all of the teachers have experience teaching in adult education, only two report having completed any university course work in the area. These two teachers cite this university work as influencing their awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy. However, they, as well as the other eight teachers in the sample, cite in-service workshops, other teachers, and classroom experience as the source of their knowledge of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy. Knowledge of whole language

fares better than knowledge of adult education/learning perhaps because most teachers have taken Education courses during the time that whole language theory was gaining popularity in the teaching of children and thus they were more familiar with it. Also, many of the in-service training sessions referred to by teachers were conducted to introduce the new ABE Level I curriculum with its emphasis on "a learner-centred" approach, a term which is sometimes used synonymously with "whole language". As well, as noted in Chapter 3, whole language philosophy is focused on language learning and may, for some teachers, provide a more direct link to practice than adult education/learning philosophy. No teacher mentioned being influenced by: a specific theory apart from what was offered in the in-service training, books or articles that they had read, or by any well-known writer/practitioner in the area of either adult education/learning or whole language. The majority of teachers in this sample, then, report having acquired their knowledge of adult education/learning and whole language theory through "a filtering system"; that is, via a somewhat condensed version necessarily employed when providing in-service training. Teachers seem to have picked up the "idea" or "flavour" of the philosophy without acquiring the specifics.

This is evident again, in Part II, where teaching practice was found to be, in general, consistent with adult education/learning and whole language philosophy, although only 50 per cent of the sample was guided by a mere fifteen of a possible twenty-three combined characteristics/principles. The teaching practice of the

teachers seems to be that of the generalist practitioner - able to describe what is done but not always able to articulate why. (Draper, 1992) Teaching practice therefore, while not inconsistent with adult education/learning and whole language theory, does not either, appear to be particularly informed by it.

Conclusions

    1. <u>Great variability of knowledge of adult characteristics, adult education/learning and whole language principles exists between and among teachers</u>.

    Support for this conclusion is found in the variety of responses to the questions regarding knowledge of adult education/learning and whole language theory.

    2. <u>Teachers have a greater knowledge of whole language principles than of adult characteristics or adult education/learning principles.</u>

    Eight of ten teachers reported knowledge of 50% or 6 of 12 whole language principles. Only six teachers reported knowledge of 50% of adult characteristics. The criterion of knowledge of 50% of adult education/learning principles was not met by any teachers.

    3. <u>Teachers' practice is guided more by their knowledge of whole language than it is guided by their knowledge of either adult characteristics or adult education/learning principles.</u>

Five of ten teachers responded to questions regarding teaching practice with teaching behaviours/activities corresponding to: ten whole language principles; one adult characteristic; and four adult education/learning principles.

4. <u>Teachers' practice is guided, at least in part, by factors other than their knowledge of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy.</u>

This conclusion finds support in that that half of the teachers in the research sample did not know half of the combined characteristics and principles of adult education/learning and whole language; and that only half of them were able to agree on teaching behaviours/activities corresponding to fifteen characteristics/principles. It is expected that intuition, common sense, and situational variables based on earlier education and experience have an influence on their practice. (Draper, 1992)

5. <u>Levels of expertise (i.e. from novice to expert) exist among teachers in their understanding of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy.</u>

Some teachers demonstrated considerable understanding of adult education/learning and whole language theory as found in the literature. Other teachers were only able to articulate the theory to a limited degree.

Implications

<u>For Teachers:</u>

1. Teachers need to take opportunities to increase their understanding of adult education/learning and whole language theory and to develop their teaching practice

so as to be increasingly consistent with that theory. This might involve taking time to reflect on their beliefs and actions, opportunities to read and discuss theory and practice as it relates to adult literacy with other Level I teachers, and opportunities to receive feedback on teaching behaviours/activities from those considered "expert" in the field.

2. The variability in teachers' knowledge and practice related to adult education/learning and whole language philosophy suggests that teachers should act upon the advice of Thomas (1982) and Darkenwald & Merriam (1982). They encourage practitioners to examine carefully their program's goals, objectives and methods in order to gain an understanding of learning and learners.

For Those involved in Professional Development of Teachers:

1. The finding that Level I teachers are more versed in whole language principles than adult characteristics or adult education/learning principles suggests that curriculum and instruction courses should be designed to give more attention to adult education/learning principles. Whole language, as noted earlier, is more focused on language learning, while adult education/learning principles have a greater focus on the learner as person with more attention on the affective dimension of learning. Adults returning to a school setting after an absence of many years will need assistance in gaining an understanding and awareness of personal meanings and values and to changes to self-concept. (Brundage & Mackeracher, 1980)

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2. The giving of information provides one component of in-service workshops but it is not enough to effect change in teaching practice. Consultants need to work with teachers in their classrooms, discussing actions and why decisions were made. These sessions would be most helpful if they focused on the reasoning behind decisions made and actions taken so as to help teachers recognize inconsistencies between what they say they believe, and how these beliefs are translated into teaching behaviours/activities.

For Administrators:

1. Teachers need opportunities for professional development. It is most important to provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss their practice in a non-threatening environment where they can discuss failures as well as successes, confusions, and interpretations of theory.

Recommendations

Following are some suggestions for the further exploration of the relationship between teachers' awareness of theory and their teaching practice.

1. To better understand the influence of teachers' beliefs and how these beliefs relate to practice, studies focusing on the influence of beliefs on instructional decision making are needed. Observation of the teacher in the classroom would be necessary, coupled with the opportunity for the teacher to discuss any discrepancies

noted between beliefs and actions. Perhaps a case study approach would provide for the more in-depth data collection and analysis necessary.

2. Another means of determining the influence of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy on teachers' practice would be to design a study where teachers would be invited to share what they consider the important factors that guide their practice. No reference to any particular theory or set of guidelines would be made, so as to allow the teachers to present their beliefs in as unbiased a manner as possible. Comparisons could be made between teachers' responses, and theory as presented in the related literature.

3. In this study knowledge of whole language principles was greater than knowledge of adult education/learning principles. Although this thesis supposes that the philosophy behind the two sets of principles is synonymous, it also recognizes that whole language is more directly focused on language learning while adult education/learning principles are more generic. It would be useful to explore whether Level I teachers see this distinction and whether such a distinction influences their teaching behaviours/activities.

4. The learner was not focused on as part of this study. It could be most instructive for teachers if learners were invited to share their views of the teachers' practice. Questions such as "What is helpful/unhelpful to you in this learning experience?" could furnish a means of identifying what learners expect from teachers.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The description of teachers' awareness and translation of adult education/learning and whole language theory to teaching practice was the subject of this thesis. The Handbook for Teachers (1990) which provides guidance to teachers in the ABE Level I program provided a framework within which to discuss adult education/learning and whole language philosophy. Core principles emerged from a review of the related literature. Teachers' awareness of these principles, coupled with teaching behaviours/activities identified with these principles, and/or with the general orientation of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy to teaching practice, provided the data for the study.

It was found that although commonalities existed, there was great variability between and among teachers' reported awareness of adult education/learning and whole language philosophy, and their reported teaching behaviours/activities reflecting this philosophy. A practitioner's language is used to describe what she does and is as expressive of philosophy as attitudes and behaviours. It is relatively easy to use current terminology, such as "learner-centred", without recognizing the meaning of the term or what it means to practice it. (Draper, 1992) Level I teachers who do not have a solid grounding in adult education/learning and whole language theory should strive not to take for granted the vocabulary that is espoused by many adult literacy programs, but must attempt to ensure a knowledge of the theory behind the words and a commitment to practising it.

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APPENDIX 1

COMMUNICATIONS

CRITICAL READING SKILLS

GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Given a text of appropriate
difficulty, relevant to personal interest
or program content areas, **paraphrase
to demonstrate clear understanding
of author's message**

1.1. Tell what the text is about
1.2 Relate the story line, if applicable
1.3 Describe characters
1.4 Identify relationships between
characters and situations

Suggested Activities/Skill Areas

PRE-READING SKILLS (page
56)
WORD RECOGNITION (page 57)

PHONICS (page 58)

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT
(page 62)

-Skim text
-Follow Directions
-Locate information from text
-Identify likenesses and differences
among characters and situations
-Use cues from end punctuation to
improve understanding

-Identify sequence
-Summarize information
-Classify and categorize information
-Determine meanings of unfamiliar
words

OBSERVATION

SITE:

INSTRUCTOR:

DATE:

1. Description of classroom.

2. Description of lesson/activity observed (include materials/objectives).

3. Describe the nature of classroom interaction.

4. Key statements about reading and writing made by learners and teacher.

5. Follow-up questions to be asked in interview.