'DIFFICULTIES' OF INTEGRATIVE EVALUATION PRACTICES:
INSTANCES OF LANGUAGE AND CONTENT AS IN CONTESTED SPACE(S)

by

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Abstract

Although language is a medium of learning, most educational institutions typically teach and therefore evaluate language separately from content. In second language contexts, recent attention has been given to language/content integration through content-based language instruction. Yet, questions of integrative evaluation (evaluating language and content as one) remain uncertain and difficult. This inquiry explores difficulties invoked when teachers engage in practices of integrative evaluation of English language learners’ writing at an international college for Japanese nationals in Canada.

Are these difficulties technical problems? Technical rationality has been critiqued by a number of thinkers. Those interested in action research practices, contrast technical rationality with what they call reflective rationality and argue for contextualizing, rather than simplifying, difficult situations. Some with hermeneutic interests argue for an attunement to, rather than concealment of, difficulties of life in the classroom. Others interested in writing instruction, are critical of conventional approaches to writing pedagogy as reductionistic and deterministic.

There are a number of instances of difficulty in teachers’ integrative evaluation practices. Prior to agreeing on a prompt, many teachers explore texts as interpretive, social literacy but, in their uncertainty of how to mark such a text, they return to a question for which there is a ‘correct’ and ‘controlled’ response. Once the prompt and evaluative criteria are established, discordant orientations to evaluation, literacy, and language/content integration complicate teachers’ uncertainty. For example, teachers sometimes acknowledge functional views of language/content integration, yet they are vague and uncertain about how to mark in an integrated way. When teachers read texts prior to judgment, they comment that the texts are difficult to interpret and then impose their own ‘straightforward’ readings on the texts to reduce and simplify the difficulties.

These instances raise serious concerns in practices of evaluation, literacy and language/content integration, especially when technical forms of evaluation are paradoxically aligned with social and integrated texts. A turn to hermeneutics troubles a technical hold and invites further inquiry into tensioned moments of integrative evaluation as difficult, living practices.
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DEDICATION

to those who find themselves in aporetic sites of difficulty and uncertainty
and stay at the site of struggle . . .
Chapter One

Beginning in the Middle of Things:
Integrative Evaluation as/in "Pedagon"

The notion of hermeneutics with which I wish to begin: hermeneutics as an attempt to stick with the original difficulty of life, and not to betray it with metaphysics.

John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*

Pedagon . . . attempts to articulate the cultural space in which issues surrounding pedagogy are contested, enacted and inhabited. Invoking "culture" here gives notice of my conviction that the typical parameters of conversation regarding educational issues, particularly in the North American context, are far too narrow, largely because of the increasing specialisation of professional languages consequent to the spread of industrialism . . . . As adults, we inevitably suffer the cultural diseases of our time, but then we reproduce them in our children to the degree we have not healed ourselves.

David Smith, *Pedagon*

If life dwells in an original difficulty, an original ambiguity that cannot be mastered but only lived with well, the pursuit of such mastery can only lead to immobility or exhaustion--it does not lead to understanding human life-as-lived in a deep way. Life as something to be mastered seems to deny what we already know about being alive . . . . It returns inquiry in education to the original, serious, and difficult interpretive play in which we live our lives together.

David Jardine, *Reflections on Education, Hermeneutics and Ambiguity*

Those who involve themselves in holistic focal practices understand that one's evolving sense of identity and one's daily practices must always be, in some way, interpreted in relation to one another . . . . [They are] lived experiences that permit an openness to the complexity of the relations among things and people.

Terrance Carson & Dennis Sumara, *Action Research as a Living Practice*
Although language is a medium of learning, most educational institutions typically teach and therefore evaluate language separately from content. In second language contexts, recent attention has been given to language/content integration through content-based instruction (Stoller, 1999). Yet, questions of integrative evaluation (evaluating language and content as one) remain uncertain and difficult (Norton & Starfield, 1997).

Are these difficulties technical problems? Technical rationality has been critiqued by a number of thinkers. Lyotard (1997) cogently criticises a lingering Western legacy, a technical rationality, and its effects on society. It has also been critiqued by Taylor (1996) as a “malaise of modernity”; a rationality in which individuals and groups work to gain control, mastery, unity and simplification of their lives in what is otherwise understood to be a complex and difficult world. Usher and Edwards (1994) explore the implications of postmodern thinking that challenge prevailing structures and hierarchies of educational practices they claim are imposed by a technical rationality. As part of the discussion, Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993), interested in action research practices, contrast technical rationality with what they call reflective rationality. They argue for: 1) contextualizing, rather than simplifying, difficult situations; 2) “dynamic networks of relationships to assist [] in taking responsible action in the face of complexity and uncertainty” (p. 202); 3) the need for “symmetry rather than a hierarchy of power relations” (p. 203). As well, Jardine (1998) and Smith (1999), both with hermeneutic interests, argue for an attunement to, rather than concealment of, the difficulties in pedagogic life. The debate continues within second language education, where Zamel (1997) and Spack (1997), interested in writing instruction, are critical of conventional approaches to writing pedagogy as reductionistic and deterministic. Re-thinking instances of integrative evaluation practices, in light of current critiques of technical rationality, raises serious concerns of how difficult practices of evaluation, literacy, and language/content integration can be understood. Placed right in the middle of difficulties, this text, as an inquiry into teachers’ integrative evaluation practices of compositions written by Japanese nationals studying in Canada, turns to hermeneutics and opens a discussion of interpreting difficulties differently.
Locating ‘Difficulty’

Naming integrative evaluation is an invitation to the reader to consider Smith’s (1994, 1999) “cultural space in which issues surrounding pedagogy are contested, enacted and inhabited” (p. ii). For those of us who inhabit the practices of evaluating English language learners’ (ELL)’ inscriptions, few would question the agony of having to leave that presumed necessary but possibly illusory mark on the page. It is a pedagogical practice in which significant decisions are enacted at seemingly declarative and definitive endpoints. As significant as the ‘mark’ may be, it is the complexification of more difficult and spirited presuppositions that lead to the decision of the mark, the struggle of coming-to-know ‘the’ mark and its (im)possibility - its “original difficulty” (Caputo, 1987, p. 1) - that is central to this dissertation. Chapter one locates those presuppositions underlying the process of evaluative decisions as difficulties in living practices. In entering such a space influenced by complex historical and current conditions, I recognise that conversations have already begun and will continue long after situated decisions are made. And so, in entering this location, I begin in the middle of things.

As an inquiry into the what (as) and where (in) of integrative evaluation, I have scripted in the title of the dissertation and chapter one ‘as/in’. It is a stance that helped me come-to-know integrative evaluation beyond definition. Thinking in terms of as/in invited me to dwell in the solidus and consider pedagon as a way of writing what integrative evaluation becomes through its location in contested sites. Integrative evaluation as

1 I use ELL (English language learner) intentionally to resist use of the common label ESL (English as a Second Language) - a label that has the potential to connotate second as inferior, substandard, not first, supplementary, subsidiary, subordinate. I also believe that the quantification of second languages and cultures (as separate from first), detracts from the richness of language and cultural complexities in which all language learners dwell.

2 In seeking enacted ways, I refer to a notion of enactivism “founded on a manner of thinking that seeks out ‘middle ways’ amid disparate perspectives. But such middle ways should not be thought of as compromises. Rather, they represent attempts to sidestep seemingly irresolvable tensions by drawing attention to and offering alternatives for the assumptions that underlie varied opinions” (Davis, 1996, p. xxv).

3 I was introduced to the term ‘complexification’ in Davis’s (1996) book, Teaching mathematics and support its use in a “general movement across a range of academic disciplines - away from attempts to impose linear and causal models onto phenomena and toward embracing the difficulty and ambiguity of existence.” As Davis explains, “it is a recent addition to the English language . . . . Its creation represents a deliberate attempt to affect the way we stand in the world. It is by making up new words that we interrupt the commonsense notions that frame our actions. We enable ourselves to act differently” (1996, p. xvii, original italics). It is with that purpose in mind that several “recent additions to the English language” are interwoven throughout this text.
pedagon conjoins "the formal practices and professions of teaching" with the "struggle or
contestation over something of great importance" (Smith, 1999, p. i); integrative evaluation
in pedagon locates itself midst "stuck places", spaces-in-between multiple texts where
traces of positionalities continually collide, egress and generate new life (Lather, 1998); it is
a place "that cannot be mastered but only lived with well" (Jardine, 1992, p. 117).

In seeking to locate and name traces of the struggle, questions of integrative
evaluation became questions of relations between multiple texts. As a reader of Carson and
Sumara’s (1997) book, Action research as a living practice. I am reminded that “one’s daily
practices must always be, in some way, interpreted in relation to one another” (p. xv). The
textured sites, established through interwoven meanings and experiences in discursive
practices of integrative evaluation, are understood here in terms of their social dialogue, a
view of meaning I have encountered in the readings of Bakhtin (1935/1981) and his use of
the terms heteroglossia, chronotope and carnival, of Kristeva (1980) and the principle of
intertextuality, of Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton and Radley (1988) and their
notions of ideological dilemmas and dilemmatic ideologies, and of Harré, Halliday,
Bernstein, Vygotsky, Foucault, and Bourdieu, each of whose works are scripted differently
but, I believe, are based on similar principles. It is not my intent to review their work here,
only to claim that such social theories of discourse have been legitimated by many scholars
from diverse disciplines.

Lemke (1995), a scholar of political social semiotics and interested in the textual
politics of education, refers to intertextuality and comments on how
the meaning of each particular utterance or stretch of discourse is seen as arising
in the relations between texts and social viewpoints and not in relations
among linguistic forms as such or among speakers as individuals. (p. 23)

Taking this stance, discourse is not an autonomous product of the individual but
“functions as part of a social dialogue (whether the other participants in this dialogue are
considered to be actually present or are only implied)” (ibid.). Intertextuality, argued as an

4 The (s) of discourse(s) is used as a way of acknowledging the ever present possibility, and moreover
probability, of multiple and incomplete discourses operating within one assumed discourse. If discourses
are socio-culturally grounded, as I believe they are, differing socio-cultural activities construct differing
discourses. As daily participants in multiple social-cultural activities, we have multiple discourses with
which to construct our world. The (s) reminds me that we cannot assume only one discourse is
constructing meaning at one time. I believe that multiple discourses are at work establishing networks that
have the potential to connect, disconnect, and reconnect at any time.
inherent aspect of discourse, is viewed as social in origin and always dialogical in purpose. Intertextual spaces locate sites of multiple texts, places where one text is read against the background of other texts explicitly or implicitly present in the first, of texts made in various times and places that are both historical and current.

The location of educative living practices claims a generative space (Jardine, 1992). As a generative space, an inquiry into texts of integrative evaluation attempts to bring forth the pre-conditions, those taken-for-granted assumptions in which we, as practitioners of integrative evaluation, live. The task of the inquiry then is to “re-collect the contours and textures of life we are already living” without “render[ing] such a life our object” (Jardine, p. 116). Resisting an inquiry into life as factual and objective, this project places itself in the midst of life and “its original difficulty”, keeping “a watchful eye for the ruptures and the breaks and the irregularities” (Caputo, 1987, p. 1). Jardine (1992), heeding Caputo’s message, argues, “technical-scientific discourse offers itself up as a remedy to the difficulties of life” and then reminds us,

rather than simply being a remedy to life’s difficulties, [technical-scientific discourse] has rather come to recast the nature of life’s difficulties into precisely the sort of thing for which a technical solution is appropriate; that is, life’s difficulties are technical problems requiring a “technical fix.” (p. 117)

Resisting the call of scientific discourse to cast integrative evaluation as a technical task requiring technical tools, difficulties within integrative evaluative practices can be acknowledged as ambiguous and uncertain. Difficulties emerge when technical words cannot disinherit or terminate experiences of a social world. Instead, they are re-instated to tensioned life where traces of technology and other discourses are contested within integrative evaluation.

A Legacy of the Modern Imaginary

Tracing back to at least the seventeenth century, the predominate epistemological stance of the “modern” or “technical” epoch in education can be linked to Descartes. Davis (1996) recalls that Descartes made
two breaks from earlier perspectives of knowledge and modes of inquiry - perspectives which he rejected as inconsistent and unreliable mixtures of fact and fancy.... Descartes denounced tradition, hearsay, mysticism and religion as he called for the pre-eminence of the “natural light” of (mathematical) reason. (p. 3)

Descartes argued for methods that derived irrefutable knowledge claims or the ‘truth’ of existence (the external universe), laying foundational paths to what has come to be known as modern science. His use of geometry to deduce the nature of the world and his distrust of the senses as a mode of inquiry led him to a privileging of rational thought, of epistemology over ontological concerns, claiming it a model of reason that was independent of the mercurial and untrustworthy senses. His well known cogito - I think - became an axiom of indubitable truth, a basis on which he claimed he could authenticate or deny the ‘truth’ of all other knowledge.

Building his model of rationality on geometric reason and the cogito - I think -, Descartes established a form of dualistic thought now infused in modernist stances of how many understand the world. Perhaps two of his most noted dichotomous contributions now contested in many disciplines are “self and other”, and, “mind and body”. The modern ideal ‘self” was claimed to be an autonomous, independent, centred subject, the reference point for meaning. To situate ‘self’ as the centred subject that was part of, but distinct and independent in, an objective world, “Descartes also distinguished the background of the ‘not-self’ which was collected under such names as ‘other’ and ‘world’.” (Davis, 1996, p. 5). ‘Other’ and ‘world’ became objects of truth that could become known to man through rational thought. In advancing the mind-body duality, Descartes privileged the mind and claimed that (rational) thinking was the basis for all truth. The Cartesian binary was established in persuasive scientific terms, separating mind from body, as if they were capable of existing independently.

With the Cartesian orientation came a preoccupation for methods of inquiry that would contribute to structuring a more accurate representation of the world (reality); methods that, in a desire to become more accurate, became more technical in their mechanistic ability to reduce, control and master objects (the ‘other’) of inquiry. These methods have continued to be a part of a dominate technical imaginary, perhaps important
necessary illusions⁵ for the concerns of the seventeenth century, but ones that may no longer address the complexifications of relations acknowledged in current critiques of technical rationality.

Undoubtedly, Descartes has made significant philosophical contributions to how many make sense of the world. He has given structure, albeit in reductionist terms, to an otherwise difficult, complex and uncertain world. We are reminded regularly by headlines in the media of serious predicaments we face, from the familiar to the global. Have we come to realise the impossibility of an autonomous self in an objective world, a necessary illusion that no longer offers refuge from complexifications? It is not my purpose to reject the Cartesian legacy, only to question its dominance. In asking how the Cartesian orientation and the assumptions it imposes implicate how one lives in this world gives insight to the consequences of such a stance, especially for ideations of both knowledge and education. In later chapters, I further explore the imposition of modernist philosophies within the complexity and difficulty of integrative evaluation.

An Instance of Integrative Evaluation

Imagine for a moment peering into a post-secondary classroom for Japanese nationals presumably writing in English, for them an other language.⁶ The casual observer would sense the tense determination of students taking a final exam. Knowing their responses to questions will be evaluated, they struggle to understand expectations of the question and to be heard.⁷ It is a common landscape of schooling, the marking of written texts, yet in this seemingly regular and unblurred process, ruptures, breaks and irregularities surface in the discourses of teachers judging that writing.

⁵ Gazettas (1997), borrowing the term necessary illusions from Bazin, constitutes it as a “co-presence” of realism and illusion (image) that “record and represent actual events [to] produce an ambiguous commentary about that world out there, forcing the viewer to realise that illusions and artworks are part of our reality” (p. 217). In turn, I borrow necessary illusions from Gazettas and re-constitute it as imaginary, those positionalities that become identified by participants as “how things are is how they ought to be” (Nichols, 1981, p. 1).
⁶ An other is written as two words to play on the effects of language in a process of objectifying and nominalising Others that un/intentionally labels, defines and confines the subject.
⁷ Reference here is to the multiple voices of self (learner), as an attempt to understand which voices get heard and why others are silent or silenced. The struggle is partially to determine which voice(s) the teacher will hear and how they will be valued and to understand how the silent, the unsaid of the said, can be heard.
Consider a living practice of two teachers marking:

After investigating aspects of climate change in class, and as part of the evaluation process, English language learners in a content class were given ten different test questions to respond to within a period of sixty minutes. It was a term-end exam. The following text is one student’s response to question number eight:

8. You have been learning about climatic change. Write a well organised paragraph about one of the following topics.

A. Explain one cause of climatic change.

OR

B. Explain how climatic change causes one human or planetary health problem.

Global warming is one cause of climatic change. Global warming is to rise temperature unnaturally in an earth. Carbon dioxide in the air increase, temperature is goes up. Therefore, we should think the way of using Carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide mainly comes from cars and industries.

If we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature, we could get ocean water evaporation, and the permanent ice melting. These cause big climatic change. Example are the dead of fish which can’t be used to speedy of temperature rising in water and huge storm in which many species could get damages. Many circle of natural chain reaction could be destroyed.

Now, we come to the period when we have to confront global warming. It can’t stop without our doing anything to it. I am sure we all hope peaceful life and future, so let’s think about it and do anything to get safety future. (Written by an ELL, 10/04/95)

Teachers enacting integrative evaluation:

T1: I don’t think we should give a separate mark for language and for content; I look for each but the mark I give is a whole mark that represents the course, yet in my mind I have separated the content from the language— it may not be right but it is easier to mark that way.

T2: I always mark language and content separately, equal marks for both, I know that sometimes I have trouble deciding which one to mark down when the ideas aren’t clear. Still, I think we should give separate marks.

T1: Look at this response on climatic change. How would you mark this? It seems to have the ideas I was looking for but it is so difficult to read. I think I know what the student is trying to say. Oh, I don’t know how to mark this-I don’t know what is language specifically and what is content-I can’t tell whether the student’s language is interfering with his ideas or his ideas are interfering with his writing.

This is not an isolated instance of integrative evaluation nor is it an example of the concept of “integrative evaluation” that is analogous to another instance of integrative evaluation, as that would imply something pre-given, already defined. Instead, interpretive
work attempts to make what has been said about integrative evaluation in the past readable again by provoking “something already familiar” (Jardine, 1998, p. 40); the instance keeps integrative evaluation alive in interpretations that build on the story of integrative evaluation, thus transforming how it can now be understood and making interpretations useful.

Presuming to evaluate what students know from what they say is a regular routine of the language and content classroom. My experiences with the formal schooling of English language learners have been bounded by what Davis (1996) calls the ocular: “of seeing and observing, of clarity and illumination, of distinct boundaries and solid objects” (p. xxi). Based on my experiences, this form of teaching and learning seems to have become disembodied, univocal and predominantly prescriptive. It is a tradition wherein a dominant view seems to be one of language as an unambiguous and static phenomenon, and where judging written tasks can be unproblematic. Yet, throughout the process of judging English language learners’ inscriptions seem to be discourses of uncertainty, ambiguity and difficulty that question these assumptions and their impositions on teachers’ practices. Evidenced in the sample, discourse(s) were contested, polivocal, unshared, fissured texts of language and content relations.

One of the ways I attempted to locate the multiple dimensions of integrative evaluation was to journalise. In going beyond descriptive notetaking and thick description, I wrote from the decentered folds of my own and others’ practices. In so doing so, re-writings of themes, meta-texts and “stuck places” emerged and seemed to have potentially useful interpretations. One journal entry, mapped on page 10, locates two themes within the activity of integrative evaluation: meaning gaps and language and content relations.

8 In his publication, Teachers Narrating/Narratives Teaching: Pac Rim Experiences, Aoki (1992) invites readers to think of “narrating as an interplay of storying and theming” (p. 29) so the writer can live in their “writing (re-writing) to write a fuller story and to write more deepened thoughts on the themes selected ... theming is a form of experiential inquiry (some call it existential inquiry) that calls for reflective thoughtfulness. For such an inquiry, it may be helpful to be guided by questions that stir us into lived meanings of experiences.” (p. 32). For me to journalise in this way was insightful. Within each of the main themes that emerged in this intertextual approach to journal writing, there were traces of possible conflicting sub-themes.

9 Lather (1998) speaks of the “praxis of stuck places” (p. 1) as aporetic moments of generativity wherein “we break with all technical thought, all method and think in wholly other ways”.
Journalising Living Practices of Integrative Evaluation

(re-written as theming and locating "stuck places")

theming: meaning gaps
In re-reading the first writing, I asked, "What was it like for the teacher to experience meaning gaps?" She was aware of the incompleteness of his writing. Did she see this as faulty? Her comment places import on the content or message. Where were the gaps located for the teacher? in content? in language? What is being evaluated? Can we ever know fully what the writer means? The student acknowledges gaps. Are the gaps understood in the same way by writer? by reader?

His is a translation lost, a transformation begun, an incompleteness always. It is a place where writers of English, for them an additional language, dwell midst slippery signifiers. Meaning gaps are a site of struggle for both the writer and the reader.

theming: language or content?
The teacher seemed to focus on the message of the text. Only in search of something else to mark did she attend to elements of language use. Even then, it is content vocabulary that she acknowledges. It seemed as if language and content were autonomous. I remember thinking, how do you separate language from content? How did content become so important? As I think about language and content relations, I’ve come to know the import of language and some of the ways it works to constitute meaning.

(meta-text: literacy concern: are meaning gaps faulty?)

In re-reading my writing and theming, I asked, “within what meta-texts was the teacher’s story located that made it possible for her to construct her comments in the way she did? She seems to be living within a meta-text that views the reading of meaning gaps as problematic, perhaps even faulty. For her, it seems the student was unable to ‘express’ or ‘represent’ his ideas to give a clear message - to tell what he knows. These traces of positions or stances lead to a meta-text of literacy that seems to structure a way of understanding writing where words are secured directly to a meaning, a place where the meaning of a text is autonomous, where meaning gaps are considered faulty.

(meta-text: language and content relations: how do you separate language from content?)

Within what meta-text was this theme written? Linguistic concerns of how language and content relate seem to predominate. The teacher’s strong emphasis on content would suggest a view of language that carries meaning, a place where meaning is primary and language plays a secondary role. Interpreted in this way, a view of language could claim to be understood void of context, separate from meaning. Taking this stance the teacher would attempt to address content concerns separate from language concerns.
Evidence within the sample discourse data on page eight seems to suggest that judging ELL compositions is a necessary but often discomforting, difficult and complex task. The literature speaks to the complexity of ELL academic writing with a common and frequently used phrase, *language and content*, often qualified by the term *integrated*. The academic classroom is presumed to be a location of purposeful and meaningful learning about the world where terms such as content, subject matter, and knowledge are used interchangeably to describe the focus of learning. In such a context, one can hardly ignore the role of language in meaning making. When an academic classroom includes ELLs, teachers are challenged to understand the effects of a doubling of languages and cultures within acts of communication. Contained by the learners' resources of the new language and of the old, confined by the translatory strategies they use, and opened by interacting worldviews, they write their wor(l)ds and, in that writing and the reading of that writing, traces of uncertainty and frustration abound. Teachers' well intentioned goals of fair and consistent evaluation practices as situated judgments are disrupted by the subjectivity and uncertainty of how to interpret the writer's intentions within his or her presumed limited conventions of language and then make sense of and judge relations of language and content that are constituted in the writing.

Within the community of relations involved in integrative evaluation, I attempted to interpret the ways in which evaluative acts both shape and are shaped by teachers, individually and collectively. Claiming that writing constitutes meaning (content) through language in a unified or integrated way contrasts with conventional approaches that separate the evaluation of language and the evaluation of content. Given that the reader attends to text form (language) and function (content), the question arises of how to integrate language and content relations. It appears that the separate evaluation of language and the evaluation

10 For example see seminal works of Mohan (1986) and Brinton, Snow & Wesche (1989) and the use of the terms integrated, and language and content.

11 *wor(l)ds* constitutes the idea that "language and reality are dynamically [and artifactually] intertwined" (Freire, 1983, p. 5).

12 The term 'situated judgments' is used to remind the reader that judgments are situated in the interstices of historical, current and subjective conditions, calling into question the possibility of being a neutral and objective evaluation.

13 While I recognise the importance of the many intricately interwoven learner relations in integrative evaluation practices and raise questions of this in Chapter six, the focus of this inquiry is on the effects of positional relations of teachers.
of content is not sufficient and, for me, raises questions regarding the assumptions underlying roles of specialisation that seem to be inherent in, for example, notions of ‘language’ teacher and ‘content’ teacher.

Rather than attempting to ‘fix’ a problem called integrative evaluation, I sought to situate its relations in ever-unfolding instances of individual and collaborative curricular actions by teachers, replete with emerging uncertainties and inconsistencies. This is supported by Taylor’s (1996) call to question a dominant Western Cartesian belief that one can be in control of one’s life (living practices). In part then, this project takes on a bricollagic function - embracing tensions, difference and “stuck places”, and opening up to generative possibilities in the “already familiar” - that calls for a reconceptualising of the difficulty of integrative evaluation.

**Evaluation as a Curricular practice**

Selecting what is appropriate and viable for students to learn and then be judged, are important curricular and evaluation decisions. In language and content curricular practices, topics and the language demands of those topics are considered. Emphasis is given to the curricular ‘needs’ envisioned in the new language and culture but complicated by the real world experiences of day-to-day schooling. It is a context wherein teaching and learning are complex, dynamic and ever-evolving activities. In some circles within the field of curriculum studies, scholars such as Grumet (1988) take this stance of curricular situations claiming, “curriculum is a moving form” (p. 172). Yet, the powerful Cartesian influence of both knowledge and education (including evaluative practices) continues to reduce this movement to a plan of curriculum-as-stasis (Jardine, 1998).15

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14 See Taylor’s (1996) *The malaise of modernity* in which he speaks of three malaises of modernity: individualism, instrumental reason and loss of freedom. He argues that individuals, in becoming entrapped in their own assumptions of self-control and self-determination, become inactive in the social discourse(s) of everyday life. Similarly, I believe, if evaluators become intently focussed on a presumed controlled and objective judgments, evaluation becomes an act of mastery that cannot be mastered. So positioned, evaluators often veil themselves from the social and subjective relations that are inherent and everpresent aspects of their task.

15 I borrow Jardine’s (1998) use of knowledge-as-stasis as a way of calling into question “desires we may have, as educational theorists and practitioners, to get the curriculum ‘right,’ ‘straightened out’ once and for all, for such desires requires a basically disintegrative, analytic act aimed at rendering education a closed question, aimed at rendering human life lifelessly ‘objective’ under the glare of knowledge-as-stasis” (p. 73).
measurable objectives and learning outcomes that purposefully prepared the learner for adult life. Life - living practices - was separate from the ‘modern’ pedagogical staple of schools. Curriculum, and therefore evaluation, was interpreted as a series of static, well-intentioned, calculated steps to assist the learner to become successful in adult life. It was predicated on the assumption that it is possible for the contents of a curriculum to have a transcendent validity - one which, for all intents and purposes, is independent of the era, the culture, the classroom, the teacher, and the learners. Such an assumption arises from the modern notions that the world is pregiven and objectively knowable and that established knowledge of both the physical and the social world is essentially value free - conceptions that support curriculum developers' goals to identify knowledge objectives that reflect that world and to organise those objectives in ways that are suited to the linear and tiered structure of the schooling systems. (Davis, 1996, p. 86)

Noticeably absent from these discussions has been the role of the learner. Hence, there has recently been much debate about learner-centred curricular approaches versus knowledge-centred perspectives; debates that continue to be based on the premise that what learners need to know in adult life can be identified and taught (knowledge as object), learned and evaluated (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

The Cartesian way infused in conventional educational practices provides educators with a technical, prescriptive view to curriculum. In taking a linear path - from goals and objectives to testable learning outcomes - the learner’s way is presumed to be clear and out of danger. Yet, evidenced in the dialogue offered on page eight of this chapter, the notion of a linear curriculum seems to be displaced and “stuck places” emerge as unpredictable re-routings and re-turns.  

For me, they are signs of unplanned and non-technical curricular life that are a part of schooling.

Disruptions that Miller (1997) claims “constitute the lived practice of our research” (p. 199) leave my work open to unexpected discourses of living practices of integrative evaluation. Rather than seeking a definitive, conclusive certainty of a deductive argument, I explore instances that build on, and make useful, understandings of integrative evaluation.

Questions of the Inquiry

Although it is a routine, unquestioned expectation that learners be judged on written responses to assignments and tests, the deliberation of a grade or mark seemed to be a

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16 I would argue that learners as well experience “stuck places”, especially in their engagement of tasks to be evaluated.
tensioned and troubled practice. Teachers, well-intentioned to engage in fair and consistent grading practices, contended with uncertainties and ambiguities, as evidenced on page eight, that seemed to disrupt their judgments. I began to structure those disruptions as questions from the stance of integrative evaluation as a living practice; questions that are not in search of answers but invite interpretation in the unfolding of complex relations and contrary themes in the experiences of evaluators. I structured ever evolving, interrelated questions central to this site of struggle:

1) How do teachers, in their practices, construct the activity of integrative evaluation? In particular, do current critiques of a technical rationality contribute to useful interpretations of integrative evaluation practices?
2) How do teachers relate practices of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration?

These questions offered promise of useful interpretations of instances that become readable again in new ways. Teachers unsuspectingly inform themselves and each other with their insights and thoughtfulness as part of a discursive process that has the potential to build, reconstruct, or alter the current context (Roman, 1992) and open up to an ever-evolving transformation of integrative evaluation.

**Mapping Troubled Terrains**

A textual form maps this text, structured by particular points of interest that have emerged as troubled historical and current sites of integrative evaluation. The text is written within a common and expected mapping of dissertations while knowing that unanticipated disjunctures may occur at interstices where readers are asked to become, in Ruth Vinz’s (1997) words, “more nomadic than usual, searching for a trace of meaning by moving through a sometimes ambiguous textual geography” (p. 245). Disruptions, located at different points of the terrain for each reader, lay hidden, unmarked, in the effects of language that are both intentional and unintentional. They occur unexpectedly in the reading of the text, as they have done in its writing; the intention of my writing is to offer pathways of thoughtful interpretations and useful understandings that educe the reader to compose their own meanings. This inquiry, its manifestation in this text, and its defence continue to be a dynamic, ever-changing and on-going landscape of constituting and
reconstituting meaning for the participants, the writer and the readers.

Chapter one invites the reader to consider difficulties of integrative evaluation as living practices. The pathways taken in Chapter two are etched onto a troubled terrain of language and content pedagogy and identify several key meta-texts that contribute to broader historical and current conditions. It traces imbricated positionalities rooted in dilemmatic discourse(s) of integrative evaluation, and relations of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration. Chapter three takes the reader into the communities of presumed authorities to listen to “where” they dwell. I ask, what are the espoused common grounds and grounds of difference in ELL writing assessment within language and content pedagogy and its history? Chapter four details a particular approach to mapping instances of integrative evaluation through discourse(s). It legitimates methods that centralise the role of discourse(s) in inquiry practices and lays out the undertaking of the study, its contextual frame and responses to questions of trustworthiness and obligation. Chapter five maps pathways of decision-making taken by participants engaged in integrative evaluation. The mapping, in part, locates pedagon, those discursive sites of tensions for teachers in the pre-conditions of decision-making. Given significant attention are the troubled discourse(s) of undecidability as discursive pre-conditions of decision-making. Chapter Six discusses the findings from chapter five through discussions of validity, ethicality and positionality.

Dominance of the technical is questioned, the possibility of de-centering the Cartesian condition is explored and an attunement to voices of the learner is considered. Reconceptualising ELL writing as a “wholly human endeavour” (Hamp-Lyons, 1991, p. 2), suggesting middle ways of judging ELL essays are offered, not for purposes of mastery and objective clarity but as ways “to live with [the difficulties] well.” The postscript is in place of a conclusion. I briefly re-write the disruptions that guided the ‘academic’ writing of this dissertation and ponder how it might be judged. As an inquiry, I entered into the middle-of-things. I learned of language and its effects, of aporetic sites and their difficulties, and of my own shifting positionalities.

Finally, it is a journey already begun, always incomplete and, in part, never ending.

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"I heed Davis’s (1996) call to resist impossible claims of “scientistic ideals of neutrality, objectivity, and generalizability” and instead engage in goals of “viable understandings rather than verifiable facts, relevant interpretations rather than generalizable conclusions” (p. 26), hence I argue for this project’s trustworthiness.
I attempt to enter into the middle of the “pedagon” of instances of integrative evaluation. Co-specifying relations among the researcher, the subjects, the topics emerging from the folds of the project, the sites of struggle that get structured as questions, and the historical and current conditions of the inquiry become paths which weave intricately as tangled networks of words where contrary themes collide, the previously unknown becomes present, and still-to-be-known is not-yet-to-be-found in the on-going, day to day tasks of teachers judging writing. It is the multiple contrary themes and the still-to-be-known that are lived out as generative spaces of difference, as “original difficulties” that are of interest to this inquiry and unfold in the remaining chapters as an intertextual struggle of the possible limits and promise of the difficulties of integrative evaluation practices as/in contested spaces.
Chapter two
Contested Spaces as/in “Stuck Places”:
Evaluation, Literacy, and Language/Content Integration

A praxis of stuck places ... [refers to] finding a way out of situations from which there is no way out ... where we are out of our depth and forced to be resourceful, elusive, wily in finding a path that does not exist.

Patti Lather, *Validity, ethics and positionality in qualitative research: Wrestling with the angels*

Ideology is not reproduced as a closed system for talking about the world. Instead it is reproduced as an incomplete set of contrary themes, which continually give rise to discussion, argumentation and dilemmas.

Michael Billig et al., *Ideological Dilemmas*

Language, typically, is immersed in the ongoing life of a society, as the practical consciousness of that society. This consciousness is inevitably a partial and false consciousness.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Language as Ideology*
Positionalities and Meta-texts

Social practices as ‘living’ texts appear to embed diverse positionalities\(^\text{18}\); those necessary illusions we have come-to-know that persuade us to assume that “the way things are is the way they ought to be” (Nichols, 1981, p. 1). To understand living texts in this way involves an awareness of how everyday lives are implicated and accentuated by meta-texts within which positionalities disrupt as ambiguous and tensioned “stuck places”.\(^\text{19}\)

The purpose of this chapter then is to explore understandings of contested spaces and how they can be understood as living practices of integrative evaluation. First, complex concepts of positionality and of meta-texts are explored. Then, subsequent parts of this chapter explore various conflicting and ambiguous positionalities within meta-texts.

In a turn from assumptions of a fixed, commensurate discourse of standpoint, I view positionality as a performative interplay of dynamic, contested discursive relations that unsuspectingly frame how we understand the world (Lather, 1998). It is a stance-in-flux that rejects the possibility of consistently held systematised solutions or discursive univocality, and acknowledges the partiality of ideological assumptions and their dilemmatic conditions engaged in a movement of deliberation and negotiation (Billig et al., 1988). Positionality is influenced by notions of ideology that “link[] the textual and the political” (Lemke, 1995, p. 2) through relations of meaning and power in discourse (text). Positionalities are those common taken-for-granted meanings that have become common sense and guide everyday life. Constructed in social dialogue, these meanings have for the most part been inherited from others. As social, they are meanings that are subjected to political acts and as a result some meanings have been privileged over others. Written as common sense, they become unquestioned ways of understanding of the world.

Lemke (1995), a North American educational scholar, summarises ‘modern’ common sense as a need for certainty and common ground.

Roughly from the time of Descartes’ Meditations, European intellectual traditions have sought to escape from the radical skepticism that ended the earlier age of

\(^{18}\) I use the term positionality as a main focus of this dissertation; however, other terms denoting similar ideas are orientation, imaginary and ideology. Although I use Billig’s work with ideology to further the argument, I minimise the use of the term ideology in my own work because of modernist assumptions associated with ‘logos’.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{19}\) I use Lather’s term “stuck places” as contested spaces, those aporias wherein teachers struggle within counter-themes, and incomplete and dilemmatic ideological structures to evaluate ELL texts.
religious faith. The principal strategy for this escape has been to find some basis of certainty other than faith in religious revelation: some common or uncommon sense way of proceeding toward understanding, some safe place from which to begin. This strategy produced a new faith in logic and logical inquiry, first in philosophy, then in mathematics, and finally in science. Each claimed to have discovered a trustworthy *method* of proceeding, a safe initial set of assumptions. These methods claimed to be universal: valid by logical necessity, in all times and all places, for all people and all purposes. They became our modern common sense. (p. 2)

Questioning the “our” in “our modern common sense”, Lemke asks, “*Whose* strategy for life produced this common sense?” (p. 3). Interested in issues of power, meaning and ruling ideologies, he pursues how the modern common sense we have come to know is a product of history, constructed by an exclusionary group who were inattentive to the needs of others outside the upper class European intellectual community of that time. With similar interests, Hodge and Kress (1993) claim, “The grammar of a language is its theory of reality” (p. 6). Of interest in this project is not how privileged meanings structured in particular ways support the power of one social group over another, or why one ideology dominates another, instead my interest is in locating and interpreting the ideological functioning of those dominant and resistant themes within the discourses of integrative evaluative practices. Concerned with “logical necessity” as perhaps being a necessary illusion, I resist the use of ideo(logy) and use positionality to assist in interpreting practices of integrative evaluation.

I have scripted the term meta-text to refer to broad concepts within which numerous fissured positionalities dwell. In particular, I focus on three meta-texts explicitly involved in integrative evaluation: 1) curriculum perspectives and their implied approaches to learner evaluation, 2) literacy orientations, and 3) linguistic perspectives on language and content relations. Meta-texts embody orientations that construct a commonsense of particular aspects of the daily activities in which educators engage. For example, one of the meta-texts of integrative evaluation, literacy, involves an understanding of what it means to read written content. Is reading an autonomous act? Reader response theorists would argue

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20 I argue that multiple positionalities dwell within any meta-text; positionalities that are incomplete, have dominant and resistant counter-themes and give rise to dilemmatic pre-conditions of decision-making (Billig et al., 1988). Given these inherent conditions, tensions can emerge in within and between meta-texts.
Evidence of a meta-text of literacy at work in teacher's practices in the current project is found in the positional traces of their discourses, particularly evident when they engage in the pre-conditions of deciding a mark for a particular ELL text. What assumptions underlie meanings made from the ELL texts they read and then judge? Within the discourse(s), commonsense assumptions of literacy are endlessly being re-written as contrary themes are interpreted and re-negotiated in the act of judging that text. Meta-texts, as frames of reference for tracing commonsense assumptions of living practices, are not viewed as offering a number of shared, whole and complete systems within which individuals choose to act. Instead, meta-texts seem to be regularly claimed by assumptions of positionalities that are fragmented, contradictory and partial (Billig et al., 1988); meta-texts become fissured texts of a "false consciousness" (Hodge and Kress, 1993, p. 6) of integrative evaluation practices.

**Contested Spaces of Living Texts**

It is argued in Chapter Four that activities comprise interdependent relationships, creating a kind of ecological embodiment of living practices. Considered in this way, the activity of integrative evaluation is viewed as containing sub-activities and is itself a sub-activity of some larger context. Here, I want to draw attention to the sub-activities or aspects of living practices that seem to locate particular points of (in)decision, contestation, and ambiguity and then consider, in general, implicated positionalities of dilemmatic discourse(s) as evidenced in inter-related ambiguous instances of integrative evaluation.

A number of sub-activities involving the pre-conditions of decision-making for teachers within the practice of integrative evaluation may include: 1) how to write the prompt and what information to include; 2) what criterion to use in the judging of texts and how to express the criteria; 3) how to read the text; 4) how to apply the evaluative criteria; and, 5) how to (re)mark the text being judged. Albeit routine, the decisions inherent in each sub-activity are difficult ones, especially when the curricular and instructional context is meant to address learners functioning in another language.

As has already been stated, one of the main purposes of this project is to explore the

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21 Reader response theorists are concerned with how readers make meaning from their experience with a text. They claim that "the text cannot [original emphasis] be understood or analysed as an isolated entity." (Beach, 1993, p. 1)
activity of judging ELL written content and its felt tensions. In exploring difficulties, particularly those emerging in teachers’ discourse(s), I consider the work of Billig et al (1988) and Billig (1996). Although they take a rhetorical approach to arguing and thinking, my interest is in their attention to the dilemmatic preconditions of decision making. They write,

> The existence of contrary maxims, or opposing pieces of folk wisdom, illustrates that common sense possesses a dilemmatic nature. These contrary themes are the preconditions for those dilemmas in which people are faced with difficult decisions. It is not . . . how people cope with these situations and how decisions are made. Our concern is more with the dilemmatic preconditions, in other words with those contrary themes which under normal circumstances are reflected in people’s thoughts. (Billig et al., pp. 2-3)

What they allude to is that individuals (in this case teachers) are “not to be seen as being fully preprogrammed by neatly systematised plans of action, which are awaiting the appropriate triggering stimulus and which obviate the need for all deliberation” (ibid., p. 3). Instead, they claim that deliberation, of what they call “contrary themes”, is a necessary occurrence in everyday life. Contrary themes, I would argue, that are not necessarily reduced to “either/or” but include multiple historical and current traces located in the contested spaces of discourse(s) enacted in activity.

Rewritten as/in integrative evaluation, their theory of dilemmatic ideologies suggest that even the ‘best’ systematised plans of action will not erase all of the dilemmas inherent in routine acts of integrative evaluation. They argue that practices are not pre-determined, but are negotiated among relationships enacted in practice. In this project, relations are not only between ‘self’ and ‘other’, but textual relationships of evaluation, literacy and language and content integration - intertextual relations where one text is read against the background of other texts everpresent in the first. Here, the difficulties as ways of knowing and doing integrative evaluation bare themselves to the histories from which the current moment emerges. Anticipated in disparate discourses are multiple contested themes that offer endless debate and disruption. It is a space that is occupied, not with systematised solutions or positions of univocality that are held consistently by people, but with dilemmas that are contested and negotiated as conflicting positionalities shape and are shaped by the interdependent sub-activities within living practices.

Few would deny the agon teachers face in turning the graphite (marks of a pencil)
on a graded text to ink. Yet, it is the preconditions of that decision, Caputo's (1993) "undecidabilities", that are of particular interest to this project. It may be helpful at this point to return to an instance of difficulty found in the conversation between two teachers that was offered earlier on page eight in chapter one. Both teachers comment on whether to give whole or separate marks for language and content. No other possibilities are evidenced. One wants to give a whole mark but acknowledges that s/he separates language/content while marking because it is easier. The other wants to give separate marks even though s/he knowledges it is problematic. They both question language and content relations in asking, does language effect meaning or meaning effect language? If language and content relations are holistic (i.e., integrated), separating them could be viewed as an act of 'fixing' a 'technical' problem; taking a complexification and dividing it into arbitrary 'static', simple pieces, could be perceived as leading to artificial and possibly unfair judgments. Yet, there is a felt ease at presuming to separate language and content. Without exploring further the norms, values and social expectations, and positionalities that make up the fragments of shared social knowledge lurking beneath the surface (as this will be done in Chapter five), this instance illustrates how a particular dilemma (to give a whole or separate mark) presupposes more general meta-textual dilemmatic aspects of practice (integrativist vs separatist view of language and content relations; objectivity vs. subjectivity of judgments; ease vs. perceived fairness). In part, the dilemmas are presumed to be resolved through a negotiated settlement among contested themes, while others seem to be temporarily resolved through a restructuring of presumed objective texts to reduce the subjective messiness implied in taking an integrative stance.

In the dilemma outlined above, the phrase 'language and content' seems to be a shared common ground, yet it also appears to be fragmented, illusory and unfixed in its meaning within and among the teachers in conversation. Billig et al. (1988) argues that "it is not merely that the bits and pieces of social knowledge are themselves socially shared, but that what are shared are conflicting bits and pieces" (p. 15). What teachers know about integrative evaluation and what they do to enact their values underlying notions of fairness and consistency can be a space of difference within and among individuals; potentially conflicting aspects of a presumed shared, common ground that effect dilemmatic
Dilemmatic aspects, according to Billig et al., are expressed both explicitly and implicitly in routine conversations. They write that explicit acknowledgment of dilemmas is usually expressed in the presentation of both sides of the debate as reasoned choices. The meaning argued for choosing one over another can be generally followed from the overt discourse structures. Constituting implicit meanings from dilemmatic texts necessitates greater interpretive acts. Implicit meanings, Billig et al. suggest, are the traces of negative meaning, counter-themes, that may be contained within the same semantic structuring as explicit dilemmas but are hidden from view. They argue that implicit meanings may be unknown to the speaker as well as to the listener. Billig et al. address the complexity of meaning as it is structured in discourses as dilemmatic ideology. They begin with the assumption of contrary themes and aim to understand discourse meanings as a kind of dialectic; a kind of discourse that structures explicit, dominant meanings as well as counter-themes of negation that give rise to deliberation. It would appear that the teachers' conversation on page eight of chapter one is an example of just such a dialectic.

Dialectics are presumed to occur because of the contrary themes evidenced in discourse(s). Those bits and pieces, the fragments of shared common and contested ground, of living dilemmatic positionalities - those meta-texts and orientations that seem to be incomplete, implicitly or explicitly conflicting in everyday discourse(s). In considering the work of teachers engaged in integrative evaluation and the meta-texts that influence their work, orientations towards evaluation, conceptions of literacy and views of language continued to emerge. Although listed as if in an order of privilege, I want to acknowledge that each of these areas have their own varied order of import within and between individuals. I also want to acknowledge that each area informs and is informed by the other. For example, a strong technological orientation towards evaluation may influence an individual’s view of language and/or literacy. My purpose is to locate traces of positionality of at least these three dimensions of integrative evaluation and, in so doing, make the

22 Billig’s work seems to be framed by dualistic thinking. However, I read it as at least two sides of a debate and am alert to the possibility of more than two alternatives in teachers' discourses. Interestingly, as I read and then wrote of various orientations within each of the three meta-texts explored in this work, two predominant orientations consistently emerged and were often discussed in binary, opposing terms in the literature.
contrary bits and pieces more visible through interpretive work. In the following sections, a summary of three meta-texts of integrative evaluation with possible positionalities within each are offered.

**Orientations to Student Evaluation**

Through multifarious educational experiences as teachers and as students, educators have come to engage in student evaluative practices using their own favoured approaches and strategies. As familiar resources of evaluative practices, these approaches may unknowingly shape and be shaped by evaluator's acts in particular ways. It is a process whereby unquestioned commonsense has the potential to dictate the form of evaluation and how it is understood. Within privileged models and techniques, traces of at least one predominant positionality in education, framed as a technical orientation (Tyler, 1949), seems to linger. It is a convincing perspective of scientific rationality that attempts to reduce education, and therefore evaluation, to precise technical acts. Although the dominance of one model can itself be troubling, of more concern is that,

> the dominance [of a single mode of evaluation] may lead evaluators to forget that the form of evaluation should be appropriate to the phenomenon to be evaluated and that the evaluation approach should be responsive to the interests to be served by the evaluation.” (Aoki, 1991, p. 98)

It has been my experience that many of the current evaluation practices of ELL academic writing still remain loyal to the use of an objective form of evaluation that purports to 'measure' the subjectivities of writing. One of the purposes of this inquiry is to probe the effects of such relations between form and phenomenon.

Current discussions on curriculum offer a number of perspectives as ways of understanding educational orientations towards evaluation.  

Summarised in Table 1, the orientations described lean heavily on the work of Aoki (1991) and his attempt to expose worldviews that influence the ways program evaluation is understood and gets done. I borrow three of the curricular orientations he offers in his discussion of program evaluation: ends-means, praxical and emic. I then introduce radical hermeneutics as a possible fourth orientation that is gaining prominence in hermeneutics (Jardine, 1992; Smith, 1999). It is

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23 For various readings of current discussions on curriculum orientations and implied learner evaluative practices, see Eisner and Vallance (1974), Pinar (1975), Miller (1983), Miller and Seller (1990), McNeil (1990), Pinar and Reynolds (1992), and Eisner (1994).
not my intention to usurp the values of one orientation for another but to suggest that even with alternative ways of envisioning evaluative practices, the rootprints of the most dominant orientation, ends-means, is unforgiving. A current headline in a local newspaper reads, "Richmond okays traditional school." A desire to return midst contrary contemporary trends in education; the roots of a 'traditional school' - a return to the basics that presumes to prepare students for adult life - as an ends-means orientation are everpresent. It is a space where the past is rewritten in the present, evolving anew each time the story of 'traditional schooling' is told. If traces of a traditional orientation continue to have a stronghold against alternate current curricular recommended practices, I would argue that it also continues to have a stronghold in evaluative practices, as it seems that evaluation is often one of the last accomplishments of curricular change.

As a prevailing worldview, the 'tradition' referred to is an orientation to technology that began to emerge with the rise of science in the 17th century. In response came a shift in the use of language and the felt need to be precise and univocal. Initially, the age of technology was centred in business practices of precision, efficiency and productivity. This orientation eventually found its way into curriculum practices. Tyler (1949) with his seminal work, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, was an influential proponent of a technological orientation in education. As a credible legacy from a mainstream social theory that expounded tenets of instrumental reason, a technological orientation of education for many became the orientation. Knowledge as neutral, finite facts could be attained and evaluated through technical, ends-means acts. It is an evaluative stance immersed in positivists' traditions of objectivity and concerned with questions that ask, what is the most effective and efficient means to evaluate student achievement of curricular and instructional ends (objectives)? It is an ethos to which many evaluators as educators still knowingly, and unknowingly, remain loyal.

The headline is from The Vancouver Sun, (Wednesday, June 17, 1998, p. B3) and is reflective of the current educational climate in various parts of British Columbia and across the country. In arguing for traditional schools, images of multiple and conflicting themes are reflected in a veil of back to the basics, yet, in Richmond anyway, the historical and current moment suggests a more deep-rooted interest - that of addressing the assumed problematics of ESLness.

Smith (1999) in Pedagon writes of the valued ambiguous and discursive quality of language before the rise of science in the seventeenth century. A new orientation to language that demanded precision evolved in response to the age of technology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientations to evaluation</th>
<th>Underlying assumptions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| ends-means (technical)    | • planned teaching goals and objectives to achieve specific ends that can then be judged  
| focus on instruction      | • tacit interests in teachers' control and manipulation of teaching, learning and evaluation  
|                           | • need to determine to what level of certainty instructional objectives have been met  
|                           | • engage in criterion-referenced activities for purposes of predictability  
|                           | • measure levels of attainment of determinate, commodification of knowledge and skills to mark end-points of curricular study  

(influenced by the work of Tyler, 1949)

| praxical                  | • effect active social change  
| focus on learning         | • students and teachers generate complex information from evaluative practices that informs the curriculum  
|                           | • evaluation practices are acts of critical reflection and transformative action that lead to emancipation and social reconstruction of underlying assumptions  

(influenced by the work of Freire, 1970)

| emic (insider view)       | • evaluation aims to determine the quality of students’ experiences  
| focus on relationships of teaching and learning | • interest in students’ subjective knowledge in situ  
|                           | • attempts to access the interrelations of values, beliefs and actions of specific activities  
|                           | • emic views attempt to access learners’ ways of knowing  
|                           | • students’ evaluate themselves e.g., self and portfolio assessment  
|                           | • evaluation as an act of thick description  

(influenced by anthropological insights)

| radical hermeneutics      | • gain insights into students’ moments of difficulty (as difference) in their living practices (e.g., “stuck places” when writing content)  
| focus on “keeping the difficulty of life alive” | • resist a metaphysical desire for presence (e.g., written content embeds the said and the unsaid)  
|                           | • interpretation as a performative act (i.e., meaning of a text is created in recursive interpretations and intertextual negotiations)  
|                           | • evaluation includes negotiated acts of valuing creative paths laid while working through “stuck places” (i.e., valuing discourse structures written in cultural hybridity, where language effects meaning that is constituted in difference)  

(influenced by the work of Caputo, 1987)

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Aoki (1991) writes ends-means orientations as hidden agendas of control and manipulation.

26
The other three orientations, though similar in their interests of exploring social and living experiences, are rooted in traces of positionalities that differ significantly. While the praxical orientation can be traced to neo-Marxian critical social theory and the need to disclose hidden relations of power and meaning as experienced through dialectal engagement of critical reflection and practical action, and to ask whose interests are being served, emic interests target a thick description of the subjective world of social relations between participants in situ engaged in particular activities being evaluated. Emic evaluators are interested in the views of participants as they relate to the self-determined quality and relevance of the experience. The possibility of a radical hermeneutic stance in evaluative practices is taken up by those interested in the dynamic and complex, living relationships in schools wherein difficulties as “stuck places” dwell. In introducing radical hermeneutics, Caputo (1987) offers,

"hermeneutics always has to do with keeping the difficulty of life alive and with keeping its distance from the easy assurances of metaphysics. (p. 3)"

It is a view of the learner in *flux* that questions the privileging of a metaphysical presence and seeks that which has been silenced by a view of life as objective and factual.

**Conceptions of Literacy for Texts in School**

Although I recognise that conceptions of literacy are not restricted to traditional notions of reading and writing, for purposes of illuminating possible frameworks of literacy for texts used in schooling, this discussion will be limited to reading and writing typical school texts. One such literary event, reading student writing, embeds underlying assumptions about what a text is, how it should be written and how it should be read. Many of these assumptions have long standing traditions and commonsense appeal, and therefore remain unquestioned. In the western tradition of formal education, one such prevailing ethos described by Street (1984) is an autonomous model of literacy where text is viewed as object. Recent literacy debates have called into question such traditional views and offer alternative models to literacy. For example, Hill and Parry (1994) introduce a pragmatic model of literacy based on their interest in texts used in reading tests and call on us, as others have, to consider text as social communication. Similarly, Hasan & Williams (1996),
respected for their work in literacy, claim that "any 'literary event' in social life is necessarily one which implicate readers, writers and texts understood as language in use in social contexts" (p. xi). Table 2 outlines possible traces of positionalities of two dominant conceptions of literacy for texts used in schooling. I do not assume that teachers locate themselves in one concept or another and that all of the characteristics listed within one must be embraced by those that give allegiance to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptions of school literacy</th>
<th>Underlying assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| autonomous focus on writer    | • text as an objective product represents unambiguous and autonomous meaning, it can be separated from its producer  
• reading/writing as technical acts, linguistic and autonomous skills are transferable across texts  
• writer/reader is autonomous to the text |
| social focus on reader        | • text is social e.g., reader response theories  
• reading/writing are active mediations of socially constituted meaning  
• the act of producing text continuously hails the voices of other text makers  
• writing/reading involves social reciprocity |

Literary events are complex act. Reading student writing is made even more complex by a lingering desire of most English writers to communicate directly with their readers. As an autonomous text, the intended meaning of the writer is presumed to be the meaning of the text and one the reader must somehow come to know. How has writing and reading come to be understood in this way? Smith (1999), leaning on The Flight From Ambiguity by Levine, offers, "an orientation to technology inspired by the rise of science creates a demand for precision and univocity in language" (p. 170). It is a movement that seems to continue to be an influential and persuasive perspective of the West.

Evidence of writing as a hunt for certainty can be traced to Descartes and his concern for the possibility of meaning as indisputable and certain. Husserl in Eagleton
(1983), like Descartes, claimed to establish certainty, then, we must first of all ignore, or “put in brackets”, anything which is beyond our immediate experience; we must reduce the external world to the contents of our consciousness alone. (p. 55)

It was the beginning of what is known today as phenomenology, the science of pure 'phenomena' as realities of consciousness. What can be known, and therefore what we can be certain of, was the universal essences and unchanging aspects of the phenomena under study. It was a move away from abstraction to work with the concreteness of experience, discovering what was essential and invariable. Perception came from knowing the very essence of things. How was this essence or meaning understood to be communicated?

Eagleton (1983) comments that to Husserl,

Meaning is something which pre-dates language; language is no more than a secondary activity which gives names to meanings [we] somehow already possess. (p. 60)

This stance privileges meaning, giving it pre-linguistic status and minimises the role of language in communication. Eagleton (1983), in explaining Husserl’s position, argues,

Meaning is an ‘intentional object’. It is a kind of ‘ideal’ object, in the sense that it could be expressed in a number of different ways but still remains the same meaning ... the meaning of a literary word is fixed once and for all: it is identical with whatever ‘mental object’ the author had in mind, or ‘intended’ at the time of writing. (p. 66)

Others, such as Saussure and Wittgenstein, in questioning his notions of meaning as object, made revolutionary claims of language as the producer of meaning. Yet, for Saussure some of the ideas Husserl and Descartes put forth remained close to his work.

Saussure’s work in semiotics evidences the import he attributed to the signified (meaning) over the signifier (language) and the significance of the direct and stable relationship between the two, while acknowledging the arbitrariness of the sign. The legacy of what it is to write in English have led many of us to believe that words carry meaning in a direct, representational relationship that is absolute and unchanging. Eagleton (1983) summarises American hermeneuticist Hirsch’s perspective on writing and meaning as,

a meaning of a word is identical with what the author meant by it at the time of writing....There may be a number of different valid interpretations, but all of them must move within the ‘system of typical expectations and probabilities’ which the author’s meaning permits.(p. 67)
In this stance, the author remains the authority of meaning of his/her text. It appears to be a location where the product can be separated from the producer and stand autonomously as a representation of ‘intended’ meaning. If writing is understood, and therefore ‘produced’ in this way, reading, similarly understood, should be unproblematic. It would seem then, that the ‘hunt for certainty’, the knowing of what one has come to consciously know, can be contained in words. From Descartes’ dictum: I think therefore I am, the writer could argue, what I say is what I mean. Objectifying meaning and reducing the role of language to a conduit seems to remove the possibility of valuing a ‘meaning gap’ in writing; it is a stance that works to disinherit ambiguous and uncertain relations in texts.

Hermeneutics, the art of interpretation, as engaged in by Heidegger and his German successor, Gadamer, was concerned with fundamental questions of text interpretation: interrogating the relationship between textual meaning (as interpreted by a reader) and the author’s intention, and inquiring into the (im)possibility of ‘objective’, autonomous text (Gadamer, 1977). Although this work held, and continues to hold, promise, it did not seem to significantly weaken the hold of Husserl’s ‘truths’ and the dominant ideas of text as a representation of ‘intentional’ meaning; assumptions about text that currently many in educational circles continue to remain loyal. It seemed that the hunt for certainty, a ‘close’ reading of texts, had been allegedly reduced to words that can say what they mean.

Hill and Parry (1994) and Hasan and Williams (1996) advocate for a social model of literacy that involve interpretive acts. Ashcroft (1996) notes that, as a form of dialogic accomplishment, the writer (text) and the reader negotiate meaning within socio-cultural contexts that shape and are shaped by the literary event. In this view, literacy becomes a performative, social act of reciprocity in which the meaning “of [reader] responses varies considerably according to differences in specific social, historical or cultural contexts” (Beach, 1993, p. 7). Attention is given to the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of discourse, conveyed by the situation of the writing/reading event. Writing’s perlocutionary force is not its expressive potential of the grammar and mechanics of English usage but is the effect of language actualised in the social act of writing and reading. The writing/reading event is the place where the language system, and its users converge; where words intersect. Meaning becomes a dialogic accomplishment within a social and
inherited context of dynamic interchange that brings together multiple wor(l)ds of the writer and reader; where writing/reading generatively alters and (re)constructs meaning.

Rooted in notions of discourse as a social process, this understanding of literacy questions how ‘true’ meaning is possible and instead deals with socially and experientially-based realities that are multiple, elusive and susceptible to change. Calling into question the restrictions rules place on writing, this view of literacy asks to be freed of those constraints; to be free to write knowing that message will be understood differently and only partially each time it is read. Differently and partially in that the cross-illocutionary (cultural) forces between writer and reader (the situation) create a gap that is installed by their variances of language and context. Meaning is constituted from the networking of differences, with the gap resisting complete understanding and representation. Writers within this orientation seem to claim that symbols and signs as words do not directly link to the experiences they write; instead, experiences are disrupted and suspended in the slipperiness of the relationship between the signifier and the signified and between signifier and signifier. Meaning seems not to be created by encoding a pre-existing thought; instead, knowing (as writer and as reader) is a function of the gaps and differences that traverse and resist the text.

Understanding that words do not directly represent our experiences recognises the potential for multiple and partial interpretations of meaning in the enactment of (re)writing in difference. Writing in difference is freed from the immutable laws that confine and reduce knowing to one truth; writing in difference acknowledges the ambiguity and alterity of socially constructed ways of knowing. Here meaning is not owned; neither the writer nor the reader are held responsible for the meaning of the text. Instead, meaning is dependent on what is brought to the text by the writer and the reader. In the intricacy, hybridity and constant shifting of language-in-use, there is no one standard code; language, and the meaning it constitutes, arises out of a struggle to write what is known and to know what is written. Ashcroft (1996) reminds us,

"Words are never simply referential... but have a number of meanings, depending on how they are used [the situation]... the almost limitless prolixity of words brought to the site of meaning... demonstrates the total dependence of that meaning upon its 'situated-ness'. (p. 300)"
Reading and writing seem to connote meaning by the function of their situation. Ashcroft (1996) claims, "the process of reading itself is a continual process of contextualisation and adjustment directly linked to the constitutive relations within the discursive event" (p. 301). It is a social model of literacy, where language seems to be inextricably bound to its social reality, functioning to effect meaning in a dialogic accomplishment.

**Dominant Views of Language**

The commonsense of needing to know how language works seems obvious. In second language classrooms, learning English is primarily thought of in linguistic terms, differing from a literary perspective emphasised in first language learning. Therefore, linguistic assumptions of language and content relations are briefly reviewed as possible positions teachers take in judgments of texts. A formal view, primarily based on the influential writings of Chomsky, and a functional view, centrally located in the work of Halliday, form the basis of two linguistic orientations to language. My purpose is to focus on these two dominant positions as they have had significant impact on first, second and foreign language pedagogical practices.

There are at least two theoretical stances in linguistics that provide different assumptions about the general nature of language and the goals of linguistics: "formal (or structural) and functional" (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 20). As Schiffrin reports, several writers have contrasted these stances.

Kress (1985) makes the formal/functional contrast using the terms "social" and "more traditional linguistic approach" approach:

Perhaps it will help to characterise the latter [the more traditional linguistic approach] in a few sentences. Within the discipline of linguistics there is a strong and still dominant strand which regards the study of phonology and syntax and their theoretical treatment as 'real' linguistics. This strand asserts the autonomy of linguistics, in terms of its theories, methodologies and subject matter. The approach is characterised in journals such as Language, Journal of Linguistics, Linguistic Inquiry. In the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, this approach was epitomised by the work of Noam Chomsky and of the theory of Transformational Grammar. Another strand has always emphasised the social dimensions of language . . . The theoretical work of Michael Halliday is in that tradition. In the mid-1960s, . . . Dell Hymes introduced the concept of 'communicative competence' in reaction to Chomsky's narrow and asocial definition of linguistic competence. Hymes' work has been most important both as a corrective and an alternative theory
of language as a social phenomenon. (p. 98)

Hymes (1974:79) makes the following contrast between formal (structural) and functional:

Structural: structure of language (code) as grammar. Use merely implements, perhaps limits, may correlate with, what is analysed as code; analysis of code prior to analysis of use. Functional: structure of speech (act, event) as ways of speaking. Analysis of use prior to analysis of code; organisation of use discloses additional features and relations; shows code and use in integral (dialectical) relation. (p. 79)

Leech (1983) contrasts formalist and functionalist approaches to linguistics in the following way:

(a) Formalists (e.g. Chomsky) tend to regard language primarily as a mental phenomenon. Functionalists (e.g. Halliday) tend to regard it primarily as a societal phenomenon.
(b) Formalists tend to explain linguistic universals as deriving from a common genetic linguistic inheritance of the human species. Functionalists tend to explain them as deriving from the universality of the uses to which language is put in human society.
(c) Formalists are inclined to explain children's acquisition of language in terms of a built-in human capacity to learn language. Functionalists are inclined to explain it in terms of the development of the child’s communicative needs and abilities in society.
(d) Above all, formalists study language as an autonomous system, whereas functionalists study it in relation to its social function. (p. 46)

Schiffrin (1994) further characterises formalist views:

Formalist views . . . argue that although language may very well have social and cognitive functions, these functions do not impinge upon the internal organisation of language. Newmeyer (1983) captures these qualities in two defining characteristics: autonomy and modularity. First, autonomy (p.2):

the grammar of a language is characterised by a formal autonomous system. That is, the phonology, syntax, and those aspects of meaning determined by syntactic configuration form a structural system whose primitive terms are not artifacts of a system that encompasses both human language and other human facilities or abilities. (Emphasis in original).

The formal autonomy of the grammar, however, does not prevent intersection with other modules; surface features of phonology, syntax, and semantics can result from the interaction of the "formal grammar" module with other equally autonomous modules, each governed by its own set of principles. Such modules might include perceptual psychology, physiology, acoustics, conversational principles, and general principles of learning and concept formation. (p. 22)

Halliday and Martin (1993), using Functional Linguistics (SFL) as an example of
functional linguistics, characterise functional views as being “oriented to the description of language as a resource for meaning . . . [;] concerned with texts[;] . . . focuse[d] on solidary relations between texts and social contexts[; and] . . . concerned with language as a system for construing meaning” (p. 22-3).

SFL is a view that accounts for how language, as a resource, is used to constitute meaning. Language as a systemic functional grammar considers “the system that lies behind the text” (Halliday, 1985, p. xiii) to explain how language functions ‘naturally’. In SFL, commonly known as functional grammar, the conceptual framework is one of rhetoric rather than logic. It is based in systemic theory that views language as a semiotic system, as a theory of meaning as choice at the level of discourse. Therefore, the grammar becomes a grammar of choices, not of rules. Although the term grammar is used in both perspectives, here it means syntax and vocabulary and is technically termed lexicogrammar (yet frequently shortened to ‘grammar’). The focus of functional grammar is on text rather than sentences: a site where meaning is negotiated and the relations between texts and social contexts are central (Halliday & Martin, 1993). Text viewed in this way is a concern with lexicogrammatical choices in “mutually predictive” relationships with text semantics and the contextual considerations they realise. SFL looks at language from the outside inwards, interpreting language by reference to its place in the social process and its potential for meaning. Grammar, from this perspective, is explained in functional terms - in terms of its use. The resources and choices of grammar played out within relations among (con)texts, construct meaning. It is an inclusive, transdisciplinary model “in which language, life, the universe and everything can be viewed in communicative (i.e., semiotic) terms.” (ibid., p. 23). Functional grammar relations give primacy and power to language; in the act of speaking or writing, meaning is socially constituted.

The two views have different emphases. This can perhaps best be demonstrated by the kinds of questions they may ask. For example, formal linguists may ask about the place of a grammar rule within the formal system of the language, whereas functional linguists frequently ask about the communicative effect of the message given particular contextual considerations. The potential for difficulty emerges in the partial and open systems constructed within and between each orientation of formal and functional linguistics.
Restoring Meta-Texts to Aporetic Sites

In a chapter that purposefully draws attention to what appears to be a multifold messiness of a current integrative evaluation landscape, it was not my intention to provide a possible directory of meta-texts and orientations that have led to this complexity or that will lead to a future moment in integrative evaluation, nor is it to offer a more effective and efficient approach that may be void of dilemmas and deliberations, if that were possible. Rather, as a starting point, each meta-text offers fragments of at least two dominant, often conflicting orientations that provide a backdrop of possible positionalities-in-movement that may contribute to aporetic sites in integrative evaluative practices. At moments of original difficulty, of being in “stuck places”, teachers work their way through and out of dilemmas. Some may take well worn paths and find themselves ‘stuck’ again at the same site at a future moment; others may choose to lay a ‘new’ path as they work their way through. Aporias are thought of as having generative possibilities (Jardine, 1992; Lather, 1998); therefore, it is with an on-going interest (inter esse - being in the middle of things) in living practices that I listen to the discourses of teachers in particular, as they work their way through and out of aporetic sites. Listening for various meta-textual and positional relations that mediate and complicate teachers’ journeys, I believe will provide useful interpretations of how integrative evaluation can now be understood. Evocations of familiar paths and invocations of generative possibilities emerge in the following chapters that offer a more detailed landscape on integrative evaluation through the discourses of presumed authorities (Chapter three) and of situated teachers’ practices (Chapter five).
Chapter Three

Tracing Orientations: A (Re)View of the Literature

Texts are constantly recycled, appearing in an endless succession of texts-about-texts, readings of readings of readings of readings. In order to understand this process we need to be able to see it in reverse, and read texts as writings of writings of writings of writings . . . developing an archaeology of each text that links, however uneasily, with the histories of its future . . . . The text (any given text) ceases to be a self-evident unity, but appears as a relatively accidental site that marks where a series of discursive processes have briefly collided. Producers (authors, speakers) likewise lose the semblance of unity, and become channels through which various authors and agencies speak and act: the fissured authors of fissured texts.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, Language as ideology

A way of teaching is never innocent. Every pedagogy is imbricated in ideology . . . [constituted in] language to define the self, other subjects, the material world and the relation of all of these to each other. Ideology is thus inscribed in language practices, entering all features of our experience.

Berlin, Rhetoric and ideology in the writing class

Linguistic content is inseparable from linguistic expression. But in research and in classroom practice, this relationship is frequently ignored. In subject matter learning we overlook the role of language as a medium of learning. In language learning we overlook the fact that content is being communicated . . . . What is needed is an integrative approach which relates language learning and content learning, considers language as a medium of learning and acknowledges the role of context in communication.

Bernard Mohan, Language and content

We define content-based instruction as the integration of particular content with language-teaching aims . . . . Ultimately, the goal is to enable students to transfer [language] skills to other academic courses given in their second language. Thus, both in its overall purpose and in its implementation, content-based instruction aims at eliminating the artificial separation between language instruction and subject matter classes which exists in most educational settings.

Donna Brinton, Ann Snow, & Marjorie Wesche, Content-based second language instruction
For purposes of the (re)view offered in this chapter - my view of those presumed texts of authority on ‘language and content’ - I play with brackets in the word, author(itie)s, to remind myself as a reader that authorial texts are texts of presumed informed comment rather than ‘truths’. Therefore I begin with cautioning the reader to be mindful of how texts are written and read - a theme re-visited throughout this thesis. Through a (re)view of the literature on language and content, I first establish a common ground among authorities in the field and then listen for traces of their orientations as a way of exploring language and content as a community of difference - of shifting positionalities and word meanings that reflect the influence of historical and current conditions on integrative evaluation practices. As a community of difference, I begin with a brief discussion of a legacy of learner assessment and evaluation practices, then explore language and content curricular links to its assessment, and, finally, consider the presumptions of writing, pedagogic interventions and its assessment within ESP/EAP communities, a close relation of language and content, as a way of educing interpretations of what and where of integrative evaluative practices as they are written in authorial texts in the field.

On Reading Pedagogical Author(itie)s of Language and Content

The first two quotes commenting on author(itie)s’ subjectivities in written texts begin an exploration in this chapter of how positionalities are “inscribed in language practices” of authored texts. As authored texts, they are “constantly recycled . . . texts-about-texts” (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p. 181) and work to dispel the notion of text as a unified, autonomous voice that claims one single, complete orientation. Instead, the fragmented or “fissured” text “appears as a relatively accidental site that marks where a series of discursive processes have briefly collided” (ibid). As fragmented, authored texts, they are written and read within particular contexts of situation as an engagement in social meaning and are, therefore, as Billig et al. reminded us earlier, spaces of explicit and implicit contrary themes and ambiguities. When constructed in particular ways, they may also convey through their powerful authority “representation as reflection of a separate reality” (Cosgrove & Domosh, 1993, p. 27). It is not my intent to engage in a discussion of a crisis
of representation here, only to become attuned to fragmented orientations within authorial texts in a general way and link the language and legacy of their historical roots to current pedagogical spaces where pedagogic acts of language and content dwell.

The last two quotes at the beginning of this chapter are from well-respected scholars in education who have made significant contributions to the area of language and content (also known as CBI or content-based instruction). They both call forth a need to recast an artificial separation of language and content they assert are prevalent in curricular practices, particularly in North America. They use the base word integrate to claim such a space - use of a common language that, for many, assumes shared meaning. Hence, of interest in this chapter is the language and legacy that has contributed both to an articulated common ground of content-based instruction and to disrupted, textured traces of fragmented orientations that have the potential to invoke dialogues of difference regarding language and content relations. I lean heavily on the authority of various members of CBI communities in attempting to locate some of the discordant orientations evoked in their meta-texts of language and content.

Many notions held about meaning and its relationship to language undergird interpretive practices lived in content-based classrooms, especially where language (in this case English) is both a subject of study and a medium of learning. Engendered from linguistic theories and pedagogical texts of author(ite)s, language and content communities are expanding as they gain increasing attention within the fields of immersion and foreign language teaching. Comprised of those who claim to value meaningful, contextualised learning, these communities place content at the initial stage of curricular planning and are sensitive to the language needs of learners engaged in the learning of that content. Yet, within this shared landscape of complex intentions, partially constructed and dilemmatic

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27 The work of Brinton, Snow & Wesche, (1989), Crandall (1987), Mohan (1986), Short, (1993, 1994), Snow & Brinton, editors (1997) are viewed as the main authoritative texts on language and content pedagogy. It is an area in the field of English as a second language that seems to have taken on its own signification and is viewed separate from English for academic purposes (EAP) and EAP's broader framework, English for specific purposes (ESP).

orientations of evaluative practices seem to dwell.  

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a (re)view of presumed authorial language and content texts where authors discuss their interpretations of complex issues emerging from within planned and unplanned second (immersion) language content-based curricular practices. I guide the reader to a number of linked language and content communities and consider assumptions embedded in “integrated” practices - of both curriculum and evaluation, of conceptions of writing content and its instruction, and of language and content relations. I first present a (re)view of the literature on language and content that alerts the reader to an authored common ground.

**Common Ground of Language and Content**

Eskey (1997), in a discussion of syllabus design, outlines a brief genealogy of content-based instruction based on Stern’s insightful commentary of “two major and largely unreconciled versions of . . . ‘communicative’ language teaching (CLT)” (p. 132). In the 1970s and 1980s a shift from a dominance of structural or grammatical designs of language courses to a communicative syllabus was a movement simultaneously taking place both in Europe (especially Britain) and in North America (Canale & Swain, 1980; Munby, 1978; van Ek & Alexander, 1977). Both communities were concerned with the functionality of language and the need to take advantage of the learners’ communicative environment.

Eskey informatively explores two divergent approaches to CLT that Stern had identified in the early 1980’s: a British-European version based in “new” linguistics (notions, functions and speech acts) which he called the L-approach, and a North American version based in psychology and pedagogy (interest in the learner and the learning process), which he called the P-approach. Eskey (1997) contends,

> content-based instruction is clearly a descendant of the P-approach, in the sense that it rejects the commonsense notion that the content of a language course should be language. (p. 133)

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79 Work in ideology and ESL was established by the work of critical theorists and pedagogues Auerbach (1989), Cummins (1989), Peirce (1989), Pennycook (1989), and by others acknowledging “education is political and ideology is unavoidable” (Benesch, 1993, p. 715). I have found particularly useful more current work in EAP by Benesch (1993), Johns (1991), Raimes (1991a), Santos (1992), and Zamel (1992, 1993, 1997).

80 My purpose is to attune the reader to the term ‘integration’ as it is a commonly used phrase in the language and content literature. In listening to authorial texts, I wonder, how is this term used?
He locates rootprints of content-based instruction in the North American version of CLT, one he claims is not educed from "any kind of linguistic analysis". While I would agree that CBI in North America may well have developed within a P-approach, and that notions of what content should be frequently neglect language as a topic of study, over the years questions of language and content relations seem to remain haunting ones.

The *language across the curriculum* movement in Britain in the 1970's, archived in such documents as *The Bullock Report, 1975*, which focused on the role of writing in subject-areas, was a shift towards the integration of language skills into content courses. *The Bullock Report* is viewed as the "first overt expression of a growing movement away from the rhetorical, product-oriented writing class - divorced from other subject-matter classes - toward an approach that views writing as an integral part of any course within the curriculum" (Crandall, 1987, p. 1). It was an attempt to acknowledge the responsibility of teachers in all subject areas to ensure writing skills are applied to authentic tasks such as lab reports, explanations of principles and theorems, discussions of historical causes and effects, or comparisons of religious or cultural institutions. (p. 2)

The field of reading has moved in a similar direction in arguing for reading skills to be taught in content courses and for texts of 'academic' substance be used in the teaching of reading skills, journeying beyond the use of texts of literature that have predominated traditional first-language reading classrooms. While practices in *learning to read and write* shifted to acknowledge the significance of *reading and writing to learn*, a similar trend in language instruction has taken place. Learning a language has become not only a study of language but also a medium in which to learn subject-matter.

Varying curricular approaches to language and content consider the teaching and learning of both language and content concurrently. The notion of integrating language and content had been a topic of discussion long before it gained attention in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL). Its history has been recorded by others and therefore will only be highlighted here to establish a common ground. As well, it is not

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31 For a thorough discussion on prominent 'language and content' curricular models see Brinton, Wesche, & Snow, 1989.

my intent to provide a rationale for the use of language and content approaches in programs for speakers of other languages, only to acknowledge that its use is well documented in English-speaking countries with high immigrant populations. Its use is well documented but little has been written that speaks to shared understandings of integrated language and content practices, a notion explored later in this chapter. As well, Eskey points out that few have written in detail how a content-based syllabus for ELL's would differ from one for mainstream classes. Eskey (1997) suggests that “some of the best work addressing this particular problem is that of the work of Mohan and his colleagues (e.g., Early, 1990a, 1990b; Mohan, 1986)” (p. 133). It would seem then a shared common ground would be found in principles rather than practices of language and content pedagogy.

Some view language and content as an umbrella term for many approaches that base their teachings on principles of meaningful learning. Labels such as theme-based, sheltered, adjunct, and content-based language instruction are used to describe pedagogic sites for CBI. As has already been stated, others suggest that language and content is one of several defined approaches to communicative language teaching. One principle of a common framework is the valuing of meaningful learning; meaningful learning that is assumed to take place when topics introduced in class are purposeful and interesting to learners and are linked to learners’ prior knowledge. The practices of who decides what is meaningful to whom is not raised. Simply, many proponents of language and content argue

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33 For a thoughtful discussion in support of CBI see Grabe and Stoller, 1997.
34 Brown (1994) in his text, Teaching By Principles, offers twelve broad principles of second language learning of which one is meaningful learning. He posits, “meaningful learning 'subsumes' new information into existing structures and memory systems, and the resulting associative links create stronger retention.” (p. 18) He argues that language and content retention improve when learners are engaged in subject matter that is of interest to them.
35 These categories are promoted and described in detail in the authorial CBI text by Brinton, Snow, & Wesche (1989). Benesch (1992) critiques the accommodationist ideology imbricated in an adjunct model as an approach that “reinforce[s] the status of large lecture classes and the traditional pedagogy of information delivery and retrieval” (p. 1) and perpetuates the secondary status of ESL classes as a “tutoring service” (p. 8). Benesch argues for “an alternative approach to paired courses, one in which the ESL and content faculty co-develop the curriculum” (p. 1) that assumes a critical stance of educational practices.
36 Nunan (1991b), in outlining a number of current approaches to the field of language teaching, suggests Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an overarching approach characterised by teaching and learning that is interactive, uses authentic texts, attends to learning how to learn and learning how to mean, links classroom activities to the 'real' world, and brings learners personal experiences into the classroom. He discusses six closely aligned terms: learner-centered, cooperative learning, task-based, content-based (language and content) and interactive learning. These terms are also discussed in Brown (1994) as current approaches to second language teaching.
that ELLs increase their language learning when engaged in learning that is relevant and meaningful. Common principle, perhaps uncommon practices.

Evident in authorial texts is that language and content, as a current pedagogic approach, is a pervasive view concerned with English not only as the subject of study but also as an active medium through which subject matter is learned. Mohan (1986), an educational linguist on the forefront of language and content concerns, comments,

The importance of subject matter and content as a context for language learning is now generally acknowledged in second language research. Similarly, in first language education there has been much discussion of ‘language across the curriculum’ since the publication of the Bullock Report “A Language for Life” (Bullock Committee, 1975). As a result, it has become widely accepted that the teaching of language should be integrated with all aspects of the curriculum. “Learning, it is now clear, involves language not merely as a passive medium for receiving concepts. Thus learning is not merely through language but with language” (Maryland, 1977, ix). (p.iii)

How relations of language and content could be understood are offered by Mohan (1986, 1990) in what he calls a knowledge framework that considers how particular structures of knowledge are constituted in language. His approach to language and content, rooted in functional linguistics, views English as a subject of study and as a medium of learning through a linguistic lens. Other authorial texts (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Crandall, 1987) also consider the possibility of English as subject and medium but through a pedagogical lens. Common purpose, differing orientations. Sheppard (1997) adds to the discussion with his comment that,

Content-ESL is a melange of strategies and methodologies, materials and activities, policies and practices that share a common purpose: the preparation of ESL students for the English medium content classroom through language and content integration . . . it falls between instruction in the language and instruction through the language. (p. 30)

As a space of instruction in and through English, the common ground of language and content seems to be a complex ground of difference where “content-language instruction has many definitions, and classroom practices vary as widely as communities, schools and personnel do” (Sheppard, 1997, p. 22). The common ground seems to be an imaginary ideal. In describing content-ESL programs in public schools in the United States, Sheppard claims, “the ideal is for an ESL and content teacher to take on part of the other’s job: the
ESL teacher systematically reinforces the students’ understanding of content, and the content teacher builds the students’ proficiency in English” (ibid.). Texts describing curriculum development, instructional approaches and classroom assessment suggest the ideal remains an important goal for content-ESL programs. Yet, they also confirm a wide range of perspectives and living practices of those involved in language and content practices that may or may not successfully accomplish the ideal. Perhaps the uncertainty of the space of instruction in and through English, including partial and conflicting orientations of language and content relations create a complexity of issues that give rise to CBI as a dilemmatic pedagogy.

Common ground to language and content pedagogues seems to be the expectation that language development and content learning be addressed in some way; it is a valuing of the principle that language cannot be learned in isolation from content and content learning is not void of language. While most recognise the need to systematically organise language and content for pedagogical purposes, diverse epistemological and methodological roots seem to disturb the possibility of shared common ground of practices. Language and content, in psycholinguistic terms, are understood as language items that are presumed to be separate from content items. In contrast, functional linguistic terms presume to relate language and content in a more holistic, integrated fashion. As contrary themes within fissured texts, they have the potential to co-exist in tension. It is a site of epistemological bits and pieces of language and content relations wherein fragmented traces from various linguistic and philosophic theories, for the most part, lie in silent conflict. Author(itie)s seem to be in agreement that whenever language is used, meaning is communicated. Yet, what is implicitly contested is language and content relations.

In sum, a framework for language and content seems to be shaped by the following partially shared common ground: 1) that English is the subject of study as well as the medium through which content becomes known; 2) that meaningful learning contributes to successful language learning; 3) that languages are learned ‘best’ through use; 4) that language and meaning are related; and 5) that language development and content learning must both be addressed. While common themes may exist in how ‘language and content’ is understood, so too, multiple, fragmented and contrary themes become ‘norms’ of how to
accomplish language and content pedagogy. Some argue for mapping separate language and content trails throughout the curriculum, while others seek ways to map them on similar paths. Herein lies a dilemmatic issue of language and content: the norms, as part of the framework that momentarily holds still embedded fissured orientations, have the potential to be inconsistent, unstable and uncertain in living practices of language and content pedagogy. What is evident in the literature is that “content-based curricula is gaining prominence in a wide range of contexts” and “many authors refer to successful program outcomes as evidence of its benefits” (Grabe & Stoller, 1997, p. 5). Increasing interest by educators in the field has contributed to the legitimation of a language and content pedagogy for simultaneous language learning and content learning within academic contexts for English language learners. Given this, orientations that both mediate and complicate authorial texts on pedagogical interventions and learner assessment for content - ESL programs are worthy of (re)view. I explore traces of evaluative CBI orientations and, in particular, those related to evaluating written content. Entailed in the pre-conditions of integrative evaluation, often the ‘final’ act of a curricular unit, are links to planned curricular goals, learning outcomes and instructional approaches to written language and content tasks. The remainder of this chapter is given to listening for orientations of authorial texts within these areas.

A Community of Difference

Although there seems to be an established common, shared ground within the community of language and content authorities, I would argue, it is also a community of difference. In using the term difference, I am speaking to the hybrid spaces of language and content pedagogy wherein contrary themes, fissured texts and ambiguous fragments dwell. In asking, what are the assumptions of author(ite)s of language and content texts that allow them to write what they do, partial and possibly conflicting traces of orientations may emerge and provide useful understandings of language and content as a community of difference.

I use the term difference and distinguish it from diversity - a term often used interchangeably with difference. Diversity implies ‘things’ as a space where separate parts make up a whole wherein parts as pieces of a complex puzzle are “unlike in nature or qualities; varied” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1984, p. 281). Whereas difference, as ‘no-things’ in its “dissimilarity, non-identity” (ibid., p. 267), contributes to a hybrid, possibly aporetic space that cannot be separated into parts; a space wherein incomplete assumptions and partial orientations mediate and complicate a community of presumed common ground.
A theme of language (as words, as text) and how it effects practices is offered throughout this chapter. For example, I begin by listening to ideational traces of how the term integration is understood and used in pedagogic discussions of language and content relations. Then, I attempt to track textured orientations in three other areas: 1) a legacy of assessment that may have contributed to current conditions of judging language and content written texts; 2) curricular and instructional practices that may have contributed to particular assessment and evaluative practices of ELL written content; and 3) pedagogic second language writing conventions and advocated assessment practices that may have contributed to expectations of the writing task and how it should be judged. I begin with an etymological search for meanings of integration.

_Fissured texts embedded in integrated practices_

Major works addressing CBI seem to align with what Hodge and Kress (1993) call fissured texts; that is, fragmented bits and pieces of discursive processes engaged in a language and content dialogic function collide at the textual site, especially in the use of the term _integration_. My purpose is not to question the validity of the substance of these major works nor to summarise them. Instead, I consider orientations to the term _integration_ as it is used in discussions of how to teach and evaluate language and content writing that inform the question, where are these texts of author(itie)s located on notions of ‘integration’?

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1987) offers two definitions of the verb _to integrate_. The first states: “made up of parts; whole, complete” and the second offers, “complete by addition of parts; combine (parts) into a whole” (p. 521). The verb to integrate, as the dictionary states, is derived from the Latin-based verb _integrare_, “to make whole” (ibid.). Although helpful in highlighting the importance of completeness, it is replete in specifying whether the ‘parts’ remain separated within the whole (as a part-whole relationship would suggest) or whether the parts are re-configured differently in process of integration. For example, in considering language and content relations, does integration act to make language and content inseparable or is segregation maintained within an ecological ‘wholeness’ of meaning-making? These take differing orientations in linguistic and pedagogic discussions on relations between language and meaning.
It has been suggested earlier in this chapter that the broader language and content community shares a common view of language as a medium for learning and of the need for language teaching and learning to take place within all areas of curriculum. Integration seems to be a term frequently used to suggest a way to accomplish this shared view. For example, Short (1993) in a detailed and thoughtful description of teacher strategies for integrating language into the social studies curriculum, comments,

when language educators integrate language and content objectives, it is often referred to as content-based ESL or content-based language instruction. . . . Some teachers . . . refer to this integration as thematic instruction . . . Some teachers prefer to integrate only one subject area with the language instruction . . . Regular and content teachers also integrate language and content instruction. This approach may be termed sheltered instruction if the students in the class are all English language learners, or language-sensitive content instruction if the class is heterogeneous . . . The main focus of these classes is content comprehension; however, the teachers are often trained in ESL techniques to make their instruction more accessible to students learning English. (pp. 582-3)

Her purpose is clearly pedagogical in identifying three curricular models (similar to the three models offered by Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989) that claim to integrate language and content. As part of a research project, Short (1993) and her colleagues
decided to define the academic language of social studies broadly to include semantic and syntactic features (such as vocabulary items, sentence structure, transition markers, and cohesive ties) and language functions and tasks that are part of social studies classroom routines. (p. 595)

Linguistic terms such as semantic and syntactic features are broad and encompassing and suggest a more formal view of language, while attention to language functions begins to address language in use, an interest of functional linguistics. Is integration then a bringing together of the parts - language objectives and content objectives that continue to be identifiable in their relation with content or do they work to constitute meaning as an ecological whole wherein when a part is altered, the meaning (the whole) is changed? A review of the practical aspects of the sample unit provided by Short reveals three areas for objectives written as, “language skills (e.g., students will listen for the main idea), content skills (e.g., students will identify the principles [my italics] of the Declaration of Independence), and thinking/study skills (e.g., students will classify [my italics] subtopics for an outline)” (ibid., p. 588). Although she does not claim a particular linguistic stance,
the objectives for language and for content within the sample unit remain separated. Yet, if students are expected to engage in these activities, how does language implicate such structures of knowledge as principles and classification? Is this not the language of the content objective?

Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) implicitly suggest a possible separation of language and content relations. In a discussion on language and content assessment, they posit,

a further area of overlap . . . lies in the fact that the kinds of materials and activities used in content instruction may also be appropriate for evaluating learners’ language skills. In other words, the texts and tasks which appear on language tests in these courses may closely resemble those on tests of content mastery; indeed, the same ones may sometimes be used for both purposes, with differences only in scoring criteria. (p. 183)

It seems that both texts of authority are addressing English as subject and medium at a pedagogical level and the sample units, with language objectives contained therein, are based on implicit assumptions of separation regarding language and content relations. If language items are separated from content items, then how is context being attended to? What is the language of content objectives? And, conversely, what is the content of language objectives? Does this suggest that they are working within a formal view of language where context is not central to language and meaning?

Crandall (1987) in an edited work, comments, “The concept of integrating language instruction with subject matter instruction is not new to language educators .... [as a] combined focus - on the subject matter and the English that is used to communicate it” (p. 1). Again, there is no specific discussion of linguistic aspects of language and content relations in her introduction. However, in a review of the articles in the book that have been chosen to represent examples of language and content integration, authors use terms of formal grammar such as vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and discourse features in discussions of language to be developed in the content area. Little, if any, mention is given to language as a resource for meaning. Could it be that these examples were written by educators that took a formal grammar position in language and content relations? In

See Short’s (1993) discussion on assessing the integration of language and content. She contends, “the difficulty with assessment centers on isolating the language features from the content objectives so one does not adversely influence the other” (p. 627). This seems to reflect a view of separation.
reading authorial texts that seem to integrate language and content from a pedagogical position (not a linguistic one), is it possible for the reader to then engage in ideations of language and content practices and not be aware of, or attend to, taken-for-granted assumptions of particular linguistic language and content relations?

Mohan (1986) also speaks to integration when he comments,

Linguistic content is inseparable from linguistic expression. But in research and in classroom practice, this relationship is frequently ignored. In subject matter learning we overlook the role of language as a medium of learning. In language learning we overlook the fact that content is being communicated . . . . What is needed is an integrative approach which relates language learning and content learning, considers language as a medium of learning and acknowledges the role of context in communication. (p. 1)

He speaks to language and content integration as a place where meaning is made and argues that what remains problematic in the literature is how this integration should get done. Other authorial texts do not seem to make such claims. While they provide approaches to integration at the level of curricular design and methods and do not explicitly link their work to linguistic models, Mohan presents an organising framework for language and content integration that purposefully provides practical and theoretical directions for educational policy that is linked to linguistic theory. For example, Mohan, in outlining discourses about action situations within a notion of activity, refers to Leech and Svartvik's (1975) semantic grammar to systematically include grammar, semantic notions and speech acts; it is an understanding of lexico-grammar that considers what items of language are used in relation to the meanings they express; it is a view of functional grammar in which context and use play a central role.

It seems that most authorial voices articulate integration in terms of pedagogy, which would align with Stern's P-approach, while Mohan considers integration from a linguistic perspective, Stern's L-approach. Within the North American language and content community, not only is integration conceived in differing terms (pedagogic and linguistic), but also differing explicit and implicit fragmented orientations are being played out within linguistics as formal and/or functional. Discourses of integration disclose unshared reference points, and language and content relations are often not made explicit therefore contributing to language and content as a dilemmatic, or troubled, pedagogy.
Preconditions of Decision-Making

Grades written in insoluble black ink, a common final step in the evaluative process, have become symbols of complex judgments that presume to represent predetermined ‘standards’ of students’ work. Of interest is research that speaks to the pre-conditions of judgments leading to the final decision of the grade or mark. Therefore, the following is offered as a reflection on historical and current moments that contribute to specific discussions of integrative evaluation.

A Legacy of Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are terms that often go unquestioned in day to day practices of teaching and learning. They are expected educational practices we participate in as teachers and learners. But what assumptions are being made? In a recent publication titled Assessment and ESL (Law & Eckes, 1995), the authors discuss, but not define, the terms effective assessment and alternative assessment. Evaluation is not a key term in this book - the term is not listed in the index nor in the detailed table of contents. In this reference, assessment is implicitly described as a process but remains undefined; the authors make assumptions that the readers already understand the fundamental concept of assessment, and, that either evaluation is insignificant or so integral to assessment and ESL that it is a shared and obvious known, two very different stances. Bachman (1990) in a well respected text, Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing, suggests that the terms ‘measurement’, ‘assessment’, and ‘appraisal’ are used as synonyms in the language testing literature and includes the term testing as a kind of ‘measurement instrument’. Although test shares its etymological roots with text (texture, textual), its current alignment with ‘measurement’ and ‘instrument’ suggest that a modernist tradition of objectivity has been privileged, showing little interest in the textured lives of learners. Bachman leans on Weiss (1972) to define evaluation as “the systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions” (Bachman, 1990, p. 22). A brief turning of the pages reveals inconsistent and somewhat contradictory understandings of these taken-for-granted terms in current references in the field. How have these words come to mean what they do? Are they the fissured texts of which Hodge and Kress (1993) speak?

A re-turn to the Latin and Greek origins of these words begins to undo their legacy.

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According to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology*, assessment [assess+ment] comes from the Latin stem *assidere* meaning *to sit beside*. In Medieval Latin it became *assedere*, shifting the meaning to determining a levy, to gather information in order to settle an amount. In modernists times, with the import of scientific rationalism, educational assessment, purposeful in its preciseness, seems to have become the process of coming to an agreement (levying or settling) of an presumed objective measure (amount). Revisiting the original meaning, *to sit by*, one’s musings are drawn into the possibility of an imaginary of assessment as a participatory endeavour enacted through subjective positionings between teachers and learners.

Evaluation [e+valu+ation] from the Latin *valere* means to be strong, to be of worth, to estimate the worth. It is a concept critiqued by Davis (1996),

> The business of evaluation tends to assume that there is an external, objective standard against which . . . can be validly and reliably measured. In its quest for unbiased certainty, evaluation has taken on a certain mechanical character, framed by checklists (that are used to identify what someone else has identified as relevant), explicit criteria (that define not just what we look for, but what we see), and most obviously, some manner of quantification. (p. 245)

It is a valuing of something that presumes the possibility of being represented by its quantification in a mark. Davis continues,

> A hint of what evaluation ‘is really about’ might be gleaned from a review of the terms associated with evaluative practices, such as ‘marking’, ‘scoring’, and ‘grading’. While their metaphoric origins have been largely forgotten in the modernist quest for objectivity, we would do well to recall that . . . one’s marking, scoring, and grading of a learner involves a certain violence as one leaves ‘impressions’ on that person’s body. Evaluation involves a marking for life. (ibid.)

The terms assessment and evaluation have blended in meaning, becoming teaching acts involved in making sense of learner, but from diverse ends of the continuum: assessment as a process integral to the teaching and learning activities of the classroom, and evaluation as a judgment of the subjective worth of a product. They are ambiguous and somewhat contradictory terms that are often used interchangeably in the current literature. For purposes here, *assessment* is used to refer to a *process(es)* of gathering information to *evaluate* (by mark, grade and evaluative feedback) a *product* that presumes to represent the learner’s achievement on school tasks. Products have the potential to take alternative forms, but ultimately, I would argue, what gets judged is viewed as a product of student
work - a sampling of what the student can achieve at that point in time.\(^9\)

Thinking of these terms in this way, as mainstream and second language author(ities) seem to do, establishes an incomplete discourse community of assessment and evaluation which shapes and is shaped by interacting complexities of authorial texts and needs of efficiencies in teachers' practices. Discourse(s) becomes specialised, working to bring clarity and closure to the uncertainty of the evaluation task guided by textured orientations that have the potential to be fissured and dilemmatic; in marking writing, precondition assumptions of how to achieve fairness and consistency, how language works, and how meaning gets made are complex, may go unquestioned, or may be altered (re-configuration) in the well-intentioned quest to be precise and defensible in the grading practices of schools. Quantification in numbers (as marks) and letters (as grades) seems to reduce textured complexifications to images of objectivity and clarity that "involves a marking for life". Educators must ask themselves what has been left un-marked - or perhaps re-marked - in a reductionist move to a numerical judgment, and ask how that which was cast-away or altered also informs judgment. And, does the form of evaluation (technical) align with the phenomenon (a social and integrated text) it purports to serve?

Given assessment and evaluation are regular and expected practices of teachers, one must be wary of the traps of discourse(s) constituting assessment and evaluation, and be mindful of the etymological and epistemological legacy that has the potential to lead them astray.

Legacies also implicate current conditions in how assessment is classified. The second language literature constitutes assessment of ELL learners broadly to include proficiency, placement, achievement, and diagnostic testing as categories for judging language competencies. Each with specific purposes, they can be located according to the criterion they purport to measure. Proficiency tests aim to "tap global competence in a language" (Brown, 1994, pp. 257-8) and traditionally have used indirect testing to access receptive skills (listening and reading), "often with validity weaknesses: they may confuse oral proficiency with literacy skills, or they may confuse knowledge about a language with ability to use a language." Nunan (1991a) contends that proficiency remains an abstract...
construct and its testing procedures lack attention to contextual factors that influence learners’ performance. Could Nunan be exploring traces of an orientation that resist a formal linguistic stance? Those charged with gate-keeping responsibilities relying on interpretations of scores from well-known proficiency tests such as TOEFL (Test of English as a foreign language), Cambridge, and the MTELP (Michigan Test of English language proficiency) may wish to heed the warnings of Brown and Nunan and rethink the presumed possibility of ‘measuring’ language void of context (content) and the effects of “marking for life.”

Placement and diagnostic tests often focus on particular aspects of a language such as verb tenses and article usage at the sentence level or identifying discrete sounds in listening. These forms of assessment often tap both productive (speaking, writing) and receptive (listening, reading) skills using direct and indirect tests. Frequently, but not always, they include sample material from the curriculum or course the learner is to be placed in or is having difficulty with. Sometimes proficiency and diagnostic tests are used for placement purposes. In presuming they are somewhat similar and therefore interchangeable, traces of orientations found within descriptions of purpose in these various forms of assessment seem to view language at the sentence level, void of contextual (content) factors.

Canale & Swain’s (1979, 1980) theoretical framework of communicative competence has contributed to much of the current research on language testing. Claiming an integration of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies at the level of discourse, their framework names specific categories of language that should be integrated. Yet, it neglects to articulate how such integration could be accomplished. Instead, lists of what they claim to be essential elements of communicative competence are offered in isolation as an approach to discourse assessment. Bachman (1991), influenced by the

For further discussion, see Nunan’s (1991a) argument on the inappropriateness of ‘proficiency’ as a main consideration in ELL evaluation.

As well, others (Benesch, 1991; Raimes, 1990) critique large scale testing and the pedagogical decisions resulting, presuming based on the needs of individual learners for placement, assessment, credit-granting purposes. They argue against a testing orientation that may deny equal access to a mainstream college education, suggesting such testing is exclusionary, and call for more inclusionary, democratic practices.

Offered in Brown (1994), diagnostic and placement tests are presented as mechanistic views of language at the sentence and sound level that seems to assume these are necessary and central elements to practices of language learning.
ideations of Canale & Swain’s framework, developed a model of language competency that expands their framework, but does not alter the underlying assumptions. Similar to those of Canale and Swain, his assertions recognise a “dynamic interaction” (p. 4) amongst the elements but then advocate a separatist view applied in assessment practices. Bachman describes a movement in the field of language testing from skills and components to a broader view of language. He suggests there is now

the recognition that *communicative language use* (original emphasis) involves a dynamic interaction between the situation, the language user, and the simple transfer of information. (ibid.)

Attending to the multiple, interrelated aspects involved in language use, this shift gives new direction to language testing in the need to develop tests that not only address socio-cultural and functional aspects of communication but, as Bachman suggests,

are ‘authentic’, in that they require test takers to interact with and process both the explicit linguistic information and the implicit illocutionary or functional meaning of the test material. (ibid.)

It seems that traces of language as form linger while those of language as function add, alter, and perhaps fragment theoretical stances in language testing. McNamara (1996) confirms this shifting movement when he explains,

language assessment is in a period of rapid change ... where learners have to demonstrate practical command of skills acquired, [performance-based assessment] is rapidly replacing more traditional test formats. (p. 1)

Promising in its desire to acknowledge contextual factors in the functioning of language, a change in orientation from a dominant formal view, evidence of a fissured text emerges in texts of author(itie)s as fields of applied linguistics and psychometrics play out their various and different, possibly conflicting, orientations. Bachman (1990), in a summary of “persistent problems and future directions” in language testing concludes,

*We language testers thus cannot allow ourselves the delusion that current views of language use and language learning can be ignored because this simplifies the problems of measurement. Nor can we afford the luxury of placing all our confidence in the correctness of our applied linguistic theories, in the hope that the measurement issues will thus evaporate.* (p. 352)

The complexifications of language testing dwell in competing meta-texts and orientations. In attempts to quantify language for measurement via psychometric routes, language seems
to have become a mechanistic tool. In a desire to acknowledge the importance of context, measurement questions of validity and reliable are raised. Contrary themes have created "persistent problems" and can be traced to ideological dilemmas. That the field calls itself language testing, that the language of language testing can be traced to ideas of preciseness and control, embeds assumptions of the possibility of a test that can measure an 'objective' language.\textsuperscript{43} It is a tattered trace from a dominant regime that has infiltrated not only the work of language testers but has found a way in to classroom assessment.

One articulated purpose of classroom assessment is to assess the students' progress or growth as they participate in curricular activities generated from the classroom. Hence, the term classroom assessment is used to describe the process of evaluating students' achievement of tasks (tests and assignments - both formal and informal) as they pertain to teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Angelo and Cross (1993), respected for their work in 'mainstream' classroom assessment, describe classroom assessment as an approach designed to help teachers find out what students are learning in the classroom and how well they are learning it. This approach is learner-centered, teacher-directed, mutually beneficial, formative, context-specific, ongoing and firmly rooted in good practice.\textsuperscript{(p. 4)}

Further, they comment that much of classroom assessment is a subconscious and implicit process . . . . Teachers depend heavily on their impressions of student learning and make important judgments based on them .... Consequently, the most effective times to assess and provide feedback are before the chapter tests or the midterm and final examinations.\textsuperscript{(p. 7)}

Angelo and Cross's intent of classroom assessment is to improve the quality of student learning and provide greater accountability of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, a view also espoused in authorial texts on assessment for second language learners (see Genesee & Upshur, 1996; Law & Eckes, 1995; O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). In this linear model, both teachers and students become actively involved in the assessment process, a kind of "micro-level, grass-roots assessment movement" (Angelo &

\textsuperscript{43} Although the field of language testing acknowledges a dynamic interaction or integration of discrete elements of language and has established frameworks for assessing communicative competence and language performance, the discrete elements remain discrete rather than integrated as new trends in language testing would suggest. How to assess integration seems to remain ambiguous and unreliable for many. Slater (1998) discusses this in detail in Evaluating causal discourse in academic writing and suggests a functional approach such as offered by Halliday and Martin (1993) that offers the how of integration.
Cross, 1993, p. 8) that hints of a technical imaginary wherein “midterm and final examinations” would measure progressive and cumulative knowledge determined by the teacher. Issues with traditional forms of assessment such as paper and pencil tests has led to a re-forming of assessment practices that work toward authenticity and claim alterity. 44

Educational reform is currently dominated by discussions of assessment reform. 45 That reform, named as alternative and authentic assessment practices, has infiltrated many classrooms including those with English language learners, and, although not a focus of this (re)view, is important in that the re-forming of assessment seems to address only some of the concerns of traditional assessment practices. 46 What seems to remain an unexplored question within authentic and alternative assessment practices is the specific evaluation of language and content relations.

I lean on Resnick and Resnick’s (1991) description of various types of assessment being proposed for mainstream classroom assessments: performance and portfolio. The history of performance assessment as it relates to use in second language contexts is well documented. 47 It is a form of assessment that is based on integrated, holistic tasks closely resembling, if not actualising, real tasks. For example, a student performing an oral presentation to a ‘real’ audience would be evaluated on their ability to synthesise a complex integration of skills and competencies such as fluent and accurate use of the language, effective public speaking and knowledge of the topic - skills and competencies that had been developed during classroom activities, a framework complicit to a ‘learning outcomes’, means-ends model of curricular instruction. Portfolio assessment differs from performance in that students are involved in gathering a collection of their work completed over a period of time and involved in a self-monitoring of their progress through reflection and self-

44 The terms alternative and authentic are often used interchangeably in the literature, although alternative has frequently been the broader term that encompasses authentic assessment practices. In this dissertation, I follow a classification offered by Resnick & Resnick (1992) that, I believe, uses the terms interchangeably.
45 In Assessing integrated language and content instruction , Short (1993) offers a brief but thoughtful overview of assessment reform as it pertains to broader educational perspectives, and the reform’s influence on new trends of the assessment of language minority students.
46 See O’Malley & Valdez Pierce (1996) for a thorough discussion of alternative, practical approaches for classroom teachers as of a move to authentic assessment practices for English language learners.
47 See McNamara (1996) for an overview of the historical development of performance assessment practices that led to their inclusion in the field of second language testing.
assessment of their work.\footnote{For a thoughtful discussion of writing portfolios in first language classrooms see Murphy & Smith (1992). For a review of second language directions in portfolio assessment see O'Malley & Valdez Pierce (1996).} This form of assessment has been adapted from traditions in professions of art and design and is a shift from a means-end orientation to more of an emic view of evaluation. These terms and their definitions as outlined above have been operationalized in various and diverse ways in the second language assessment literature.

What I find troublesome is that in an attempt to shift from traditional, mechanistic ways (hence new trends are named 'alternatives'), the process has been altered but the evaluation of a product that lies at the root of a graded task is left unattended by authorial texts when describing these alternative positions. For most, whether they use performance, or portfolio assessment practices (or in some combination), when called upon to evaluate the process or the product, there seems to be a presumption that determining a mark or a grade is unproblematic. It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of alternative practices in detail, only to outline common, current approaches advocated by authorial texts and to acknowledge that the act of marking and grading 'language and content' within alternatives approaches to assessment, orientations are presumed and unquestioned.

Curricular approaches to assessment as outlined above are helpful reminders of the desire to shift from traditional forms of assessment that seem to isolate and reinforce skills detached from 'real' life, and move to forms of authentic assessment that attend to the development of complex, integrated abilities learners use to thoughtfully address issues in their own lives. However, within the 'how to' descriptions of these various forms of authentic assessment, little attention is given to the actual act of evaluation. It seems to be a promised land, full of presumptions that teachers will know what to do when they arrive. Assessment seems to remain privileged over evaluation in most theoretical and practical discussions of judging ELLs' achievement in academic classrooms. In (re)viewing authorial texts, I have come to be wary of the promised land and suggest instead that it may be a dilemmatic terrain. Given my interest in the pre-conditions of evaluating second language written content, either in traditional or more authentic forms of assessment, I first turn to the small body of literature that specifically addresses language and content classroom assessment.
Language and Content Classroom Assessment

The literature addressing specific concerns of judging language and content tend to emphasise various processes and strategies of collecting evidence of learner development in language and content. It has been my experience that teachers (and I include myself) read the ideas offered in authorial texts with interest, yet when implemented in the classroom, still struggle with evaluation - justifying a mark or grade for a particular task, be it, for example, a portfolio collection or individual pieces of work within the portfolio. Given that the necessity to mark or grade learners' work is a dominate orientation in the broader society, I want to give space to a discussion of how this is dealt with and where authorial texts may be positioned.

One of the first authorial texts on language and content to give a chapter to this topic was by Mohan (1986). In the introduction to the chapter, he offers,

> It should be apparent that each type of test should only test what it claims to. It should not include, intentionally or otherwise, areas outside its purview. Language tests should test language and content tests should test content. But what seems apparent is not so easy to accomplish in practices: language is intertwined with content.

> There is obviously a language factor in content tests, because it is not possible to understand content questions without an understanding of the language they are written in. (pp. 122-3)

He then asks, “is there a content factor in language tests?” and draws attention to the possibility of cultural knowledge and its contribution to test bias. It is the beginning of a discussion that considers differences in semantic (language) and factual (content) inference factors in test items and implications of bias for learners. His position, founded on an L-approach, claims semantic and actual (cultural) inferences as a necessary condition for addressing language/content relations.

A few years later Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), in another seminal text, Content-based second language instruction, also included a chapter on content-based evaluation. The introduction begins with preface to curricular concerns in the statements,

> Evaluation is an integral part of the teaching process, and while it has some precourse and end-of-course functions ... its main role in instructional programs is to measure achievement - to see whether students have mastered course material, and to identify areas where they need additional help. When it is seen to support the objectives of the course, to be relevant to students, and to be fair, it has a positive impact in an instructional program. To be effective, the ongoing evaluation of student performance should include clear communication
with students about course goals, the instructor’s expectations, and the criteria to be used in judging student performance. (my emphasis, p. 181)

Notions of evaluation evolve from a strong P-approach to content-based instruction. Not only do curricular concerns seem to dictate the conditions for evaluation, its orientation to measurement, reliability, mastery, and linearity, and its attention to course goals, objectives, instructor expectations, and criteria can be traced to aspects of the dominant means-end perspective. What is suggested in their chapter on evaluation is that evaluation practices, seemingly framed within technical rationality, can be determined by considering what “in its broadest terms - language or content?” and “how” of content-based second language instruction. In a detailed and thorough explanation of the “what” and “how”, the authors offer multiple examples of test materials, each specifying evaluation objectives of functional skills, text/discourse type and task. The P-approach to evaluation was evident as evaluation practices were primarily addressed in curricular terms. Under a sub-heading in the chapter, “Evaluating content knowledge”, the “what” seemed to be an assumed “subject matter” and its mastery, whereas under another subheading, “Evaluating language knowledge and skills”, the “what” was defined as “knowledge of elements of the linguistic code … knowledge of discourse … interactive communication skills … academic language use skills … related study skills” (ibid., p. 186). The sub-headings presume the possibility of a separation of language and content and the items listed as the “what” of language seem to confirm that separation. Traces of orientations seem to suggest a linear view of curriculum that is embedded in a model of linearity (Tyler, 1949), and its possibility of mastery, in which objectives are a means to guide teachers to specific ends for the learner. Could it be that a need for clearly articulated objectives could impose a particular way of thinking about and evaluating language and content relations?

Similarly, Short (1993), in Assessing integrated language and content instruction, takes a P-approach in calling for “organising assessment objectives” (p. 627). Traces of a technological imaginary are evident in the establishment of objectives and by claiming to be assessing instruction. Thoughtfully detailed, she advocates alternative assessment practices to address concerns raised in content-based instruction and, in providing an assessment matrix of the “what” and “how”, suggests,
Overall, assessment should be viewed holistically but in an integrated language and content course, where students are asked to demonstrate knowledge and ability in several areas, it is important to separate language issues from subject-area concepts. (ibid., p. 635)

Explicitly here and in the details that follow in the text, she confirms a separatist’s (formal) stance in addressing language and content relations.

In an article in a current edited text, *The content-based classroom*, Turner (1997) writes guidelines for teachers in the development of content-based language tests. In the model she offers stage one requires “clarifying language instruction goals” and stage two “clarifying content instruction goals”; it is a view that explicitly separates language and content. The model reflects “the iterative nature of the test-writing process” that will “allow, if necessary, a return to Stage 1 for clarification of the instructional purposes of a program.” (ibid., pp. 188-9). Again, evaluation, and in this case testing, is placed within a P-approach, focused on instructional goals and purposes that suggest traces of a means-end orientation to teaching. An objectified, means-end orientation seems to impose a need to objectify language and content that may impose its separation. What seems to be called for is the clarity and precision of language and content, further traces of a powerful technical imaginary at work in ensuring the possibility of closure (definability) to what is language and what is content. In a discussion of scoring procedure descriptions of essays items, she suggests that language and content relations be scored “using a holistic approach ... grammar (5 points); vocabulary (5 points); mechanics (5 points); and content (5 points)” (ibid., p. 192), providing further evidence to support a formal, objectified view of language.

I wonder if teachers using this approach to test design will still struggle with the “what” of an essay - what is language and what is content.

In another article on language and content assessment in the same edited text, Weigle and Jensen (1997) speak to the “interaction of language and content” and claim to “expand on the ideas presented in” (pp. 201-2) Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) and Turner (1997), implicitly stating that their foundation is one of a technical imaginary that embeds a formal view of language. It is a work thoughtful in forwarding new trends in testing within a means-end orientation.

Assessment and evaluation are complex areas, especially when learners are studying
in another language. Authorial texts are pioneers in their own right, providing scholarship and leadership within the language and content landscape. Predominant in those that took a P-approach was a technical imaginary that seems to dictate a need for an objective stance on language and content relations. The one authorial text that took an L-approach seems to raise concerns related to a functional view and the integratedness of language and content. Meta-texts of fissured pedagogic and linguistic orientations are evident in the literature. However, notions of literacy and how 'reading and writing' are understood do not seem to be directly addressed. Is text presumed to be autonomous and objective? For those taking a P-approach, where traces of a technical imaginary dwell, text seem to be conceptualised in this way. Yet, taking an L-approach, Mohan (1986) seems to be one authorial text that raises cultural questions of how text is understood, a trace that resists the autonomy of texts, and suggests a different orientation to literacy.

How authorial voices advocate the judgment of language and content texts cannot be understood without consideration of pedagogic conventions that attempt to simultaneously address the development of language and content. While many explore language and content integration through snapshots of classroom activity, I turn to those texts that offer detailed syllabus designs and descriptive examples of how integration is presumed to get done. Several advocate the use of Mohan’s (1986) Knowledge Framework (KF) and its associated knowledge structures to develop language and content relations. Early (1996), well-respected in her work in language and content pedagogy, suggests, “according to Mohan, each of these knowledge structures has unique or distinct linguistic features which set it apart structurally from the others. In addition, each of these distinct structures can be graphically displayed in ‘key visuals’” (p. 25). She argues that graphing content lowers linguistic demands and allows learners to explore content while developing associated language. Tang (1997) also explores in detail the KF for purposes of “systematically

49 More recently Kamhi-Stein (1997) advocates the co-development (ESL teacher and faculty) of multi-step assignments “to insure instruction in the academic language skills required” (p. 52). The detailed multi-step model seems to emphasis organisational writing skills (a P-approach) not language (an L-approach).
50 A number of examples of detailed curricular approaches and unit plans that use Mohan’s (1986) knowledge framework to plan integrated language and content activities have been published. Common to all of these curricular innovations is addressing 'language and content' relations at the level of discourse, based on a functional linguistic model of language. See Dunbar (1992); Early (1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1996); Early & Tang (1991); Fairhall, (1991); Tang (1991, 1994, 1997).
integrating language and content” (p. 69). She advocates the use of graphics and offers many examples of how graphics become central to this pedagogical form of developing language/content relations. For example, Tang explains that as part of a social studies unit in high school, “the teacher had taught the knowledge structure of cause-effect and exposed the students to cause-effect graphics. She had also repeatedly pointed out the linguistic devices and given the students practice in constructing text passages from graphics” (p. 76). Others have engaged in graduate work that employed the knowledge framework as an organised tool for integrating language and content. It is a curricular approach rooted in contextualised lexico-grammatical constructions wherein a dominating L-approach meta-text with a functional orientation to language and content relations is fundamental.

Other strategies for curricular approaches to language and content development are primarily founded on the early work of Crandall (1987) and Brinton, Snow, & Wesche (1990). Their work offers innovations developed within a curricular framework (Stern’s P-approach) and, as has already been stated, seems to map a means-end approach to curriculum development. In so doing, language and content relations, according to those texts of authority, seem best addressed separately. Here, language is primarily viewed from a formal perspective, separate from content, wherein, as Short (1993) reminds us, “the objectives of an integrated language and content course can be divided into the following categories: problem solving, content-area skills, concept comprehension, language use, communication skills, individual behaviour, group behaviour, and attitude” (p. 635). Advocated is a linear process that works toward goals and separate objectives of language and of content established in the planning stages of curricular development.

It appears that although classroom implementation of CBI is multifarious, there are two main approaches that are evident in the literature: Stern’s P-approach and L-approach. Those engaged in a P-approach seem to be guided by particular orientations to curricular practice and strategies advocating a technical imaginary that imposes itself on how language/content relations and literacy are understood. L-approaches to language and

51 See graduate work based on Mohan’s Knowledge Framework and/or knowledge structures that has been completed at The University of British Columbia: Dempsey, 1994; Grant, 1995; Helmer, 1995; Low, 1989; Sampson, 1998; Slater, 1998.
content, rooted in functional linguistics, embed traces of means-end curricular practices but resist a technical imposition on linguistic understandings of language and content relations. For the most part, assumptions of writing seem to remain static and fixed. Hybrid orientations within this community of difference relate to how curriculum and evaluation are understood and how relations of language and content are implicated. What seems to be presumed undilemmatic is the act of writing and the possibility of univocality.

I turn now to an influential movement, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to further explore orientations to writing and assessment in the academic classroom.

Presumptions of Writing and Assessment Within ESP/EAP

Much of what has been written regarding CBI classroom assessment as been influenced by authorial texts on writing assessment within English for Specific Purposes and more specifically, English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Johns (1997), a well-known author(ity) in the ESP movement suggests,

ESP practitioners are, for the most part, researchers - completing text and genre analysis, needs assessments, and other studies before designing their curricula. On the other hand, CBI practitioners seem to focus almost exclusively on pedagogy, discussing student affect, instructional strategies, and classroom models. (p. 366)

Situated at San Diego State University, she further comments, “I teach in an ESP program at my own university, and I find the pedagogical contributions of CBI valuable to my practice” (ibid.), and then claims in a footnote on the same page, “I call it ‘ESP’ because that’s my background; however, Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) would identify the adjunct (linked) model as CBI.” Maintenance boundaries arbitrarily set in the labels ESP and EAP are temporarily reworked by Johns. Whether ESP or EAP, her readings of CBI support Stern’s designation of the P-approach and much of its modern heritage in North American contexts.

Concerned with ‘writing’ as something to teach and then assess separately from the content it constitutes, those interested in English for Specific Purposes and, within that domain, English for Academic Purposes, contribute significantly to the current language/content condition. Given the interest of this inquiry is writing within academic contexts, the selected texts for (re)view are from authors who claim a background in EAP.
Zamel (1992), an authorial voice on EAP writing, offers that with the advancement of process writing in first language contexts, "[i]t has become commonplace to characterise the act of writing as a meaning making, purposeful, evolving, recursive, dialogic, tentative, fluid, exploratory process" (p. 463). This statement suggests a re-positioning in its fissured break from the privileging of a technical rationality in the EAP classroom. It is the process writing movement that has questioned the validity of traditional models of writing and its evaluation and turned the field towards alternative, authentic assessment practices as discussed earlier in this chapter. Yet, I wonder if this is lived in the content classroom - a place wherein content and how it is constituted becomes the focus of judgment. I suspect, from reports of collaborative work between language teachers and content teachers, that technical rationality still remains strong.

Hamp-Lyons and Kroll (1996), both well-respected second language specialists, write of current issues in ESL writing assessment. In the introduction of their article, they speak to variables that influence the complexifications in designing "appropriate and excellent measures of non-native writers’ English language writing competencies . . . to assure optimally fair testing practices" (p. 52). While it is well intended in its purpose, I

Other views comment on shifts in ideology and ESL writing. Johns (1991) offers a current description of three orientations to ESL composition theory: process approaches - cognitivism, expressivism; interactive approaches; and social constructionist approaches. She posits that writing teachers can benefit from exploring underlying assumptions of praxis and argues that current, incomplete ESL composition theories "must include, at the very least, the four elements mentioned by Berlin (1988) [writer, the reader, reality and truth, and sources of language], in addition to other features necessitated by the nature of second language learning and use (e.g. contrastive rhetoric)" while acknowledging "no single, comprehensive theory of ESL composition can be developed on which all agree" (p. 33)

Hamp-Lyons (1994) argues for the interweaving of assessment and instruction in a variety of forms and practices.

For discussions on collaborative teaching and assessment practices in the content classroom see Benesch, 1992; Dempsey, 1994; Fradd & Hudelson, 1995; Gee, 1997; Helmer, 1995; Mohan & Low, 1995; Short, 1994; Swain & Miccoli, 1994; Tang, 1994. It seems from many of these discussions that collaborating language teachers and content teachers maintain their 'identity' even in the evaluative process - the content teacher marks the content, the language teacher marks the language - a separatist perspective within a traditional framework that imposes the importance of presumed measurable and objective words.

Hamp-Lyons, editor of Assessing second language writing in academic contexts, is known for her extensive inquiry into L2 academic writing assessment and Kroll, editor of Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom, is known for her work in L2 writing pedagogy. I (re)view this joint current text as a respectful, authored reflection on the current state of affairs in EAP writing and assessment frameworks and therefore seek its orientations extensively. Its bibliographic reference contains the authorial texts that I had listed in the original search I prepared for this section of the chapter. It is not my purpose to agree or disagree with the ideas presented in this text but to trace the orientations presumed in the authorial voices of these writers. I include other references as appropriate for this discussion of writing assessment frameworks.
question its suggestions that the complexifications of competency can be measured and that “appropriate and excellent measures” can “assure fair practices.” Traces of a dominant technical imaginary permeate the text that seem to become a quantifiable imposition on the complexity of judging writing.

In speaking to the entanglements involved in EAP writing assessment, Hamp-Lyons and Kroll critically review four different approaches to writing assessment currently in use, raising questions of the ‘unsaid’ in writing assessment frameworks. Their concerns of the implications of topic and time constraints, the role of revision, the integration of skills wherein source texts are used to generate written response, and, the role of talk (oral/aural skills) are silenced in assessment tools that purport to measure ‘only’ writing. Traces of literacy as social communication, those active mediations of socially constituted meaning, are raised in concerns of the multiple texts and interpretations involved in writing implied above. Their call for test developers to attend to the subjective, the social, suggests a shift from text as autonomous and objective - a technical view - to a stance that possibly implicates a radical hermeneutics of contextual, textual and intertextual considerations. Yet, this shift remains within a paradigm where the ultimate goal of developing “appropriate and excellent measures of non-native writers’ English language writing competencies ... to assure optimally fair testing practices” (1996, p. 52) is a possibility. Contrary themes collide, but ultimately it seems that the need for measures insists on reducing subjectivity to a ‘marked’ object.

Hamp-Lyons and Kroll “search[] for an idealised model for academic writing assessment” (p. 55) and continue to raise concerns of a social nature. For example, in seeking useful understandings of what writing skills are needed in the world of academia, they ask, “How are skills socially constructed?”, “Are they the results of expressive and cognitive processes that are relatively de-centered from specific academic tasks or expectations?”, and “Do they require a social (re)construction of the writer’s own cognitive and expressive processes to conform to genre or to faculty expectations or conventions?” These questions seem to live the tensions played out between a lingering technical imaginary and an emergent social, pragmatic one.

Further issues of contextualization render a single theory of EAP composition and
an ideal assessment framework near impossible (Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1996; Johns, 1990, 1997; Santos, 1992). Divergent views on second language (L2) writing instruction are shaped by broader views of curriculum, pedagogy, education and philosophical musings of language. Assessment, integral to the writing curriculum but often designated as endpoints, is shaped by that which comes before in the planning and implementation of EAP writing curricular practices in the classroom. Diverse assessment frameworks then, are often reflections of diverse curricular planning rather than a unified curricular plan and framework for EAP writing instruction and assessment. Yet, silent in this literature are the voices of test-takers, a signpost that privileges the assumed expertise of the teacher - traces of an instructional, technical imaginary of education. Texts on writing across disciplines contributes to emerging theoretical and pragmatic fragments that give import to “situated responsiveness” (Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1996, p. 57), fluctuating reader-writer-topic-language interactivities imbricated by epistemological assumptions imbued in writing content. Although a decade of theoretical and pragmatic discussions of ELL process writing (see for example, Raimes, 1987; Santos, 1992; Spack, 1988; Zamel, 1993) legitimate its practice, Santos (1992) argues that the traditional model of product-oriented, text-centered ELL composition practices continue to dominate current EAP classrooms. In claiming the privileging of a scientific model for second language research that filters into classroom practices, she argues

> Science . . . has been virtually untouched by leftist theory, and it is partly for this reason that linguistics, applied linguistics, and TESOL, of which ESL writing is a branch, have . . . model[led] themselves on the sciences in their research methodology, a methodology which has as its foundation an idealised adherence to neutrality and objectivity. (p. 8)

According to Santos, technical rationality remains rooted in current pragmatic-oriented EAP

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57 See Blanton, 1995 for a discussion on how the multiple and diverse ideations on teaching L2 writing influence curricular planning and classroom practices.

58 See Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995, Leki & Carson, 1994, and Swales & Feak, 1994 for their authorial texts on the importance of contextualization and the particular “situated responsiveness” at their respective sites of inquiry. Each text explores aspects of the distinctiveness of expectations and requirements of writing in various disciplines at differing levels of study, suggesting that, although distinct variations exist across disciplines, there is a linearity and formulaic application that is both ‘expected’ and ‘required’ for each discipline. Early on, Spack (1984) and Zamel (1983) argue against a reductionist view of writing and claim writing to be individual and recursive. In later discussions Spack (1988, 1997) and Zamel (1993, 1997) continue to disrupt linear and formulaic notions of EAP composition.
composition pedagogy. However, Benesch (1993) argues that even pragmatics is imbricated by what she calls "accommodationist ideology, an endorsement of traditional academic teaching and of current power relations in academia and in society" (p. 711).

Over the past decade, EAP writing research has continued to describe and quantify important elements of writing assessment. Horowitz (1986c) explored types of professors' assignments, while Santos (1988) and Johns (1991) inquired about professors' responses to ELL writing. Other aspects of writing assessment such as influences of the writing prompt (Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1996; Kroll & Reid, 1994), topic types (Reid, 1990), and topic development (McKay, 1989) are part of the L2 composition literature.

Kroll and Reid (1994) discuss the role of the prompt and a number of variables that affect the learner's response such as context, content, linguistics, rhetorics and evaluation. Their suggested prompt design guidelines are intended to avoid

a poorly developed prompt . . . that . . . can result in unfinished, unfocused, or rambling essays, many of which may betray the writer's misinterpretation of the question. They also may prove difficult to score according to the criteria test developers had in mind. (p. 248)

Are they implying that well-developed prompts contribute to finished, focused and precise writing in another language and culture? Strong traces of a technical imaginary are evoked in assuming the possibility of these characteristics of writing, doubled in languages and cultures, and in assuming that the more well-developed the prompt - more precise and direct - the more accurate assessment and evaluative practices will be. Although much has been written on prompts and their importance for assessment, few consider the assumptions underlying their well-intentioned contributions to EAP writing assessment and their effects on a marking-for-life.⁶⁰

A number of authorial texts on EAP writing recognise the inherent difficulties in writing across at least two cultures. Leki (1992) comments on the possibility of North American teachers not having access to learners' experiences and assumptions they explore

⁵⁹ Benesch (1993) responds to Santos' claims by suggesting "L2 composition, like all teaching and research, is ideological whether or not we are conscious of the political implications" and that "there is already a substantial body of ESL literature . . . that foregrounds ideology by studying the sociopolitical context, including L2 composition" (p. 706). She implies, but does not state, that sociopolitical practices are breaking with the technical.

⁶⁰ For a fuller discussion on the role of ELL prompts see Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1996; Hamp-Lyons & Mathias, 1994; Polio & Glew, 1996.
in their writing. What a teacher may deem an inappropriate response to a topic socio-culturally may have been very appropriate to the learner's first culture experiences. Reid (1994) writes of the "myths of appropriation: the exclusion of the social context in writing, both in the classroom and in academic discourse communities" (p. 273) and raises her concerns of "not differentiate[ing] intervention from appropriation" (ibid.) in instructional practices. Although her concern is linked to the possible disempowerment of the learner through acts of appropriation, her explicitness of referring to social contexts are traces of an orientation to a complex, socio-cultural position on literacy.

Writing as cultural (worldview) difference(s) has become a commonplace grammatical nominalization of culture as "thing". Knowledge as worldview, as knowing the world, as knowledge of the world (e.g., subject matter, content), is a master signifier in a technical imaginary of education wherein there is a presumed possibility of a cumulative, universal mastery by all those who come to know. Yet, not all function within a system of knowledge as mastery and universal. Knowledge, how it is systemised and its purpose in society, differs among various groups (Ballard, 1986). Cultural difference is most obvious for this discussion on EAP writing. When the writer and the reader do not share the same cultural background assumptions, tensions emerge. In studies by Ballard and Clanchy (1991), Basham and Kwachka (1991), and Hamp-Lyons (1991), culturally disjunctive attitudes to knowledge were identified as a basic difficulty in the evaluation of EAP students' work. Basham and Kwachka (1991) convincingly argue that some cultures (e.g., those cultures that do not have a written language) use English in innovative ways to construct and perform their native identity and that these ways should not be presumed to be incorrect or less appropriate because they do not conform to the cultural expectations of the teacher. This brings into question: whose cultural assumptions should standards be based on when readers judge student writing? The writers? The readers? Both? How do we come to know "good" writing? For many, the messiness of cultural difference disrupts

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6¹ Those interested in exploring this notion further should read D. Aoki's (1996) musings on The thing of culture. A nominalization of culture becomes an act of categorising - generalising - and counting - objectifying - that which is subjective.

6² For a fuller discussion on the (im)possibility of cumulative, universal mastery see Usher & Edwards' (1994) chapter on 'Knowing oneself: subjectivity and mastery'.

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and interferes. The intertextual tensions remain entrapped by the border crossings of culture as “thing”.

The term interlanguage introduced and developed by Selinker (1972) is a similar simulacrum. Placing separated cultural ‘things’ at opposite ends of a continuum, the technical “thing” and all its boundary maintenance, is at once a desire and an obstacle, wherein moving learners from writing in one culture to writing in another requires movement through a space of interlanguage where the two ‘things’ mutually disrupt and interfere with the act of writing in the target language. The presumed work of the EAP teacher then (and, I suggest here it is assumed of all ESL teachers) is to engage in a linear action of moving the learner quickly through this ‘temporary’ phase to a targeted place called ‘English’ (Brown, 1994). The imposed structures of a dominant technical imaginary once again seems to force educators to act in particular ways. The implications for evaluation seem obvious - judging an objective, autonomous text can be more easily justified. ‘Errors’ become labelled as first language interference and are then worked on to be erased or concealed in order to produce an assumed univocal English text.

Could ‘interlanguage’ be one of life’s original difficulties, the possible space for a radical hermeneutic pedagogy, or has the technical imaginary maintained its dominance and focused L2 writing pedagogy on the technical imaginary and its confinement of becoming writers ‘just like us’?

Leki and Carson (1994), concerned with learners’ perceptions of writing instruction, found that “at a time when many writing teachers are expanding the content of EAP writing courses to include critical thinking as well as a focus on the heuristic functions of writing”, learners “persistence in trying to turn us back into experts on language, hence their requests for help in increasing their vocabulary and their insistence on having all sentence-level errors pointed out to them” (p. 91). As teachers begin their own resistance to a mechanical model of academic writing and shift into the complexity of textured social relations of critical praxis, learners’ felt needs remained on a foundation of a

64 Two references from Leki & Carson (1994) - Benesch (1993) and Raimes (1991) - offer a thoughtful discussion on shifting paradigms in L2 writing, paradigms that, in the Leki & Carson study, learners seem to be resisting.
fixed possibility of technical, in-structured, autonomous givens of what it means to do academic writing. This is complexified by expectations of undergraduate students “to move beyond ‘knowledge-telling’ forms of writing to ‘knowledge-transforming’ (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), which is believed to be the type of writing that promotes learning”.

This suggests a shift in language and content relations from one of isolation and separation to one that hints at a mutual and multiple entanglement that cannot be ignored if writing to learn is a focus of the L2 writing curriculum. Similarly, Zamel (1992), interested in writing practices, resists “a transmission model of reading, focused on the retrieval of information from a text”, and claims,

writing, because of its heuristic, generative, and recursive nature, allows students to write their way into reading and to discover that reading shares much in common with writing, that reading, too, is an act of composing. (p. 463)

In heeding Zamel’s call and others, literacy becomes a dialogic space between multiple literacies, not an autonomous, objective act. In another text, Zamel (1993) challenges the traditional notion of academic discourse as reductionist and formulaic and suggests,

Rather than serving the academy, accommodating it, and being appropriated by it, we ought to work with others to engage in an enterprise that is far more dynamic, complex, collaborative and intellectually engaging, an enterprise whereby we and our students contribute to, complicate, and transform the academy. (p. 38)

It is a stance that questions a technical imaginary and shifts into a radical hermeneutic orientation that values the learners’ experiences of writing meaning across cultures as “this is the way all cultures, including academic cultures, come to be, continually re-created by those who enter and the languages they bring with them” (ibid.). She later develops her position into the beginnings of a transcultural model (Zamel, 1997) that continues to critique mechanistic and reductionist approaches to teaching L2 writing “that resist engaging students in the messiness and struggle of authentic work that begins, values and builds on . . .” (p. 343) learners own effects with language. In linking this

See Cumming’s (1989) discussion on developing writing expertise through knowledge transformation as a type of writing that fosters learning.

Hill & Parry (1994) and Parry (1996), hold similar positions to Zamel, promoting a dialogic, pragmatic, multi-literate perspective of reading, citing influential factors such as cultural backgrounds, individual variation and the enacting change that happens to both in the process of reading(writing) to learn in another language. The New London Group, comprised of such noted authorial voices as Cazden, Cope and Kalantzis, Fairclough, Gee, Kress, A. Luke, C. Luke, Michaels, and Nakata (as cited in Pennycook, 1996b), argue for multiliteracies and the polysemantics of words wherein “access and power have been recognised as more diverse and complex than before” (p. 170).
model to ways of judging language, she reminds us “that we, like our students, bring our backgrounds, subjectivities, and frameworks of understanding to our interpretations; and that what we make of our students and their experiences may very well be an artifact of these influences” (p. 350). In traces of a radical hermeneutic stance and pragmatic orientation to literacy, Zamel challenges her readers to break from traditional ways of understanding L2 writing and be open to possibilities of the “messiness and struggle of authentic work.”

How do teachers respond to the “messiness and struggle” of ELL written content? Guided by haunting questions of consistency and fairness, multiple studies have sought useful understandings of various aspects of judging ELL written content. For example, much has been written about teacher commentary, exploring feedback and learner revisions in terms of dichotomous form/function relations (see authorial texts such as Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995b; Leki, 1991; Porte, 1997). More recently Ferris, Pezone, Tade and Tinti (1997) attempted to explore the messiness by analysing the discourse of teachers’ feedback and its relation to time, space, curriculum and learners. Promising in its effort to enter a possible radical hermeneutic space, the methodological approach was scientific in design, a performative contradiction of orientations as the researchers attempted to make sense of the ‘mess’. Exploring “stereotyped expectations based on students’ ethnolinguistic identities”, Rubin and Williams-James (1997, p. 139) “caution us to beware of the apparently persistent tendency to base our grades and evaluations on surface [linguistic] error” (p.150), a finding that suggests the dominance of a technical imaginary’s imposition to isolate language from content. Johns (1991) explored “issues of academic literacy in university communities” (p. 167) by calling into question notions of academic literacy and its attainment by learners. Interviews with two discipline-specific faculty raised a number of their concerns relating to the learners ability to “satisfy the experts in an academic discourse community” (p.176) which suggests a social constructivist orientation. Yet, near the end of the discussion, Johns offers a contrary theme in that “analytic scales

67 Discussions of teacher’s conceptions of and responses to ELL writing content in academic contexts I found useful, other than ones mentioned in this section of the chapter, are Bachman, Lynch & Mason, 1995; Cumming, 1992; Norton & Starfield, 1997; Vaughan, 1991; and, Shi & Cumming, 1995.
seem to be more appropriate for most academic writing than the presently employed holistic type” (p. 177), implying a reductionist need to objectify as criteria that which had been claimed subjective. Evaluative criteria, it seems, has received EAP attention in the last decade in its possibility of gaining consistency in grading practices. However, even with explicitly stated criteria, teachers vary in how the criteria are interpreted and implemented (Brindley, 1991; Brown, 1995). Similarly, work by Cumming (1990) and Vaughan (1991) suggest teachers approach the common reading and judging task differently. It seems, even though the dominance of a pragmatic, instrumental attempt to clarify and analyse elements of assessment and evaluative practices, the hybridity of difference cannot be completely concealed and creates a site of contestation and original difficulty for teachers and for researchers.

Perhaps attempts to reduce the “messiness and struggle” through assumed clarity and univocality (sameness) is another example of the technical imaginary at work. It appears as a paradox that seems to render this work ‘unsolvable’ as teachers work toward objectivity yet dwell midst constructions of day to day evaluative practices that (in)consistently enact particular values and multiple, fragmented perceptions and conceptions at any given moment. Writing academic content seems to have laid a predominantly pragmatic path of orientation that imposes reductionist and formulaic strategies for teachers and for learners. These seem to have become the privileged (w)rites of the pass(age) that mark-for-life.

**Disruptions Within Language and Content - Its Language and Its Legacy**

Tracing orientations of authorial texts on integrative evaluation and related fields presents both anticipated and unanticipated dilemmatic sites. Fragments of multiple and incomplete orientations within and between meta-texts were evoked in multiple texts of authority. Stern’s recognition of divergent pathways (his P and L approaches) in language and content development was useful in becoming attuned to fragmented pedagogical orientations in P-approaches that seem to confirm dominant technical impositions in evaluative practices, especially evident in calls for separate language and
content evaluative criteria, and in the prevailing, traditional view of text as autonomous and objective. As well, in tracing the linguistic orientation of one North American L-approach, language and content relations were explored as functional relations that seemed to dominate pedagogical interventions developed from this framework, and resist a technical imposition that presumes to separate and reduce language to a context-less state.

On the language and legacy of integration, assessment and evaluation, multiple perspectives were traced within and between meta-texts. Positionalities of pedagogy and therefore evaluation seem to continue to impose a technical imaginary through the language of measurement that dominates other competing meta-texts of linguistics and literacy. Traces of social and functional stances in these terms become hidden or concealed in the hunt for certainty in evaluative practices.

Assumptions of positionality that have informed L2 composition research and pedagogy contribute directly to language and content practices. Authorial texts on L2 composition research claimed the predominance of L1 composition research (Johns, 1990; Santos, 1992) and literacy education research (McKay, 1993) as major influences of the current L2 condition. Traces of a social view of literacy were evident, and even sometimes advocated, in their acknowledgement of the social practices and issues of power that construct and implicate a learner’s multiple literacies. Entangled within social views of literacy was acknowledgement of the ‘messiness and struggle’ of learners’ authentic work (Zamel, 1993). Traces of a radical hermeneutic orientation to pedagogical interventions and social views of literacy attempted to break with the technical. However, in discussions of L2 composition assessment, its pragmatic approach and the need to measure and number learner’s work, teachers in the research reported on, although acknowledging the social implications of judging ELL written content, seemed to re-turn to accommodate a technical, rationality.

Authorial voices influence teachers’ practices. Vaughan (1991) notes that research on teacher assessment practices has focused on product-oriented decision-making. Neglected has been inquiry into pre-conditions of decision-making judgments and intertextual relations between prompt, criteria, written text and the teachers and learners.
who create/read/write/use them. The next chapter explores approaches that view discourse as central to the interpretation of instances of teachers' practices.
Enacting research as a lived practice is daily work for me. I constantly have to work against my academically induced tendencies to romanticise, generalise, or technologize the purposes and forms of . . . research. Fortunately, the classroom teachers with whom I research usually disrupt any of these tendencies. These disruptions, in fact, are what constitute the lived practice of our research. For, no two days in the classroom are the same and no one theory holds together the disruptions in the work in which classroom teachers and I are engaged. I must pay attention to these disruptions in the field, then, for they daily reconfigure not only the curriculum theories that frame my work but also the ways in which I conduct research with teachers.

Janet Miller, *Disruptions in the field: An academic’s lived practice with classroom teachers.*

To a certain extent, the aporia of theory and practice has revolved around the ‘and’. There is obviously an ambiguity in the term theory and practice. It can mean that theory and practice are linked. But then the question becomes what the nature of that connection is. Or it might mean that the ‘and’ signifies difference, that is different domains of experience, which remain by definition, separate and nonrelational . . . Theorizing is a form of practice when it is oriented to questions of purpose and common concerns. Practice involves the mediation of traditions, and the reflexive responsibility to bring that to language and communication.

Hans Smits, *Living within the space of practice: Action research inspired by hermeneutics*

The relation between a situation and a text has been transposed into the relation between a theory text and its practical texts. This means that the relation between situation and text can be studied by a discourse comparison between a theory text and a practical text.

Bernard Mohan, *The structure of situation and the analysis of text*
This chapter begins by framing the inquiry contextually through descriptions of the site and the participants. It is a site where language and content pedagogy is mandated and teachers regularly engage in the activity of integrative evaluation. A central premise to the methods of inquiry then is the notion of activity and its discourse(s). The notion of activity is explored as social practices through paradigmatic features of qualitative research, associated ontological assumptions and related forms of discourse(s). Discussions of discourse(s) are linked to Halliday’s (1978) claim of language as social semiotic and his work (and others) in systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Using Mohan’s (1987) structure of activity, aspects of SFL and forms of discourse are brought together as a way of exploring the discourse(s) of living practices. Following that, offered briefly in a chapter section entitled ‘undertaking this inquiry’ are discussions regarding collecting the data and its analysis, including examples of this approach to sample discourse(s) data. The chapter concludes with a section on legitimating this inquiry through discussions of my claims of researcher positionality, and how concerns of trustworthiness and obligation are addressed.

I heed Miller’s (1997) notion of ‘disrupted’ discourse(s), discourses which are constituted within social practices, also called activities. It is an inquiry that resists the possibility of the researcher as an objective, neutral observer and questions the ‘real worldness’ of experimental research designs. Instead, research itself is viewed as a social activity, replete with disruptions of living practices.

Contextual Framings

The Site

The project was undertaken at a Canadian college with specifically designed programs and curricula for Japanese nationals pursuing post-secondary studies in Canada. The college was established in 1987 with,

a mission to educate global citizens - individuals who understand their own and other cultures from a global viewpoint and who are committed to developing the knowledge, problem-solving strategies and compassion needed to participate fully in a global society. (An educational review, 1992, p. 1)

Hence, it is a college that offers academic study for English language learners. One documented curriculum principle states that “The academic curriculum . . . weaves together
language learning, academic content, diverse cultural experiences and preparation for careers with an international focus" (ibid., p. 3). The programs are designed such that these threads are woven into each course offered. Recognising that the learners are learning English as they learn subject matter, the intention of the curricular approach taken was to "integrate language and content in ways that are meaningful and intellectually challenging" (ibid., p. 17) and attend to the needs of post-secondary Japanese learners. With established curriculum principles and a curricular focus of language and content integration (see the college’s educational mandate in Appendix 1), the college sought teachers with similar interests and qualifications. Often, teachers, individually and in curriculum teams, engaged in simultaneous curriculum development, implementation and learner assessment of integrated language and content learning.

Questions of integrative evaluation were considered within the socio/cultural context which informs and is informed by the teachers who work at the site of this inquiry. The culture of the institution, evident in both explicit and implicit ways, has the potential to influence teachers’ praxis significantly. Structures of time and space, of collaboration and autonomy, and of shared and unshared curricular views seem to influence how integrative evaluation gets done. In briefly describing a school culture at this particular site, my purpose is to acknowledge some of the multiple influences on daily practices and to establish the import of the phrase language and content to those at the college engaged in pedagogical practices.

Institutional documents state explicitly that the academic programs at the urban campus of this Canadian, post-secondary college are build on a framework that addresses the learning of language and content simultaneously. No standard ESL classes were offered, all were content based with a Liberal Arts focus. The Knowledge Framework (Mohan, 1986) was a foundational tool in curricular design in the initial stages of curriculum development, using topic analysis and task (activity) as starting points to determine related language needs. Educational documents clearly describe the role of the teacher at this institution as a language and content teacher but nowhere do they articulate what it means in living practice.

An expectation of teachers is to work in curriculum teams with other teachers teaching the same course. A position of Curriculum Head, is held by a teacher knowledgeable in curriculum and instruction in a specific content area. The Heads offer support to faculty wrestling with the challenge of being a language and content teacher and issues related to academic standards. Meeting times for curriculum groups are scheduled during the working day and teams are expected to reach consensus on assignments and assessment practices common to all students taking the same course. The thrust of this thesis comes from the tensions experienced at many of the curriculum team meeting discussions on assessment and academic standards.
The institutional culture may influence the discourse(s) of integrative evaluation. Three aspects of institutional culture considered in this discussion are core pedagogy, structure, and norms. Profiling this curricular landscape, they offer insight into what it means to teach at this institution. Faculty understandings of core pedagogy at the time of the inquiry were framed by at least three factors: 1) program goals clarified expectations of faculty to expand learners’ knowledge base and develop language skills; 2) an educational goal stated the necessity to integrate language and content; and 3) faculty meetings used for professional development opportunities, e.g., various sessions had focussed on integrating language and content learning strategies, thinking skills, testing, target tasks, and developing a global perspective. Time was given to regularly scheduled meeting blocks in which all faculty were available for meetings; and to leadership for establishing and clarifying criteria for evaluation and supporting curriculum teams in scope and sequence activities. It is an institution that has been structured with a vision of collaboration. Curriculum teams develop and follow a common course outline and use common evaluation tools that contribute to a sense of shared purpose, yet, most of the faculty teach and evaluate autonomously. It appears to be a supportive environment wherein ideas and materials are openly shared and four meetings a term are given to discussing cross-disciplinary issues such as the overlap of content, and concerns and accomplishments of the language learner.

Teachers in this project engaged in discourse(s) of integrative evaluation within an institution committed to offering a program of substance in English to learners for whom English is an additional language. Their knowledge, beliefs, and values of evaluation continually shaped and reshaped their living practices. As well, different cultural histories and environments brought to those spaces by the experiences of teachers engaged in the activity of integrative evaluation contributed to the complexity.

College documents contain broad educational and specific program goals that have

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Werner (1991) describes school culture in terms of mutually reinforcing core pedagogy (e.g., common curricular and instructional goals) structures (e.g., timetable, meetings) and norms (e.g., internal and societal expectations and their power to coerce certain kinds of behaviour). He reminds us that much of school culture is unwritten. Describing the school culture is an attempt to describe why teachers teach what they do in the way they do and what happens when an idea comes into a culture and doesn’t fit. My purpose here is to consider how the socio/cultural expectations of the institution shape integrative evaluation. At this site, it is written into the core pedagogy, given time, and teachers talk about evaluating language and content in their everyday practices. Yet, multiple tensions surround their practices, seemingly fed by the ambiguity of what it is and how to do it.
been a focus of numerous professional development activities. Structures of time, place and leadership encourage collaboration and shared understanding, especially in the area of assessment and academic standards. The documents and educational culture provide a mandate for teachers to teach and therefore evaluate language and content. Of interest is how the teachers make sense of what it means to teach/evaluate language and content within the borders of this institutional culture.

Students at this college study in a two or a four year liberal arts program. The content writing used for evaluation purposes in this project was written by students studying in the second year of a two year program or years two, three or four of the four year program. Those that were studying in the two year International Studies program took as core, common courses Culture and Current Issues and Experiential Studies and chose a major course from translating and interpreting, environmental studies, business, or teaching Japanese to non-native speakers. Those that were studying in the four year International Relations program took as core, common courses Global Studies and Experiential Studies in each year two, three and four, and chose a major in business, multicultural and ethnic studies, or translating and interpreting. Typically in courses for English for Academic Purposes (EAP), students study academic English prior to entry into academic programs. By contrast, the programs at this college are designed such that English is both the medium of learning as well as the subject of study; that is, the students learn subject matter and the English language concurrently.

In particular, the academic writing of subject matter has been given significant pedagogical attention in a systematic way throughout the curriculum in years two, three, and four across subject areas in the four year program as evidenced in their curricular documentation. Professional development activities related to teaching academic writing have contributed to the teachers' classroom practice. In turn, how they have come to understand the pedagogical interventions of teaching the writing of subject matter has most likely influenced their evaluation practices, particularly how they relate to the teaching and then judging of the integration of language/content. Felt tensions among teachers, within and across courses, led to a concerted effort to establish and honour academic standards at the college. From this initial work in academic standards across courses and years, a two
year plan was developed to address concerns of fairness and consistencies in evaluating student essays (see Appendix 2).

Although many teachers choose to work independently, the college has encouraged a collaborative environment in the development of curriculum and academic standards. Blocks of time are scheduled into the timetable to ensure curriculum teams (groups of teachers teaching different sections of the same course) can meet to discuss issues that arise from their teaching and evaluative practices. Opportunities to re/search teachers marking independently, and marking collaboratively with their curriculum team members, seemed to offer a rich source of data collection.

The Participants

The subjects that volunteered for this study are teachers who regularly engage in the marking of texts written by the students they teach. The educational backgrounds of teachers vary from having a Masters degree in a particular subject area without any formal training in teaching English language learners (ELL) to those who are not content specialists but have significant training and experience in teaching English language learners. Some have taught English overseas while others have taught in the public school system in British Columbia. All teachers at the college teach language and content - the English language and subject matter - in any one course. This context may be relatively unique in its twofold purpose of addressing language and content concerns in the post-secondary classroom. For example, in a course called Global Studies 200, teachers are expected to extend and develop the students’ knowledge and language that will facilitate the learners’ ability to write causes and effects of a particular issue such as deforestation. As part of teaching and learning, all teachers are expected to do integrative evaluation; that is, judge the language and content ability and knowledge of the students they teach.

As in any research project, relationships and silent negotiations between and among all subjects involved in the project (and I include myself) are inherent and must be acknowledged. I am not a stranger to the group of teachers who volunteered for this study. I have worked at this post-secondary institution for nine years as a teacher and in multiple administrative roles, including responsibility for teacher evaluation. I am conscious of the
political nature of my past positions and how those relationships may have influenced the participants’ responses. Although I currently work part-time at this institution in a coordinating role unrelated to the volunteer participants of this project, all members of the faculty are aware of the leadership role I have had in shaping the curriculum and articulating the educational and curricular assumptions that are the foundation of the institution. They are also aware of my pursuit of a higher degree in the very field in which they work. I wonder, do they see this research activity as potentially educational in terms of their professional development? As a researcher, I am aware that my histories influence the participants and their conversations with me. Similarly, I wonder how the teachers’ histories influence me and our interchange. Do they think of me as an “expert”, an “authority”, a theorist of integrative evaluation practices? Do I value their expertise, their teacher knowledge, and/or their practice? Do I believe theory should influence practice? That practice should influence theory? These concerns are addressed further in the discussion of the project’s trustworthiness later in this chapter.

At this college, the following seem to be assumptions on which evaluating the content writing of English language learners are based: 1) that teachers are asked to judge what students know (content) from what they say (language); 2) that students can express what they know; 3) that teachers believe they are working towards fairness and consistency in their judgments; and 4) that evaluative criteria are based on the pedagogical interventions of writing. As a researcher, how can I understand these assumptions; how are they constituted? Can they be accessed and, if so, how? Entangled in the opening up of understanding integrative evaluation is the relationship between teacher and student, teacher and researcher and student and researcher within the social situation under study.

The Activity of Integrative Evaluation as a Social Practice

The following ELL text was written in class in response to a question on causes and effects of global warming.

Now, the world is getting warm. This is called Global warming. How does it affect to the people?
Global warming caused by not natural energy. We burned them after ozon rayer is broken. Also, CO2 and warm air stay on the air. In addition, sun rayer comes from directory to the earth.

80
Global warming will likely worsen air pollution, such as greenhouse gases etc. Also, it will alter rainfall pattern, we won't be able to get freshwater. In addition, many serious diseases cause and food supply.

Global warming is very serious one of climatic changes, first we use natural energy, such as sun, river and wind energy instead of not natural energy. If we won't do that, it will favour certain pests and diseases. (om 03/17/94)

The following discourse was generated by teachers independently commenting on the same text before making a judgment.

Headings used for discourse analysis:
Reflecting-on-action: teachers discussing essay marking in general (ACCOUNT)
Reflecting-in-action: teachers discussing specific essays (COMMENTARY)
Action: teachers assigning a mark or grade (ACTS)

Reflecting-in-action: teachers independently discussing specific essays (COMMENTARY)

T1: serious grammar errors have made the answer very unclear don't you think?
T2: it gives me information...but you're right, the language is a little ungrammatical and the spelling!
T3: if it's a pass, it's based on the introductory sentences and what I think the student is trying to say because I'm not sure of what he is saying. I'm guessing
T4: they're not clear statements about cause and effect. I would have to guess a lot too and that's not something I want to do.
T5: it doesn't matter how they say it, I just want the idea. I think the language is getting in the way of the content and I'm not sure how to mark it.

These discourses are an instance of practice teachers engaged in judging the text of an English language learner; as a research focus it is an example of the social practice or activity of integrative evaluation. As a common, routine practice of classroom assessment, it is a pedagogical activity in which teachers presume to judge what students know from what students say.

I use the term 'activity' to locate the texts that involve a kind of social practice in an identifiable social context with particular kinds of actors (Spradley, 1980). The social situation central to this project is an activity of teaching. Figure 1 is an attempt to establish the activity of integrative evaluation as a socio-textual practice. The physical setting is the
classroom, a known place to particular teachers engaged in the activity of evaluating written texts of ELLs.

Figure 1 The Activity of Integrative Evaluation

actors: teachers’ texts
activity: evaluating ELL texts
place: the classroom as a topographical text

As well as identifying components that comprise an activity, it is important to consider the multiple sub-activities in a social practice. Spradley views the web of connections as part of an extensive system of activities; activities that are contained by larger social contexts and that contain smaller elements of activities. They are situated one within another (see Figure 2). The social practice of the current project becomes a

Figure 2 Partial Contextualization of Integrative Evaluation

Still wider context: Educational system
Wider context: The school
Activity: Integrative evaluation
Sub-activity: Determining evaluative criteria

network of sub-activities in which the same actors participate to accomplish integrative evaluation. The wider context of school is evident in the College’s educational mandate and in the Academic Standards Committee’s two year plan (see Appendix 1 and 2). Figure 3 is an attempt to illustrate this complexity. Distinctions of particular activities fade; in the process of completing one activity, at least one other activity is implicated.
Cultural psychologist Cole (1996) posits that activity is grounded in everyday life events - in this project, the everyday professional life events of teachers. Cole offers that social situations, wherein actors are viewed as active agents in the co-construction of joint activities, are surrounded by contexts of historical and current significance; those constructed material artifacts and social practices that continually reshape social situations.

**Qualitative Inquiry and Ontological Assumptions**

Qualitative inquiry explores cultural meaning and "emic" linguistic concepts based on assumptions that cultural or social actions are influenced by an individual's knowledge of local norms (Harre, 1993). In contrast with quantitative approaches that privilege numerical data, qualitative approaches use discourse as data in their interpretations of social realities. In the view of some analysts of certain types of qualitative research, ontological conceptions of the world consider the individual’s social realities to be constituted midst dynamic interchanges within his/her social world. It is a view that values the subjective experiences of individuals and uses methods to illuminate how individuals create, participate in and make sense of the social situations that make up their world. It gives import to the role of cultural interpretations of behaviour.

In a recent publication on new methods in psychology, Smith, Harré, and Langenhove (1995) emphasise the central role of language and discourse in the construction of an individual's social realities. Harré, a philosopher, in earlier works (1985, 1993, 1994) has consistently maintained that discourse has a significant role in

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*Ontological assumptions, concerned with the very nature of being in the world, contribute to particular views and interpretations of social reality.*
social situations; that discursive interactions are inherent in all social situations and perform
to structure and effect the social realities individuals have come to know. Harré (1993)
posits, “social behaviour is the structured product of the joint actions of intelligent and
knowledgeable agents acting to further some end or other. It is not the effect of causes” (p.
107).

Harré and Gillett (1994) claim that activity is a planned and intentional social
practice and that individuals’ intentionality can be understood in terms of discourse
(conversations), the socially produced linguistic exchanges within activities. They argue that
activity and its ordered, intentional acts are ‘actions of discourses’ that construct and are
constructed by situated, sociocultural knowledge. Discourses, as actions of social situations,
contain sociocultural knowledge of those engaged in linguistic exchanges.

Spradley (1980) and Harré (1993) both view activity as a semiotic of theory/practice,
knowing/doing, cultural knowledge/cultural practice. Spradley (1980) considers cultural
knowledge, “the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate
social behaviour” (p. 5) and cultural action, as fundamental to human experience. He
speaks of activities as “streams of behaviour . . . [with] recognisable patterns of activity”
(p. 41) that are culturally interpreted. Harré (1993) compares resources and acts, a
theory/practice relationship he claims exists in all activities, to linguistic concepts of
competence and performance. He defines competence as the background knowledge one
knows - rules and conventions of language appropriate to a social situation - that influences,
and is influenced by, the performance of speech acts. Together, resources and actions,
competence and performance, inform the social act. In Harré’s terms, analysing these as
different types of discourse gives insight into the socio-cultural act: the actions (practice) of
an activity and the resources (theory) that inform them. Both address the socio-cultural
knowledge one uses to accomplish the activity. Table 3 aligns Spradley’s and Harré’s
views with notions of theory and practice, and activity.

How is activity interpreted by its participants? What resources of cultural
knowledge inform and are informed by its practices? In contrast to a process-product

72 The relationship of theory and practice, as Smits reminds us on page 70 of this text, is an ambiguous
one. For purposes of gaining useful understandings of the discourse datum, I explore the work of social
psychologists and functional linguists and how the notion of activity can be considered a semiotic of
theory/practice.
paradigm of research on teaching (Brophy & Good, 1986), the ontological assumptions that underpin the view of activity presented here focus on cultural interpretations of behaviour and view discourse as central to the construction of the theory/practice of an individual’s social realities.

Table 3  Activity as a Semiotic of Theory/Practice

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Recently the field of L2 teaching research has taken particular interest in investigating the assumption that teachers’ practices are inextricably linked with their pedagogical knowledge and beliefs. Their work explores teachers’ interpretations of classroom activities and reflections on decisions in the classroom. Current emphasis on reflective practice supports this reflection on action. Richards & Lockhart (1994) remind us,

It is necessary to look objectively at teaching and reflect critically on what one discovers . . . . It can help achieve a better understanding of one’s own assumptions about teaching as well as one’s own teaching practices, it can lead to a richer conceptualisation of teaching and a better understanding of teaching and learning processes; and it can serve as a basis for self-evaluation and is therefore an important component of professional development. (p. 2)

Schon’s (1983) account of reflective practice includes the notion of reflection-in-action, a type of action where the teacher negotiates theory/practice in the practical context of their classroom. In Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993), Schon’s work on different relationships between professional knowledge and professional action is explored and three types of action are identified: 1) reflection-on-action as discourse that “distances itself from the flow of activities” (p. 206); 2) reflection-in-action as dealing with “new and complex situations . . . or disturbances and problems [that] disrupt the smooth flow of routinised action” (p. 205); and 3) tacit knowing-in-action as routine “actions or mind-sets which have been built up through frequent repetition” (p. 204). Of significance to this project is

73 See the work of Borg, 1998; Johnson, 1992a, 1992b; Woods, 1996.
Schon's acknowledgement of reflection-in-action. It is a way of attending to the discursive preconditions of decision making involved in integrative evaluation.

**Forms of Discourse in Activity**

Harré (1993) and Spradley (1980) both use activity as a unit of study and offer approaches that investigate the theory/practice of activities; that is, through their methodologies they attempt “to make explicit all that is tacit in a form of life” (Harré, 1993, p. 107), an important goal in several forms of qualitative research. Spradley (1979) discusses methods for an ethnographic interview as an investigation of the theory of activity; the interview, removed from the activity, is a kind of discourse of reflection. In another text, Spradley (1980) describes approaches to participant observation as a way of investigating the practice of an activity; the observation, located midst the activity, records discourses of action within the activity. While Spradley is concerned with detailed descriptions of the activity including language, Harré emphasises discourse(s) as the central point and argues that discourses contain evidence of one’s resources (theory) and acts (practice).

Fundamental to Harré’s (1993) work is his distinction between two kinds of discourse. There is that with which social acts are accomplished and there is that with which we comment upon and theorise about those social acts. Accounts are discourses of the second kind . . . . some of the norms of social action are made explicit in accounts, though for all sorts of reasons. In first order discourse, the norms of action are implicit. (pp. 116-7)

He suggests that (discourse) acts are a form of discourse that imply the norms of actions (practices) of an activity, whereas discourse accounts of knowledge as theory and discourse commentaries in action make evident norms of social acts. The meanings of social acts are made more explicit through differing types of discourses (Table 4).

**Table 4** Main Types of Discourse data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harré et. al (1985), Harré (1993)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accounts of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary on acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(discourse) acts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Figure 4, Harré’s main types of discourse data are linked to discussions of theory and practice, and reflection and action. Explicit discourse evidence of theory can be aligned with Harré’s accounts of knowledge while discursive evidence of practice seems to be found in both commentary in action and (discursive) acts themselves. However, it seems that in discussions of reflection and action, discursive evidence of reflecting ‘in’ or ‘on’ action can be aligned with Harré’s accounts of knowledge and commentaries on acts, while action seems primarily concerned with acts of decision-making. Reflecting-on-action and reflecting-in-action as discourse evidence of both accounts and commentary, have the potential to make explicit the norms implied in the social acts.

Of particular interest to this inquiry are the discourses located within the preconditions of acts of decision-making (e.g., teachers accounts and commentaries prior to deciding on evaluative criteria or a mark or a grade on an essay) as these discourses claim a contested, discursive space of dilemmas, contrary themes and undecidabilities (Billig et al., 1988). Analysing, for example, teachers’ accounts and commentaries has the potential to make the norms of marking or grading acts were explicit. Significant in the data analysis then are the relations of accounts and commentaries, as they provide primary evidence of the cultural meaning of the (discourse) act.

As well, Harré et. al (1985) discuss the practical and expressive aspects of action as “Action occur[ing] on two levels at once. Not only has one to *do* the right thing, but one has to *appear* as the right kind of person” (pp. 88-9). It is a linking of the idea of acts - a concern for doing the right thing (e.g., marking ‘correctly’) - and the idea of identity - a concern for being the right kind of person (e.g., viewed as a teacher who is fair and consistent in marking); it is a positioning of subjects in discourse(s). Of particular import is Harré and Gillett’s (1994) claim,

> The sense of agentic position, the sense that one is the agent of one’s actions and responsible to others for them, is something that we acquire through learning the language and the cultural conventions for the assignment of responsibility. (p. 111)

Aspects of the practical and the expressive are a link to the socio-cultural situatedness spoken of earlier in this chapter and of neo-Vygotskyan approaches that invite images of the individual in dramatistic, performative notions of action. How teachers make sense of
doing the ‘right’ thing and being the ‘right’ kind of person as it relates to integrative evaluation is of particular interest in this project; it raises questions of norms and conventions, and of the multiple, and possibly conflicting, interpretations of the normative and conventional expectations operating within and among individuals. Harré (1993) attends to the means of actions, the “unfolding of everyday life and to the performances of the people who live it . . . an ironic stance, a viewpoint from which life goes forward, becomes visible” (p. 191). Researching through what Harré calls a dramaturgical model, activity becomes a scene with all its necessary and sustaining illusions; it is a simulacrum of participants performing their parts in daily routines. Viewing scenes from this stance not only implicates the researcher in his/her part of the larger performance of research itself but it has the potential to make visible the diverse scripts, improvisations, interpretations and, as Billig et al. (1988) remind us, the inherent dilemmas enacted within the webs of connections of activities.

In sum, it is argued that discourse data, with all its dilemmatic aspects, is central to the methods of inquiry of much qualitative research and helps to make the context of an activity explicit. Although Harré claims two types of discourse, I, in support of Mohan’s (1999) work, make distinctions between three main types: 1) a discourse of practice that reflects discourse acts of activities (e.g., discourse collected when teachers engage in evaluating essays); 2) a discourse of commentary that serves to interpret meaningful acts of practice (e.g., discussing possible decisions with self, with members of a collaborative marking group or with a researcher while engaged in the marking process); and 3) a discourse of accounts that provides information of norms, rules, and conventions for acting ‘correctly’ and offers evidence for cultural knowledge of an activity (e.g., conversations between teachers, or between a teacher and the researcher that elicits talk about marking writing in general). It is essential to relate commentaries and accounts to discourse acts. Whereas conventional interview research methods emphasises accounts (e.g., teachers’ responses to questions prior to or after action) and behaviourist research methods emphasise acts (e.g., teachers’ behaviours (acts) related to student acts of achievement), this approach claims that evidence from all three types of discourse data are necessary to interpret the meaning of activity more explicitly; that is, commentaries and accounts are
viewed as primary evidence of the implied cultural meaning of an act. It is a notion that considers discourse as a social semiotic text.

**Discourse as a Social Semiotic Text**

Language arises in the life of the individual through an ongoing exchange of meanings with significant others. (Halliday, 1978, p. 1)

It has been argued that the process of learning language and creating meaning is a social process involving experience and the interaction with oneself and with others. The linguist Halliday (1978) posits, “the construal of reality is inseparable from the construal of the semantic system in which the reality is encoded. In this sense, language is a shared meaning potential, at once both a part of experience and an intersubjective interpretation of experience” (p. 1). SFL theory is based on the premise that language is a social semiotic and Halliday argues that “social reality (or a ‘culture’) is itself an edifice of meanings - a semiotic construct” (1978, p. 2). In SFL, semantics is interpreted within a sociocultural context, a context which is itself understood semiotically - the socially constructed relationships of meaning between the signifier and the signified. Discourse, considered as “a text - an instance of language in use” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 24) is seen as a resource for social purposes. This stance makes possible the recognition of discourse communities and their specialised uses of language. It is a shift from a focus on the individual to viewing community as a system of social situations or activities of which language is central. It is a social theory of discourse that begins with the discourse and seeks to describe its features by its social functions; it is a view of discourse as social semiotic text.

Halliday’s contribution to linguistics is significant. Building on Saussure’s idea that language is a product of the social process, Halliday describes how learning takes place through language and how language is used to construe meaning. Language, for SFL linguists, is a meaning-making system. For Halliday and Hasan (1985), language is text, not sentences, and always interpreted in its relationship to social structure. They define language “as a resource for meaning, centrally involved in the processes by which human beings negotiate, construct and change the nature of social experience” (p. vi). Language exchanged in social contexts, in which there is always some form of social structure, derives
its meaning from these social activities. It is a theoretical framework that focuses on discourse(s) in social contexts.

One important SFL claim is that meaning is situated in contexts of situation and can be specified through register variables of field, tenor, and mode (Halliday, 1994). Field refers to the socially recognised activity taking place at the time and includes an activity focus (the kind of social activity - e.g., marking essays) and an object focus (subject matter - e.g., criteria for marking). Tenor refers to the social relationships which hold between the various participants in the interaction and that are specifiable (e.g., tenor in integrative evaluation activities could reflect the power or status relations between colleagues in collaborative contexts or between a teacher and the researcher). Mode refers to the role of language in the interaction and how it is being used (e.g., teachers' comments can be oral or written, action or reflection).

If we are to apply SFL to Harre's distinctions, it is important to distinguish the discourse features of various discourses emerging from social practices discussed earlier and briefly summarised here: 1) the discourse acts of the activity that reflect the practice of the activity, 2) the discourse acts of the activity that reflect the comments and descriptions of the practice of an activity, and 3) the accounts or discourse of theory that provide evidence of the cultural knowledge of an activity. Within the action/reflection dimension of mode, as discourse "moves from action to reflection there is a progressive distancing from the actual event and the experience becomes increasingly vicarious" (Gerot & Wignell, 1994, p. 11). Martin (1992), an SFL scholar, describes differences between the three types of discourse data along this dimension in terms of discourse features. He describes the language of action (e.g., a teacher marking collaboratively comments, "let's mark this one together, I can't figure it out") as verbal actions and speech acts where attention is given to the text as interaction rather than as content. He explains that the language of commentary denotes specific people and actions, often, but not necessarily, in the past tense in reflective comments (e.g., a teacher reflecting on the mark she gave comments, "I think I was too generous with this one"). And, he suggests the language of accounts is about generic things and actions/events and is usually in the timeless present tense (e.g., a teacher conversing about marking stated, "I always write down my criteria before I
Martin’s work is an implicit acknowledgement of the possibility of a theory/practice relationship in discourse acts and, therefore, potentially links ‘mode’ of discourse with qualitative research methods. Table 5 summarises this argument, suggesting possible connections between the qualitative discourse methods of Harré and SFL work on mode of discourse by Martin. In addition, Figure 6 illustrates that reflecting-on-action and reflection-in-action have the potential to be constituted by all three discourses. Finally, it has been argued that reflecting-in-action, wherein evidence of all three forms of discourses can be found, is a possible site of contested discourses in the pre-conditions of decision-making, a site of central interest to this project. It combines methods of inquiry that address situated and distinct forms of discourses wherein cultural meanings of social acts, replete with potential dilemmas, are made more explicit.

Table 5  Discourse Analysis: Qualitative Research Methods and SFL Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harré (1993) (mode)</th>
<th>Martin (1992) (mode)</th>
<th>reflecting-on-action e.g., research interviews: teachers' making grading decisions explicit</th>
<th>reflecting-in-action e.g., collaborative marking: prior to determining mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>account</td>
<td>generic (theoretical)</td>
<td>account</td>
<td>account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>specific (commentary)</td>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(discourse) acts</td>
<td>language in action (participation/interaction)</td>
<td>acts (a judged essay)</td>
<td>acts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further delineations of discourse and sociocultural knowledge are central to the work of Schieffelin and Ochs (1986). They suggest that knowledge of language and of culture, interrelated and inseparable, are learned through the process of socialisation. They posit,

In making sense out of what people are saying and in speaking in a sensible fashion themselves, children relate linguistic forms to social situations. Part
of their acquired knowledge of a linguistic form is the set of social relations that it forms in social situations, just as part of their acquired knowledge of a social situation includes the linguistic forms that define or characterise it. (p. 2)

The work of Schieffelin and Ochs conceptualises a framework of language socialisation based on the role of language in the process of becoming competent members of social groups. It is a sociocultural view of activity, a site where “activity mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and that knowledge and activity impact each other” (Ochs, 1988, p. 15). The role of activity in language socialisation is outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4  Activity: Motility Between Sociocultural and Linguistic Knowledge

| sociocultural knowledge | activity | linguistic knowledge |

Ochs offers activity as the product of a sociocultural, discursive practice that has a cumulative, goal oriented set of actions involving human investment. She claims that activity is the location of sociocultural and linguistic learning - a place where language crafts, and is crafted by, sociocultural knowledge.

In sum, for purposes of delineating methods of inquiry used in this project on integrative evaluation, I argue that activity is a social act or practice wherein at least three forms of discourse and general related linguistic features can be identified in the analysis of discourse data. Two forms of discourse, accounts and commentaries contribute to interpretations of the third form of discourse - implied cultural meanings of social acts. Consideration is given to all three forms of discourse and their potential to be dilemmatic as a way of attempting to make more explicit the felt difficulty of living practices of integrative evaluation.

**Undertaking This Inquiry**

Integrative evaluation is explored within triangulated sources of the discourses
gathered from live(d) experiences of being there. 

Outlined in detail below, the sources of data include: tape recordings of teachers collaboratively and independently conversing with me while marking; recorded debriefing sessions; collected participants’ oral and written responses to the reporting at the debriefing sessions; recorded conversations with students about their marked writing; and, personal journals kept as a researcher and as a teacher marking. The doubling of roles - as a researcher and an actor in a social situation, - is not regarded as distinct and separate, but as perspectives that have the potential to support, elaborate and illuminate useful understandings of integrative evaluation and therefore are woven thoughtfully and intertextually throughout the study.

Collecting the Data

The following procedures for data collection framed this project:

1. Participants were recruited by a memo circulated to all faculty. The request was for me as the researcher to attend and interact in regular collaborative marking sessions by curriculum teams and to sit with individual faculty as they marked their students’ written texts. I contacted the fourteen that responded to my memo, asked them to sign a subject consent form and then established a mutually agreed upon schedule of sessions to attend.

2. Three kinds of sessions were scheduled for me to attend and tape record: four different curriculum teams collaboratively marking a writing assignment completed by all the students taking the course; ten teachers independently marking assignments written by learners they taught; and, fourteen teachers, who may have participated in the above sessions, independently marking anonymous assignments written by students at the college. Although I did not lead the sessions, I asked semi-structured and open-ended questions as teachers engaged in their marking activities. At the end of the sessions, and as part of the conversation, I asked them to reflect on the activity of integrative evaluation.

3. Six debriefing sessions were held: two with each group of participants in the three kinds of sessions described above. The purpose of the debriefing sessions were to share draft analysis of the data collected. Teachers were invited to respond to the analysis orally or in writing. These sessions were recorded and considered part of the data collection.

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74 Britzman (1995) reminds us, “There is a belief and expectation that the ethnographer is capable of producing truth from the experience of being there and that the reader is receptive to the truth of the text” (p. 229). By “being there”, we often assume we are capturing the true story of the activity. I sought not one true story but multiple stories of integrative evaluation.
During the first session, teachers responded to my interpretations of the discourse data (see Appendix 3). Any anonymous written participants' responses to the debriefing sessions were collected. The participant's feedback led to revisions in the initial analysis. The purpose of the second debriefing session was for each group to respond to those revisions that reconstructed their and my collective view of the discourse data from the first debriefing session. A redrafting of that analysis was circulated to participants inviting further feedback (see Appendix 4).

4. A request for students interested in participating in the project was posted. A small group of seven responded and I met with them. With the assistance of an interpreter, I explained the study and asked them to sign an English/Japanese consent form if they wanted to volunteer. I arranged to meet with each student for half an hour at a later time when they were writing one of their course assignments. I also asked them to bring a marked written assignment they had done. At the meeting, I asked semi-structured questions as they were writing, asked them to reflect on what it meant for them to write subject matter in English, and asked how it should be judged. I also asked them to respond to the mark they received on the second assignment. Our conversations were tape recorded.

Dealing with Discourse(s) as Data

Twenty-seven ninety-minute cassette tapes hold the discourse data collected over a period of three months through the above procedures. Each tape was reviewed within one week of taping and evidence of accounts, commentaries and acts of integrative evaluation were transcribed as found in the multiple activities of integrative evaluation. Discourse evidence from independent markers and from collaborative marking sessions were used in the analysis of the data. The tapes from the debriefing sessions were reviewed and transcribed. The researcher's journal was examined for evidence of accounts of integrative evaluation (the focus of the research and used as evidence in the discussion of the findings) and as a reflecting-on-action of the research project itself (a process of reflexivity I used to inform my research at all stages and is therefore infused throughout the writing of this text). Once collected and transcribed, the discourse data of integrative evaluation was analysed for Harré's notions of accounts, commentaries, and acts as is illustrated in the following examples. In all examples, the texts being evaluated were written by ELLs.
I. Collaborative Integrative Evaluation - sample data

Context: A group of three teachers who are experienced markers collaboratively judge 84 responses to the same essay question on multiculturalism in the same room at the same time in an attempt to be fair to students and gain consistency in grading practices. The researcher is present.

Reflecting-in-action: teachers on the process of their marking (COMMENTARY)
T2: So is it five and five - five for the structure and five for the content?
T3: I think that's easier to mark with.
T2: So the opening sentence has to have part of the question in it?
R: How did you teach the notion of 'topic sentence'? What do the students understand by this term?
T1: I don't know. I think some of my students are going to fail - they may use a lead or something to catch the reader's interest. That's how we talked about introductions.
T2: Alright, we didn't ask for a topic sentence so we can't mark for one.
T3: This sure is difficult to agree on a mark.
T2: And more time-consuming but the students benefit ultimately.
T1: Ya, I agree. Let's stick with it.

Action: teachers judging essays collaboratively (ACTS are underlined)
T1: Look at this one. It didn't answer the question and it has no conclusion. I'd give it a four. Which is the four pile?
T2: Let me see it. Hmmm...the student has put a lot of thought into it though. What's wrong with this last sentence? It links back to the topic and there are hardly any grammar errors. I think it deserves a six or seven.
T3: Let me have a look at it. We need to come to a closer agreement. It's actually quite a well written text - just a little off topic.

Reflecting-on-action: teachers talking about the collaborative experience after the marking session. (ACCOUNTS)
R: As you think back over the last hour and a half, what are your comments about collaborative marking and about fair and consistent evaluation of students' essays, especially in the marking of language and content?
T1: It was good but much more difficult than I thought it would be.
T3: Ya, I would agree. I feel better about the marks but amazed at the number of times we couldn't decide. I realised how different we each think about each piece of writing.
T2: I noticed we had most trouble with what was language and what was content. It seemed so clear with the criteria for language and the criteria for content we laid out but it was not so easy when we read the essays.
T1: I think I learned from the experience of hearing your (the other teachers) comments. That was helpful. In general, I think the students benefited from our collective judgments. But, to tell the truth, I still don't know how to mark the essay when the ideas seem to be there but the language is messy or when the language seems fairly readable but the ideas aren't substantial.
II. Debriefing Session on Integrative Evaluation - sample data

Context: teachers that participated in the independent marking sessions attended a debriefing session where I offered my interpretation of the discourse data and asked them to give me their interpretation.

Reflecting-on-action about integrative evaluation (ACCOUNTS).
T5: I think that it's hard to separate language and content but it is certainly easier to mark them separately. That's a problem for me.
R: When you separate them, how do you think of language? I try to think of the whole text, that helps me to see a closer, more connected relationship.
T1: I see what you're saying but for me I think of language as grammar, the verb tenses, proper use of nouns, you know, the rules, the bits that distinguish a native writer from a non-native writer. I can count the errors, I can list them, I can show the students their weaknesses in writing. I never really understood what is meant by 'discourse'.

III. Researcher's Journalised Accounts of Integrative Evaluation

Context: during the marking sessions, teachers asked about integrative evaluation and about specific texts they were marking. At the end of each session, I made a journal entry that reflected on the content of our discussions as well as on the process of researching.

Reflecting-on-action: one of my journal entries (ACCOUNTS)
R: I tell the others that I consider the text first to get a sense of the purpose of the writer. Is s/he trying to convince, persuade, argue, define...Starting with the whole text takes my eye away from the grammar errors evident in the writing. I don't want to be influenced by grammar errors but I know as soon as I see one, as I did in a paragraph the teacher was marking this afternoon, I am distracted by it, I want to correct it, it's almost an automatic response. Why is the eye more controlling than the ear?

IV. ELLs on what it means to write and judged

Context: I sat with individual students as they worked on a writing assignment. We talked about what it meant to write and be judged on their written content as an ELL.

action: a student engaged in writing content (ACT)
S1: How do you spell global? I always make mistake (commentary on act).
R: ah, global g-l-o-b-a-l
S1: Thanks. Umm... I want to say these things need each other but I forget word. Do you know?
R: You are writing about global systems? Hmm. How about interdependent. Do you know that word?

reflecting-in-action: the student engaged in writing content (COMMENTARY)
S1: I make so many mistake here. Look how much I cross out.
R: Why do you think you're having difficulty?
S1: Vocabulary. My vocabulary is weak. I need more words. I can't remember grammar points too. I want to write correctly. Then ideas stop. Should I think of ideas or rules when I write this. I don't know. It is so hard.
reflecting-on-action: a conversation about writing and judging ideas

ACCOUNT
S1: It's hard to write ideas and think about spelling.
R: What if you just try to write your ideas?
S1: Too difficult. I know some things in Japanese I can't tell in English. The teacher marks my language. I know its poor. But, I know this topic. I can't tell her what I know. She doesn't know what I know. My content mark is low. I don't like this kind assignment.

Undoing the discourse data in this way, living practices of integrative evaluation and its felt tensions can be located and made sense of. It allows questions such as, how do teachers do integrative evaluation, why do dilemmas occur where they do, do teachers practice what they espouse and do they espouse what they practice, to be probed. Student voices add a dimension to the project that have the potential to elaborate on the question, can teachers judge what students know from what they say?

Legitimating This Inquiry

Cultural geographers Cosgrove and Domosh (1993), concerned about issues of author and authority in writing, remind us that questions of representation and communication are dependent upon prior questions of ontology (what constitutes reality), epistemology (how we come to know that reality) and science (the formal construction of such knowledge). (p. 25)

As a researcher/writer, these too are my concerns. Heeding these words, and as a way of legitimating this inquiry, in what follows I discuss questions of researcher positionality and the project’s trustworthiness and obligations to this kind of research practice.

Researcher Positionalities

As the researcher of this project, I question traditional ontological understandings of discourse as being representative of an independent reality, and instead view communication (discourse) as dilemmatic (Billig et al., 1988). Rather than the preciseness and clarity of reality being reflected in language, I am open to the possibility of language as opaque, wherein meanings shift within the act of communication. And, I am open to the possibility that multiple socially constructed ways of coming-to-know integrative evaluation may be constituted in discourse(s) containing ambiguous and conflicting fragments of

75 In chapter six I discuss the effects of researcher positionalities in inquiry practices in more detail. Here, my intention is to specify what I understand to be my positionalities in this particular research project.
positionality that become living 'disruptions' (Miller, 1997). These notions frame the project and assist in understanding the discursive contestations, negotiations and nexus I anticipate in exploring the activity of integrative evaluation. Positionalities that inform and guide this inquiry of integrative evaluation, then, are based on assumptions of 1) qualitative research and certain related ontological assumptions; 2) discourse as a form of social action; and 3) cultural and historical realism.

The stance taken here rejects the idea that the purpose of research is to search for the 'truth', natural and universal laws that exist 'out there'. Traditional research has often assumed that data collected will capture the 'true story' of the activity being researched. My intent is not to discover the 'essence' or nature of the individual or of the collaborative group doing integrative evaluation, instead I am interested in the multiple positionalities enacted, positions of integrative evaluation as instances of living practice. I do not seek a single, explanatory reality that may exist for all teachers. Instead, I am interested in the felt tensions of those positions, the “social preconditions... those aspects of socially shared beliefs which give rise to the dilemmatic thinking of individuals” (Billig et al., 1988, p. 8).

I believe integrative evaluation practices have the potential to be situated within connected historical and cultural frames (e.g., notions of school culture as outlined by Werner, 1991) from which emerge multiple perspectives, some of which are contradictory, fragmented, and conflicting. Teachers (and I include myself) bring to this process understandings of language, of content, of marking, as have been learned in socially constructed contexts throughout various life experiences. Discerning the influences of history and culture that have shaped our discourses, that is, how we understand language, content, second language writing, will influence integrative evaluation and its collaboration. It is an educational legacy that has influenced ways of thinking about, and acting upon, the practices of judging ELL essays. Ways of thinking, as Haraway (1988), a feminist researcher, argues, are “situated and embodied knowledge... those partial, locatable, critical knowledges that have the potential of sustaining the possibility of webs of connections” (p. 182). Shared meaning, one example of Haraway's web of connections, is an element of integrative evaluation. Collaboration is the negotiating and connecting of
partial, fragmented social knowledges among group members and within oneself. Haraway’s ideas give privilege to “contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing” (ibid.). This enables discourses to be heard as historical and cultural realism; as situated knowledges within activities.

In discerning a discourse that would guide my re/searching, I developed and then engaged in the living practice of the following research claims:

• that subjectivity and partiality are inherent in all social science research activities (Clifford & Marcus, 1986);
• that historical contexts are integral aspects of the condition for useful understandings of the re/searched activity;
• that voices of participants are heard as they make sense of their experiences within the re/searched activity;
• that there is no ‘one true story’.

Supported by the work of Peirce (1995), this research is collaborative and critical, reflexive and interpretive, and works to engage all participants in the constituting of useful understandings of integrative evaluation. Participants inform each other with their insights and thoughtfulness as part of a dialogic process that builds, reconstructs, or alters the current context.

Throughout this project I have refrained from privileging scientific assumptions of objectivity and neutrality that presume to lead to the validity and reliability of this research. I acknowledge that my collection and analysis of the discourse(s) are social situations and therefore contain traces of my own subjective discourse(s). Taking this stance, and guided by the above claims, I entered this work cautiously and thoughtfully and now argue in defence of its trustworthiness.

Its Trustworthiness

In questioning this project’s validity, the term validity was reconsidered. I asked, are the discourse(s) of teachers marking reliable? Do they represent truths of knowledge where there is a direct and transparent link between word and thought that is easily recognised and validated? Lather (1995) calls into question the traditional notion of validity
as absolute and categorical and attempts to “reframe validity as multiple, partial, endlessly deferred” (p. 38). If validity is an impossibility as Lather posits, then questions must be asked about the validity of researching integrative evaluation, and of qualitative research itself. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that traditional notions of validity and reliability for qualitative research are inappropriate. Instead, the researcher should advocate for the value and logic of their research project in its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

This project’s credibility lies in the use of multiple points of view and reciprocity. On the importance of multiple points of view, Goldman-Segall (1995) comments,

We recognise the internal “strength” (validus in Latin) of a reporting, not only by its rhetorical ability to persuade, its compelling authority, and its exclusive use of canon and genre, but by its ability to bend, to be resilient, and to be reconfigured into new groupings. Layers on layers. Research also gains strength by bringing together both the discordant and the harmonious. It gains strength by providing a forum for variance and diversity. (p. 3)

It is a way to address the problematics of re/searching “others”. I acknowledge that the data as text is always ‘read’ and therefore does not speak for itself, and, as a ‘reading’, interpretive traces of my point of view are always present. It was therefore important to give back to the participants how the data was viewed and to check the validus of the analysis. The debriefing sessions, a form of reciprocity, were offered as a platform to engage in what Goldman-Segall calls “multi-loguing” where participants (researcher and subjects) in this project were invited to reflect on the anonymous discourses collected (their own and others) and engage in multiple layers of commentary. Significant aspects of those multiple perspectives were then negotiated and became a co-constructed report of the findings. The inquiry then became “credible to the constructors of the multiple realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296).

Transferability, however, is more problematic because it involves two kinds of decision making - the researcher making decisions on the writing of multiple realities that have been multi-logged, and readers deciding whether or not to transfer the useful understandings to a new context. Is the new context similar enough to the one reported that there can be transference? By articulating the theoretical framework and giving thoughtful description to the context and re/search activities of this project, readers will more readily
determine its transferability.

This project is not disguised as reproducible. My focus was to record the active discourse constructions of the complexities of 'doing' integrative evaluation and adapt the strategies I used to capture the discourse as it occurred. This cannot be replicated. Instead, I have noted jarring moments, those moments of unexpected acts, commentaries or accounts of integrative evaluation, and I have documented any adaptations of the research-as-planned as they took place throughout the project. In any qualitative study involving human subjects, the research is taking place in an always changing social world and makes dependability of the project problematic.

Resisting the possibility of objectivity of the researcher, I used activities of reciprocity and encouraged a dialogue of reflexivity as two strategies to address the concerns of confirmability. Participants conversed with each other and with me while evaluating students’ texts and while reviewing my reportings of the data analysis. They reconstructed with me, through the debriefing sessions, to locate useful understandings of our situated knowledges of integrative evaluation. Recognising that our subjectivities continually shaped this project, these strategies were significant in their work of confirmability.

Its Obligation

Obligation, that is, my responsibilities as a social researcher to those involved in this project, is integral to its legitimation. The main form for addressing obligation of this project, as is common with other social research projects, is informed consent. Informed consent, while an act of well-intentioned 'ethics-in-the-name-of-the-good', must deal with "that tenuous and delicate situation" of decision-making "addressed by the name 'undecidabilities'" (Caputo, 1993, p. 3) that veils a presumed decisive clarity involved in signing the form. Knowing the 'vulnerability' of obligation, I step carefully through a process of providing information of the study to prospective participants, reviewing it with them, answering their questions to the best of my knowledge, while being mindful that their participation was intended to be voluntary. I attempted to establish a context in which

Traditionally, questions of ethicality are addressed in researcher practices. Instead, I support the thoughtful arguments of Caputo (1993) and his writing "against ethics", outlined in more detail in chapter six. Hence I turn to a discussion of my obligations, rather than presumed possibilities of ethicality, as researcher to the participants.
the participants had the choice to take part, and the self-determination to withdraw themselves from the project at any point without effect. However well intentioned in what was written in the informed consent and the discussions that surrounded it, when I began the research, the many obligatory concerns, inherent in any qualitative research, emerged and required on-going thoughtful (re)consideration.

My attention to the rights and values of the participants while seeking not the ‘truth’ but useful understandings of the inquiry was a delicate process. In thinking through what I was seeking, I anticipated that I may be less than satisfied with the fairness and consistency of the evaluative practices of teachers I would encounter. Roman (1992), in discussing the feminist post-modern practices, raises the question of means-end research. I reaffirmed for me that the purpose of this research was not to have the teachers learn to do integrative evaluation the way I ‘wanted it done’. I thoughtfully considered my framework of understanding integrative evaluation and the values I bring to marking students’ essays and was mindful not to insert them into this inquiry in any significant way. I was careful not to dominate with what may have been possibly perceived as a voice of authority when I interacted with the participants as they marked. I was attentive in offering suggestions while honouring their contributions as valid and worthy in our conversations.

Knowing also that obligatory concerns often arise from the methods used, I thoughtfully considered aspects of obligation at each stage of the research. There was always the potential of naming, of ‘othering’, the participants. I actively contested this in my journal writing. Embedded in the naming or labelling process is also a possibility for judging the participants, especially when such close attention is paid to their discourses. Fine (1994) questions what she calls the colonising discourse of othering and writes about the relationship between subjects and researcher as working the hyphen, “that is, unpacking notions of scientific neutrality, universal truths, and researcher dispassion” and invites us to “braid critical and contextual struggle back into our texts” (p. 71). To work the hyphen, I self-consciously questioned the influence of my historical relationship with the participants and how that might be encoded in their discourse. As well, I asked, how is what I know of them as ‘teachers’ (their histories of learning about English and subject matter) influencing

77 Means and end talk is described by Roman (1992) as having the potential to redirect the project, both consciously and unconsciously, to a desired outcome.
the questions I ask and the comments I make in the dialogic process of inquiry? I wondered, will teachers practice what they tell me as researcher? Will there be a dominant discourse? If so, whose will it be? These were some of the 'jarring' moments, those moments of my unanticipated accord and discord in what I observed and in the conversations in which I participated, as the research process unfolded. As researcher and teacher, I explored my teacher knowledge and practices reflexively by journalising jarring moments of disruption. This was one way to account for my subjectivities and interested knowledge and used to check whose and what knowledge is legitimated and how new knowledge was constituted. In the act of re/searching, I acknowledged the relationships and the subjectivities within the context of this inquiry that I was re/searching to understand.

Understanding integrative evaluation through discursive instances of teachers’ practices, each time building on past ‘readings’ and transforming how it can now be understood to be, requires co-specifying relations between the subjects and the researcher, as well as the contextual factors such as the participants, history of teaching, and the school culture. These were important histories that shape who we are, how we think, what we say and do. As a researcher I tried to examine critically my relationships with other, to know I was not a distanced and neutral observer, but an integral other being researched in the process of this inquiry.

A number of aporetic sites emerged in teachers’ practices. The following chapter explores those aporetic sites through the discourses of teachers’ doing integrative evaluation. As interpretive work, I wanted to remain open to generative spaces that educe useful understandings of difficult relations of evaluation, literacy, and language/content integration.

78 *Jarring moments are described as those times when the unexpected is heard.*
Chapter Five

Troubled Terrain:
Interpreting Instances of Integrative Evaluation

The same thinkers and theorists (including us all) move freely from one side of an opposition to the other, as practical constraints or the requirements of argument demand. The same teachers who espouse the virtues of child-centred education, of learning by discovery and of the realisation of innate potential also know in advance what will be discovered, prepare their lessons according to set books and syllabuses, and prepare their students for the knowledge that is to come.

Michael Billig et al., Ideological Dilemmas

But there was nothing easy, linear, predictable or necessarily successful about any of our disruptions of each other’s assumptions and interpretations. The teachers’ and my own disruptions of one another’s fixed notions of what was “going on” in their classrooms . . . belied romanticised ideals. The disruptions of my data interpretations, of any one “researcher” and/or “teacher” role and of one another’s perspectives...also interrupted any easy or smooth lived relationship . . . Disruptions, then, were a daily reminder that the relationships and methodologies of teaching and of . . . research are ambiguous, contingent, and shifting. And research, within and because of disruptions across power positions, interests, and goals, is a living and constantly changing practice.

Janet Miller, Disruptions in the field: An academic’s lived practice with classroom teachers

The extent to which it is possible to separate language and content, ideas and expression, remains everywhere an unresolved problem.

Bonnie Norton & Sue Starfield, Covert language assessment in academic writing
Chapter five explores interpretative work emerging from discourse(s) of teachers’ integrative evaluation practices. First, the aporetic sites of discursive instances are mapped as a way of understanding integrative evaluation. Then, three “stuck places” are probed: 1) creating and interpreting prompts; 2) establishing and using evaluative criteria; and 3) difficulties prior to deciding a mark or grade. In the third “stuck place”, I also interweave learner voices with teachers’ discourse(s) to explore the effects of positionalities on practices. The approach I use considers the discourse(s) in terms of reflecting-on-action (accounts), reflecting-in-action (accounts, commentary and acts) and action (acts as decisions). In this way, traces of meta-texts, positionalities and their relations can be followed through teachers’ discursive practices of integrative evaluation. In one of the last sections of this chapter, I explore teachers’ discourse(s) of language/content relations specific to two ELL compositions. I then offer a way to consider language/content integration in ELL composition that builds on the promise of a functional orientation to linguistics.

Another Instance

Three teachers came together for purposes of grading essays on ‘multiculturalism in Canada’ written by English language learners in their classrooms. They reviewed the criteria (stated as structure, organisation, and main points related to the topic) and began the shared reading and judging of one paper. The following is an instance of the discussion that ensued.

T1: This paper stays with the topic but there are so many errors in grammar. I’d give it a low mark.
T2: It does have errors but it is descriptive of multiculturalism and does state the main issues. I think its worth more.
T3: But, look what he’s doing, he’s offering a very thoughtful response to the question.
T1: But we can’t ignore the grammar.

Different readings of the text led to ‘disruptions’ of different value commitments. Difference was played out in the tensions of teachers’ practices. Meta-texts of evaluation, literacy, and language/content intertwined, locating sites of agon within and among those discourse(s). It was a messiness, a non-linear “stuck place”, of judging writing that the three teachers worked to ‘clean up’ and find their way through.

In general, judging ELL compositions seems to be a space of agon. Yet, at a...
workshop presentation I and my colleagues gave on the difficulty of integrative evaluation, one participant stated,

_ I don’t see what the problem is. You just have to be clear on your marking criteria by identifying the language you have taught and expect the students to use and know the content you want in their response and then mark for it. It’s not difficult. You can be consistent and objective, you just have to be clear and get it right._

(a delegate’s response, International TESOL Convention, Florida, 03/1997)

The agon of her espoused theory was noticeably absent. Was it a tensionless space or was tension concealed within evaluation practices? If disruptions are consistently evident in discourses of teachers marking, can so many not be “getting it right”? I argue that it is not quite so simple as the conference participant suggests. The complexities of intertextual relations played out in evaluative practices are significant. Interpretations involved in the decision of a mark are made even more complex with judging writing that is doubled in languages and cultures. Agon and “stuck places” seem to be integral aspects of the pre-conditions of evaluative decisions. This chapter is an attempt to analyse, as an etymological “undoing” or “loosening”, teachers’ discursive integrative evaluation practices that dwell in “stuck places”, agons, and felt messy texts.

Integrative evaluation is an activity constituted in discourses of time, place, social relations, and positionalities. It is within this whole activity that multiple voices, or discourses, emerge and crucial evaluative decisions get made. While recognising that time, place, and social relations contribute significantly to the complexity and uncertainty of evaluating ELL inscriptions, of particular interest in this inquiry are relations of meta-texts of evaluation, of literacy and of language/content and the various orientations constructed within those meta-texts. My purpose is to interpret the difficulties using traces of positionalities that frequently collide and disrupt in ambiguous, dilemmatic tensions in teachers’ practices. “Agon”, “stuck places” and messy texts emerged through the folds of discourse(s). One teacher, “stopped in her tracks” (Lather, 1998, p. 1), commented,

• _This student didn’t read the instructions carefully. I was expecting a very specific answer to this question. We studied it in class. He should know what I wanted. I think he’s offering another view here but I’m not quite sure what he’s saying. How am I supposed to mark this?_
S/he struggled to judge a learner's work within a framework of a planned curriculum of what "we studied in class." Questions of presumed objectivity of evaluative practices and of expectations of knowledge as commodity arise. Yet, socio-cultural imbrications of constructing meaning seem to disrupt the possibility of objectivity. Expectations, influenced by how we understand what it means to learn and by expectations of what it means to demonstrate that learning, are constituted in writing what we know. "He should know what I wanted" assumes a stance of teacher as authority, as "one who knows." Did the learner not have something of value to say in his own words? Was there value only in the teacher's words? Evaluative practices seem to lay-in-wait for opportunities to entrap students in intentions of fairness and consistency; instructions and criteria so clearly laid out that there is only one possible answer. Or, is there? Difficulties, caught up in all of this and more, are central to this exploration of the discourse(s) of integrative evaluation practices.

Mapping Troubled Terrains

The activity of evaluating written tasks is a regular practice of classroom teachers in academic contexts, yet we know little of how this activity gets structured nor of specific "stuck places", those sites of aporias where complex intertextual relations become entangled and "stop[s] us in our tracks." Participants in this inquiry, teachers at a Canadian international post-secondary college, engaged in practices of integrative evaluation which I then mapped from conversations and 'being there'. The mapping in Figure 5, was reconstituted through two sessions of reciprocity. Unremarkable in its framing, the process involves remarkably complex pre-conditions of decision-making, as teachers work within (in)visible and fissured positionalities that effect their work. The process of first establishing a prompt and then deciding on criteria before judging and offering evaluative feedback appears to be routine, commonsense aspects of an often unquestioned process that, when restored to "life's original difficulty", disrupts a simple linear notion of the evaluative process and the work of criteria. Evaluative practices instead seem to include various and partial acts of (re)reading texts, comparing responses, reviewing all papers
before committing to individual marks and giving evaluative feedback. Teachers in this inquiry constructed their practices in multiple ways; practices within and among teachers were realised in recursive movements and unpredictable differences. Marking became recursive for teachers as they circled back returning to that which came before. For example, discourse(s) of teachers included such comments as,

- Reflection-in-action: discussing the process while marking (COMMENTARY, ACTS)
  - I can’t give a mark yet. I need to go back and check the criteria.

- I am writing comments about their organisation problems. Now I have to be clear on why I gave it a six. I need to read through it again to be clear on the six.

Another teacher enacts recursive movements when she says,

- Reflecting-in-action: discussing the process while marking (COMMENTARY)
  - I can’t decide whether it’s a sixteen or seventeen. I need to reread the things we listed to watch for. Okay, that helps. No, wait. Where’s the assignment instructions? How did we tell the student what was important? How close is my list to the instructions? Hmm. Pretty close. Good. Now how did the student take care of these things?

The same teacher’s movements, when marking another student’s essay, were linear. With the prompt in front of him/her as a guide, s/he proceeded to judge the text in indelible ink after one reading; there was no turning back. S/he explained,

- Reflecting-in-action: discussing the process while marking (COMMENTARY)
  - I haven’t got time to reread and I know this student. I have one hour set aside to mark half the class.

Issues of time and familiarity, although not explored in this inquiry, are acknowledged as influential in how evaluative processes get done.
Figure 5 (Re)Marking ELL Writing in Post-Secondary Studies: Mapping a Troubled Terrain and “Stuck Places”

Site one: developing prompt or re-turning to the prompt
Student responds to prompt (another 'stuck' site)

Site two: establishing criteria or re-turning to the criteria for guidance

Site three: evaluator 'reads' text

Marking schema
Seems to reflect:
- pre-established explicit or implicit criteria
- information contained in the prompt
- some notion of expected standards for students at a particular level
- perspectives and/or intuitions of evaluator about language and content
- perceived needs of students
- what was taught
- what evaluators feel confident to justify

Teacher knowledge - influenced by ideologies that effect socio-cultural borders, teacher expectations, teacher expertise (background knowledge)

Student knowledge - influenced by cultural understandings, knowledge of subject matter, ability to express subject matter, interpretation of prompt, strategic competencies, understanding of teacher expectations

(in)decision: inscribe mark in pencil? in ink?

mark?

need to reconsider mark?

need to re-read text?

comments?

comment (s) on mark

Assigning a mark: appears to be a recursive process often involving felt messiness (dilemmas, conflict, fragmentation and uncertainty) prior to assigning a mark.

Is there a dominant discourse?

Evaluative feedback: seems to reflect expertise or what teachers feel they can defend

Note: All courses involved in this inquiry are content-based; that is, the main purpose is to extend the learner's knowledge in a subject area through the medium of English while simultaneously developing their ability to use English effectively.
In the discursive folds of pre-decision-making, uncertainty, ambiguity and ambivalence contribute to the difficulties of deciding a mark. While reflecting-in-action, several teachers in different contexts independently commented,

Reflecting-in-action: discussing the process while marking (COMMENTARY)
• I don’t like marking writing. I want to change this criteria now that I am reading what they wrote. The criteria seemed clear when we started but now as I read this answer I’m not sure how to use the criteria and be fair to this student.

• This is why I don’t like to give a mark. I never know exactly what they’re saying so how can I know what they know?

• Sometimes I get so tired of fighting with the writing, I’m just giving my best guess at a mark.

In order to address what mediates and complicates positionalities among evaluators and texts, I turned to what seem to be aporias or “stuck places” as a location of dilemmatic discourses in teachers’ practices of integrative evaluation. Once located, I traced conflicting and fragmented positions to make sense of multifarious practices teachers engage in to work their way through “stuck places.” At crucial points of decision-making, I listened for dominant discourses that seem to have imposed a particular way out.

I worked with three sets of data: teachers’ discourses from authentic marking sessions, learners’ discourses from authentic writing sessions, and teachers’ discourses from non-authentic marking sessions. “Non-authentic” sessions were deemed those in which teachers marked content written by learners they did not teach. The conditions for the non-authentic discourses were determined by the inquiry process; teachers had no knowledge of previous teaching and learning activities of the writers they judged. “Authentic” sessions were those in which teachers marked the written content of learners they taught. Tracing disruptions primarily focused on teachers’ discourses in authentic marking sessions.

Discourses from authentic sessions will be considered first. In particular, three sites of tensioned “stuck places” seem evident in the discourse from individual and collaborative authentic marking sessions: creating prompts, (re)turning to criteria, and the felt messiness of inscribing a mark of indelible ink. The second set of data involved “non-authentic” sessions in which teachers’ conversations were specific to fourteen ELL compositions, two of which are highlighted in this chapter.

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Site One: Creating Prompts for Language/Content Texts

The part of the evaluative process that is of interest in this inquiry begins with teachers creating a writing prompt to which students would respond. Generally, the prompt structures the task and includes a stimulus (a question or statement), the conditions under which learners write, and indicates the expectations of the teacher as aspects of the response that will be valued (Kroll & Reid, 1994). During discussions of this part of the evaluative process, several teachers in varying contexts independently offered,

Reflecting-on-action: how a prompt should be structured (ACCOUNT)
• First thing I do is think about what we’ve studied in class. Then I think about the kind of work I expect from them [learners]. Then I’m ready to write out the assignment. I always give them the instructions and tell them how to organise their answer before I let them work on it.

• The question needs to be something familiar to them [learners] - especially the vocabulary.

• They [learners] always ask me what the assignment is worth so now I have to think about it ahead of time and include that information in the instructions.

The pre-conditions of a ‘final’ version of the prompt involves numerous sub-decisions; decisions of how questions, instructions, and values get constructed. The following instances were collected when four teachers collaborated on essay questions to which all students taking a second year global education course would respond.

Reflecting-in-action: commenting on the prompt while structuring it (COMMENTARY)
T1: There should be choice.
T2: Instructions should be clear stating the timeframe.
T3: What about how the essays will be marked. I think that’s important. We need to be really clear.
T2: Ya, we can list the language items and points from the content that we’re looking for.
T4: Even things like double spacing and where to put their name and number.
T1: Most of this is fairly routine and straightforward. Shouldn’t take us long.

As they set about their collective task, commentary on the prompt seemed unproblematic for this group; agreement on generalities of what should be included was “routine and straightforward.” In separating “language items and points from the content”, two lists were formed. As teachers continued their discussion and began to write and then comment on the prompt, their discourse fragments suggested uncertainty, ambiguity and, for one, ambivalence. In the structuring of one of the essay questions, dilemmatic tensions emerged:
Reflecting-in-action: commenting on the prompt while structuring it

(COMMENTARY)

T1: Here's the instructions for last year's final exam questions - “Answer all three questions in paragraph form. All questions will be marked for language and content.” They wrote two essays, really they were paragraphs, in 90 minutes. Question one we can probably use as is because we all did the United Nations.

R: What was the question?

T1: Describe the structures and purposes of the six main organs of the United Nations.

T2: So if they’re going to describe, they’re just going to tell us back what the purposes are and what each main organ’s responsibility is. We’re not asking them to do anything with it? Like write for new meaning, you know, discover something new?

T1: No, not for that one. Does it matter?

T2: What about giving reasons for why, make them think more not just memorise the answer . . . encourage them to be creative, find new meaning in their own words. Shouldn’t this be rewritten?

T3: Ya, I was thinking we should ask for more about reasons for the connections between things but I wasn’t clear on the answer myself so I didn’t think we could ask the students.

T4: What exactly do we want from them? We worked on defining the organs. It would be fair to ask for something about defining the organs.

T2: My point is, do we just want something back or are we asking them to come up with something new - like a new way of looking at the connection? Make their writing work for them in different ways.

Teachers seem to be uncertain with what is expected in the response - a return of the ideas discussed in class or a turn to new experiences of connections and relations. One teacher seemed to be concerned with his/her own ambiguity in responding to a question on relations and was resistant to restructuring the question to invite unknown responses. Another seemed ambivalent in the concern for the kind of response they were attempting to elicit.

They continued the struggle as they reworked the prompt question:

Action: structuring the prompt (ACTS )

T2: It should be “How did the six organs of the United Nations try to meet the four purposes and seven principles?”

T1: So, you want to add that to it.

T3: Well, I don’t know. We also talked about the two goals of peace and security, and dignity. Maybe that’s all we need to write down.

T4: I think we ask them to link the organs to the two main goals.

T1: OK, how about define one organ and link it to a goal? Would there be the possibility of more than one answer? More than one way to link an organ to a goal?

T3: Good point. Will we accept all answers as long as they give reasons?

T2: Well, it's easier to explain to the students if we can say these three reasons must be in the answer. Then, maybe we can give them some freedom. We’ll just mark for the three reasons and a little life in the paper.

T4: I like that. (they all nod in agreement)
Decisions led to further indecision and then a change of decision in the collaborative process. Teachers came with questions they had decided would be appropriate but were willing to reconsider when consensus could not be reached about the subject matter. What is evident throughout the conversation is that content was privileged. Expecting three reasons as the 'markable' substantive aspect of the essay and ignoring what other substance the students might have constituted in writing was offered as a viable way out of this “stuck place.” There was no mention of language expectations in the first thirty minutes of teacher interaction. When asked for further comments on the kind of response expected, the discussion continued to focus on substantive aspects of the response and how to elicit them.

Reflecting-in-action: commenting on the prompt while structuring it (COMMENTARY)
R: What kind of a response are you expecting?
T4: Well, they should talk about what each main organ did in relation to peace and security. They'd have to describe the organ first.
T3: Can we ask how the organ is set up?
T4: Well how it is set up is not really related to the goal of security.
T2: I think it is but it would be hard to explain. I don't know if they could handle the language.
T: Why don't we stay with the original question. It's clear, we know what the answer is.
T3: I'd rather change it to be more challenging but I don't know how to word it to get exactly what we're looking for.
T2: How about, "How do these organs meet or work towards these goals?"
T1: One or both of these goals. I think it would be too difficult for my students to take the economic and social council and link it to peace. That's complicated. How would they write that?
T2: More importantly, how would we mark it?
T3: Don't we need to find out what has been meaningful learning to them?
T4: What if we worded it in such a way that they would only have to outline a connection of one of the organs to one of the goals - peace and security maybe?
T3: I still think it has to link to something meaningful to them. We're not giving them any space to do that.

Structuring the prompt to elicit texts that were 'markable', texts that students could 'handle', seem to be important and impose constraints in this negotiation. Now fifty minutes into the prompt planning, the teachers had not mediated question one, instead they seemingly made it more complicated. Working their way through this “stuck place” became a recursive track for this group of teachers. Even for the resistant ones, those interested in a kind of performative writing wherein there is 'life' and meaningful personal connections constituted in the students own words, positionalities complicated consensus.
The way out for the group was a return to the original question:

**Action: structuring the prompt (ACTS)**

T3: Ya, I agree.

T4: It can be done, "How is the security council’s responsibilities and functions related to the general goal of peace and security?"

T2: This is getting so complicated. How will they know exactly what we want? How will I know what specifically to look for, there’s so much they could say.

T3: Or not say if they don’t understand the question.

T1: Ya, what is the right answer to that question because I’m not sure? Couldn’t we just reconsider the original question?

T2: I think so. I feel I know what to expect with that one (the others agree).

In an attempt to rework the first question, discussions dealing with the substantive aspect of the question lasted 75 minutes. Their accounts of structuring prompts suggested this work was "routine and straightforward." The commentary on writing a particular prompt suggests that this work is much more complex. Negotiating amongst teachers, midst dilemmas of uncertain, ambiguous, and ambivalent expectations of students, raises questions of markable learning: how it might be elicited, what it might look like, and how one might go about judging it. It was a space where teachers were momentarily “stopped in their tracks” and explored other possibilities, only to determine the way out of this particular situation was to return to what they ‘knew’; what was for them, a predictable response of commodity.

Individual teachers creating prompts struggled in similar tensions. Mediations and complications arose within internal conversations that erupted in commentaries such as,

**Reflecting-in-action:commenting on the prompt while structuring it (COMMENTARY)**

- I’m not happy with this question. Too much handholding. Yet, without spelling it out for them, how do I tell them what I am expecting in the essay?

- If I write the question this way, they may get confused . . . but I don’t know how else to say it.

- I like the question on international debt and know what kind of response I should expect but I don’t know how to word the evaluation part on this assignment. I’m tired of dividing language and content, ten for each. Although you know, they never question me on that. I want to move them . . . or maybe me . . . beyond subject-verb agreement, I’m just not sure how.

- I want them to move ahead with their thinking on the causes of social problems . . . come up with some new thoughts not just tell me what I said in class. It’s more than a synthesis of ideas. And, what do I say to them about evaluation that they will understand? I have to be concrete and yet I can’t anticipate how they might respond. I guess stay with the basics of organisation and grammatical accuracy.
I have to keep reminding myself to keep the questions simple, with vocabulary they know. They are ESL. Hmmm, but, at the same time I want to push them to think about these political issues. Yet, it seems the harder I push, the more problems they have with language. You can't win, the harder the content questions, the more errors in their language; simpler the content, the language errors become more obvious.

Disruptions in the structuring of questions emanated in incommensurate discourses fixated on concerns of degrees of substantive complexity, performativity, what it means to be “ESL”, language expectations, and how to inform the students of what will be valued in a response that could not be predicted.

During this conversation on prompts, meta-texts of both evaluation and surface aspects of literacy seem to be prominent while comments on language are silent. Priority is given to specific content and its readability (hence predictability) in relation to how ‘markable’ responses would be. In meta-texts of evaluation, tensioned commentaries on knowledge (knowing, learning) as transmission or transformation seem to collide, fragment and re-emerge in meta-texts of literacy wherein a text’s readability seems to be influenced by both possibilities and predictabilities of transmissiveness and transformation. For some, it seems the more transformative the anticipated response is, the more unreadable and therefore ‘unmarkable’ it becomes. For others, it appears that transmissive knowledge is disturbing in its lack of thoughtfulness and indulgence in mirroring back what is already known. Little is said of language/content relations. Perhaps in the silence there is an assumption of emptiness in that words as empty vessels wait patiently for the thoughts they carry. What is evident in the meta-texts of language is that for most, when engaged in predetermining evaluative purposes, language is separated from content. Only one resisted the call momentarily to separate the two and then called for an alternative view in considering language/content relations. But in so doing, s/he acknowledges what is for her/him a pathless path, an impassable passage. The way out becomes a return to what is markable learning.

A visual analysis of the pre-conditions of decision-making was helpful in tracking dilemmatic discourses.\textsuperscript{79} Claiming that structuring a prompt is often a site of contestation lived out in pre-conditions of discursive incommensurability, Figure 6 offers a visual

\textsuperscript{79}This is adapted from a work in progress by Mohan and his graduate students at The University of British Columbia.
analysis of alternatives, possible outcomes and the decision one group of teachers made as they collaboratively determined the prompt. It is a tracking of the pre-conditions and of the decision when one teacher asked, “Shouldn’t the original question be rewritten?”

Figure 6 Visual Analysis of Collaborative Decision-Making in a Specific Case of Structuring a Question for a Prompt.

As teachers worked their way through and out of unsuspecting aporias and messy texts, orientations within meta-texts and meta-texts themselves seem to struggle for control. The question, Shouldn’t the original question be rewritten?, was explicitly asked by one teacher in her/his search for an alternative question that would elicit reasoning and creativity in the anticipated response. As a working collaborative group, teachers weigh the possible outcomes before making a decision. Discourse evidence at crucial points of decision-making suggests traces of positionalities in conflict where one can be understood as dominating another. In this case, predictability and markability seem to be valued more than eliciting creativity in the response. Concerns with the ‘unknown’ response and how to deal
with its evaluation was discomforting. Living within what appears to be a predominant meta-text of evaluation when engaged in the structuring of prompts, traces of varying positionalities seem to embody prevailing fragments of a technical imaginary wherein predictability (transmissiveness, commodification and mastery of knowledge) and markability (where assumptions of a rational consciousness imply, 'I can mark what I know') become persuasively enacted. Resisted initially by some members of the collaborative group, their dialogic pursuit of a function in the prompt that would enact creativity in the response eventually returned to the comfort of 'objective' predictability. Fragments of disparate positionalities had both mediated and complicated intertextual relations of the collaborative group. Predictability and markability convincingly, perhaps even unknowingly, seemed to powerfully force them to return to the original question, one which legitimates learning as giving back that which one has been given, and to structure the prompt in a way that gives power to transmissive knowledge and its markability.

Site Two: (Re)Turning to Criteria

Site two locates the tensions experienced by teachers as they articulate what is valued and how that might be applied in the marking of ELL written content. It explores the pre-conditions in which teachers work towards a crucial decision point of fixating the paper at a mark or grade. Teachers revisit or create what are presumed to be concrete standards (criteria) on which to base their marking. Others grade without use of explicit, overt criteria. One teacher suggested,

Reflecting-on-action: for the mark (ACCOUNT)
•I think of my criteria first but I don’t always use it. At times I just know the paper is a ‘B’. With practice it gets easier to judge them [ELL written content] quickly without always going back and checking. Somehow you just know.

An overt, routine terrain maps the process of marking ELL written content, yet in the midst of difficult practices covert acts and unsaid stories seem to perform in resistance to the linear stability presumed to be offered with criteria and grading. Concerned with issues of fairness and consistency, the following conversation took place when three teachers came together to mark common exam questions.

Reflecting-in-action: reviewing the criteria just prior to applying it (COMMENTARY)
T1: I’m giving you copies of the criteria we agreed on earlier. Any questions?
T2: Looks good to me. Five for language, five for content.
T3: Ya, five points under each heading. We are so organised, this should be easy.
(others nod in agreement)
T1: We’ve got 54 papers to mark. Just read through them and put them in one
of the ten piles. Then we’ll go through the piles. (five minutes pass)
T1: Hmmm. I’m having difficulty here. What’s the difference between the
language of description under language criteria and describe Canada’s
multicultural situation under the content criteria. Do we give two marks for
doing one thing? I don’t know what’s the difference.

Each teacher working from the same marking scheme presumed to easily divide language
and content, with “five points under each heading.” Setting specific criteria under separate
headings of language and of content seemed to be for them commonsense and objectively
manageable. A theoretical plan was in place. Yet, only minutes into the marking session,
uncertainty emerged in interpreting the criteria. In absence of the present papers, the
established criteria had been accepted as a valued imaginary, yet in its application at least
one teacher was in the midst of a “stuck place”. Was “I don’t know what’s the difference”
a moment of impossible language/content separation, a disruption for the teacher? The
criteria for language and content had been separated (as in a formal view) prior to marking,
but in practice the criteria were difficult to separate (as in a functional view). Fragments of
two models of language enacted in disruptions of what was valued and how integrative
evaluation was now understood to be.

In another case, four teachers agreed on the following marking scheme for an
assignment that asked students to write one multicultural issue in Canada. They claimed it
reflected the current focus of the teaching/learning experiences in their classrooms:

Criteria for marking essay (25 marks):
1. Uses multicultural vocabulary 5
2. Expresses at least two different perspectives in their own words 10
3. Applies the rules of subject-verb agreement 5
4. Applies the rules of article usage 5

The teachers worked within a system they established for themselves. The criteria targeted
content vocabulary, content structured as perspectives, and two rules of English usage
focussed at sentence level grammar. Does the list imply a separation of language and
content, the first two as criteria of content and the second two criteria of language or are
these criteria of ‘language’ both formal and functional? In their account of the criteria,
teachers assumed shared meaning as they briefly discussed and agreed on the contents of
the list and its application. Yet, in practice, their commitment to the established criteria
sometimes wavered. In one commentary, a teacher explained,

Reflecting-in-action: discussions of applying criteria to specific papers
(COMMENTARY)

•I think I know what she means here, but she’s used the term diversity
incorrectly. She does give two perspectives but I have to fill in the gaps with
the second one before I could mark it correct . . . several grammar errors
with articles. She uses three multicultural words.

A student’s words appropriated by the words of the teacher. The form of at least one
perspective was altered, re-formed to what was expected; in this case, writing “in their own
words” (as stated in the criteria) did not signify that which the teacher knew and expected
in the response. The response was altered in order to “mark it correct”.

Another teacher from the group commented,

Reflecting-in-action: discussions of applying criteria to specific papers
(COMMENTARY)

•The language is fairly easy to mark. You can see the mistakes. It’s the
content that’s hard to access, the language gets in the way. The language
is, in some ways I guess, the meaning and I don’t know what to do with
that. How they use the language to write the perspectives has a whole lot to
do with what meaning gets made. I tried to divide up the ten marks into
language and content but I couldn’t do it.

Difficulties are evident as the teacher makes sense of language/content relations. The last
two criteria on the list suggest formal aspects of language evaluated at the sentence level.
The first two imply a functional view wherein content vocabulary and the language that
structures perspectives contribute significantly to inscribed meanings. Within one set of
criteria, it appears that two models of language may be operating. The formal view, as in
criteria #3 and #4, is presumably objective and concrete enough not to be contested in this
specific case. However, the criteria on perspectives, operating at the level of discourse, is
contested; in attempting to separate language and content, the teacher was ‘stopped in
his/her tracks’ because s/he “couldn’t do it.”

Are language and content relations independent? interdependent? Is meaning
altered when we “fill in the missing words”? Do disruptions within the marking scheme
effect judgment? An account by one teacher offered,
His/her marking scheme aligns a set of criteria for language and another set of criteria for content. Similarly, another teacher commented,

Reflecting-in-action: discussions of applying criteria to specific papers (ACCOUNT, COMMENTARY)
• Each of these arguments has at least two main details, so I give one mark for each ... I usually leave about one mark for the overall organisation, one for the spelling of key words.

The words ‘language’ and ‘content’ write a wholeness or unity through the additive conjunction of ‘and’. Yet, for many there is a sense of ambivalence of meanings, a co-existence of opposite poles. Within the phrase itself, a duality or polarity is easily established that seems to position the teacher in a model of language and content that assumes a fragmented structure; a model in which the ‘and’ behaves disjunctively - a disjunctive conjunction. The practice of fragmenting language/content criteria suggests a view of separateness, one set of criteria unrelated to the other. Questions surface in enacted presumptions of language and content. Do the sum of the parts equal, or are they different from, the judgment of the whole? Is language and content a commensurate or incommensurate discourse, subdivided and fragmented, or integrated and whole? Integrating language and content is complex and, as a meta-text, is ambiguous, contested, and seemingly little understood by many teachers. Instead, a separation occurs when “I give each part a mark then I add them up” because “It’s easier that way for me and for the students to understand.” Multiple models of language and content mediate and complicate the criteria that get established and applied within practices of integrative evaluation.

As I met with individual teachers marking ELL inscriptions, I asked them to explain what criteria, if any, they used to judge ELL texts and how they applied them. Some offered that the use of key words studied in class were expected in student responses. When asked whether this was a language or a content criterion or language and content criterion, some categorised it as language, others labelled words as content. One accounted for it as a language and content criterion because “the words made the meaning”.
Another, in a conversation with the researcher (T, R) while marking essays, insisted,

Reflecting-on-action: on evaluative criteria (ACCOUNT)
T: Use of specialised vocabulary tells me the student knows the content well. I don't pay too much attention to the language, you know, the grammar mistakes unless they really distract me, the message is in important words that express content information and students need to know and use them.
R: Are these words criteria for marking language and content?
T: Yes, I think so. That's what language and content means to me, using words loaded with meaning in their essay.

Reflecting-in-action: on the criteria while engaged in it (COMMENTARY)
T: You see in this essay the student used important words like "international debt", 'World Bank', 'crisis', 'north and south divide'. This gives substance to the essay.
T: So, for you, this would be an example of a good paper?
R: Well, yes but... no. Look at the grammar errors. You really have to be blind not to see them. Mostly articles and subject-verb agreement. Oh, they'll learn it as they write more. It takes a long time for them. I didn't specify those grammar points for marks anyway so I'll just ignore them. I think about language in a general, overall way. In other words, I ask myself how hard was it for me to understand what they are saying. How many times did I get distracted by their language?

Reflecting-in-action: on the criteria while engaged in it (COMMENTARY)
T: What would I give this essay? I don't know. It's not so easy. I guess I should have been more specific for them and for me in what I was looking for. I just wanted the ideas, I thought the language wouldn't matter.
R: What is it about the language in this essay that does matter to you?
T: Well, they are using the vocabulary words I was looking for - I've ticked seven of them in the introductory paragraph and that's really good - but they don't go together so well and that's distracting. I'm not sure what he knows. Some of the meaning is lost to errors. This is a tough one. My criteria don't work in the way I thought they would.

This teacher explicitly states that words, as language, are valued when words are "loaded with meaning", suggesting words gain import when they "express content." Yet, s/he does not value the specific structuring of those words because "they don't go together well."

Do words fill with meaning, as a formal model of language would suggest? Do words constitute meaning, as a functional model of language would claim? Evidence of traces of a formal model of language locates the teacher in a space where language becomes a vehicle for content, a carrier of its message, and content words become valued criteria. The teacher’s account of the valued criteria heavily weight words "loaded with meaning.”

Little value is given to those other words that link ‘content words’ and structure meaning. Yet, this teacher indicates a discomfort in the way the “words loaded with meaning” are
structured that is "distracting", suggesting a trace of a functional view. There is explicit commitment to language that is loaded with meaning. Language and content viewed as content vocabulary is a paradox of sorts. It is juxtaposed by two conflicting ideas: 1) that language carries meaning, and 2) that language constructs meaning. Uncertainty reigns in accounting for what language/content relations are and what that means. Evidence in his/her commentary suggests a re-thinking of the criteria, confirmed in the discourses of his/her active engagement in coming to terms with a mark based on an account of criteria that s/he now realises "don't work" in practice.

Most teachers acknowledge the practical ease of locating grammatical errors. This teacher, as others claim to have done, reads the students as ELL, and offers refuge in ignoring these errors "unless they really distract me." S/he attempts to disregard sentence level grammatical errors in written content, attributing them to the students’ ELLness. What criteria then were valued and applied? Do the errors that remain, those errors of distraction, become points of faulty language and content integration? Points of distraction live out in significant and haunting uncertainty. Which grammar errors distract? Which errors are unobtrusive? A blurred threshold for grammatical errors of greater and lesser import seems to have been established for this teacher. Is the threshold a commonly shared threshold for teachers marking ELL written content? Do all teachers understand grammar in this way? The stance taken seems to be a formal one of grammar at the sentence level. Disruptions are easily located but ambiguously dealt with. It appears that the teacher’s consideration for what grammatical meaning the writer is constructing may be at the level of discourse, a functional perspective of language of which the teacher seems to be unaware. Uneasiness arises from the uncertainty of which grammatical errors matter and which do not. For this teacher, language and content were only momentarily inseparable.

Contested spaces of establishing criteria for the judgment of language/content texts seem to emerge as commensurate and disparate fissured discourses. While considering what evaluative criteria would be used to judge the response to a question written by an ELL she teaches, the teacher conversed with the researcher (T, R). An instance from the conversation is offered.
Reflecting-in-action: on applying specific evaluative criteria (COMMENTARY)

T: They have to explain the arguments or opposing viewpoints on Foreign Aid as presented by the two authors we studied in class.

R: Are you looking for anything specifically?

T: In each of these arguments, I've talked to them, they know they have to have an introductory sentence that has something like, "Matsumura argues that...", or to use that formula, and they have to have a concluding sentence which says something like "therefore or because of this." I've talked about "Therefore, Matsumura argues that Japan should..." so I'm looking for that. Actually I'm looking for about four marks, one for the introduction and conclusion and then each of these arguments has at least two main details that they include.

Reflecting-in-action: on the criteria while engaged in it (COMMENTARY)

T: Before I started marking I took the tests and ran through them all clarifying in my mind what I expect and what I'm seeing in their answers. I need to go back and do that now with the ones I've marked.

R: So you alter your expectations as you look over the papers each time?

T: Sometimes. Ya, I think this mark is too high for the accuracy of the language.

Action: applying the criteria (ACTS)

T: Look at this one, the student has got the intro and conclusion but doesn't state the details of the argument, only makes general statements. I would give this two out of four... Hmmm, I think I'll put the mark in pencil and come back to it after I've read all of the responses to this question.

In this instance, the teacher's account of the criteria to be used seems certain, yet as she engages in the marking process there is an altering of the expectations to align more closely with the responses received. The teacher adds another, previously unmentioned criterion, the accuracy of language use. As s/he comes to decide on a mark, the use of pencil signifies uncertainty and temporality, and in so doing becomes an act of (in)decision. At this point in the marking of ELLs' written work, the disruptions of practices are evident. The presumed valued criteria for this task, and written into the prompt, did not work for this teacher and were therefore altered to account for another factor, the accuracy of language, initially not included as a criterion. As a "stuck place", adding a criteria that was unacknowledged in the prompt helped this teacher work through and find a way out.

Within a meta-text of curriculum/evaluation, positionalities that support linearity are evident. The teacher relies on criteria that reflect what the learners have studied, what they have come-to-know through transmissive activities in the classroom. In reading the writing, s/he seems to be looking for a reflected image of what has been studied, a text that works to express 'the' meaning she's "looking for." Is it presumed that the reader does not
interpret the text in any other way than the writer intended, that there can be only one meaning of the text and that one can know the intentions of the writer? The teacher initially lists the criteria and, in so doing, speaks of language at the level of discourse. Discourse structures of 'argument' work to construct meaning and are valued cohesive devices students are expected to use in their responses. But then, the agon of accuracy of language hauntingly enters and s/he is “stop[ped] in his/her tracks.” The significance of accuracy lingers and performs throughout the mapping of decision-making.

Using the above discourse sample as a case of decision-making involving criteria, Figure 7 offers a visual mapping of discourse(s) of the pre-conditions of a particular decision regarding criteria, Should “accuracy of the language” be valued? As this teacher implicitly ponders the question, s/he considers the alternative choice of a criterion of “accuracy of the language” and weighs the possible outcomes wherein a decision is made. Tracing dominant orientations at crucial points of decision-making, there is evidence that the added criterion, accuracy of the language, overrides pre-established criteria. Within a meta-text of language, a technical imaginary is implied wherein the mastery (accuracy) of a language and its structure is possible, and discourse fragments of a functional and a formal model of language both mediate and complicate intertextual relations. As a site of troubled positionalities, the dominance of accuracy (mastery) compelled her/him to alter the pre-conditions and judge the ELL text in a way that privileges accuracy.

Figure 7 Visual Mapping of an Individual Case of Deciding Evaluative Criteria

Should “the accuracy of language” be valued?

alternatives: • 4 out of 4
has introduction, conclusion,
two main details

possible outcomes & evaluation:
• won’t reflect accuracy of language (-)

decision: mark altered to reflect accuracy of language (valued)

other
add accuracy

reflects accuracy (+)
Site Three: Difficulties of Judging Language/Content Texts

Within each site, difficulties play out at important points of decision of the 'final' version of the prompt, and the 'final' version of what will be valued and how that will be enacted and shared with the learner. I place single quotation marks around the word 'final' to draw the reader's attention to motile interpretations. Although the prompt, for example, once decided seems 'final', as it is one presumed shared intention that is given to the students, discourse evidence at site three - the felt messiness of judging language and content texts - suggests that multiple interpretations of the 'final' prompt exist among and within teachers, among and within learners, and between teachers and learners. Therefore, I argue that the 'final' version is not a 'final' version at all; understanding the act of reading a prompt involves inquiry into the relations among forms, writers, readers and contexts of reading. Similarly, what is valued as a 'final' list of criteria, seemingly fixated on a criterion referenced imaginary is presumed to be shared, unambiguous, and stable. Yet, discourse data suggest evidence to the contrary and point to instability within the pre-conditions of crucial decision-making points of (re)marking the text. Adding further complexity to an already complex site, I include discourse data from the learners that respond to the prompt in writing, the texts to be judged. It is a doubled site of agon, wherein both teachers and learners struggle to make sense of the intentionalities of each other. In reading the prompt, the students ask, what was the intention of the teacher? In reading the response, the teacher asks, what was the intention of the writer? Reciprocal intentions often become sites of aporias; dilemmatic discourses disrupt and teachers once again bear witness to the agon of integrative evaluation.

The activities within the pre-conditions of the crucial decision of marking and re-marking the essay - fixating it on a scale - varies among teachers. Some carefully review the prompt and place the criteria before them. Others begin by reading the essays to experience how learners have responded. Many reread the essays several times, others read all the essays once before returning to each one for a focussed evaluative decision. However they work their way through, at some point teachers must place a mark or grade on each ELL text. Prior to this crucial act, there seems to be a discomfort, a felt messiness tensioned by incommensurate discourses of integrative evaluation. With the prompt set and criteria
considered, certain assumptions prevail,

**Reflecting-on-action:** on how evaluation should happen (ACCOUNT)
- *Just know what you asked them to do, know what you’re looking for and the rest should fall into place, you know, get it straightened out in your mind or on paper first and, if you've done your homework, it should work.*

If one attends to the criteria in determining the mark, then they will “get things right.” A view of consumable knowledge sets the prompt and criteria. The teachers’ relation to the prompt and criteria are presumed to be unambiguous and certain. Is this also assumed for students? Different students, once having read the prompt for their assignment, independently commented,

**Reflecting-on-action:** on how learners approach the writing task (ACCOUNT)
- *The first thing I try do, know what teacher want me to say. Most I guess. I study note from my class so I know what.*

- *Sometimes, I don't like question. It just repeat what study in class. I know more so I try to say but sometimes it worse. I can't say what I want in words I know.*

- *I want to know how much worth. It tell me how hard I work. This one worth 25 mark so I should work very hard. I need know exactly what teacher want. I made mistake before in understanding question. I got low mark.*

For them, reciprocal intentions live in tensioned difference. Life as the student knows it and what the teacher “wants” mediates and complicates the written response. In acting on the importance of determining intentions, students remain uncertain. They study their notes and make sense of the prompt through the content that has been offered in class rather than what they know. It is a momentary “stuck place” and they find their way out through a well-worn path of privileging consumable knowledge. It seems judgments reflect how well students read intentions rather than what they know of life. It seems to be an act of interpreting life as corporeal, of knowledge-as-stasis (Jardine, 1992), and assumptions of mastery and autonomy; teachers intentions to “get it straightened out first” presume linear and objective evaluative practices and seem to ignore acts of reciprocal intentionality in students’ responses wherein the possibility of generativity, movement, and difference can be invoked.

Just prior to the crucial moment of putting indelible ink to paper, an account by one
teacher appears clear and decisive within the domain of grade giving,

Reflecting-in-action: on grading a specific paper (COMMENTARY)
• I'm giving this paper one grade for both language and content. If I had to
give a number for both, I couldn't do it, it's too difficult to explain to the
student. But a grade I can give, I know the difference between an “A” and
a “B” paper.

When conversing about receiving a mark or a grade, many students expressed indifference.
What seemed to be important to them was to understand why the mark or grade was given if
it was less than anticipated. One learner commented,

Reflecting-on-action: on the meaning of marks (ACCOUNT)
• I don't care number or grade, I just want high mark. I don't understand
either, mostly I trust teacher. Except when it's low, then I want to know
what I did wrong. How to improve my language to tell her more what I
know.

Many students seek high marks. A low number or grade fixates them on a scale from
which they want to move. Movement comes in knowing “what I did wrong.” As the teacher
moves the pen into position to mark-for-life, s/he begins to question relations between
language and content and how s/he might justify the grade.

Reflecting-in-action: on grading a specific paper (COMMENTARY)
• It's a “B” paper. They don't know enough about the topic. They've used
some of the vocabulary but it doesn't go anywhere. What I am going to say
to the student. Why isn't it an “A”? Is the student’s language a problem
or is it his ideas that make the language awkward? I don't know. I don't
like this. Just saying it's a “B” isn't enough. I want to be able to explain
why.

After spending an hour on his/her paper, another student shared,

Reflecting-on-action: on the meaning of marks (ACCOUNT)
• I want to tell her what I know. I am frustrated with English. I search deep
inside for my ideas and then I can't tell them because the words are lost.
The words we learned in class are not enough.

This student speaks of language and content relations in a different way. It seems that
meaning is lost in the limited resources s/he has in English. For her/him, language is
privileged in construing ideas, implicitly suggesting that traces of a functional view linger.
Yet, for many teachers, the meaning of language and content has become more blurred.
After a decade or more of this phrase being used in the literature, and its obvious connection
to a specific context where both language and content have a role in teaching and learning,
teachers struggle with the term’s complexity. In the messiness, what surfaces is tensioned
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ambiguity of the meta-text of language and content relations. Already framed by meta-texts of evaluation and literacy that attempt to objectify the end, “my purpose is to determine a mark”, following a linear progression from teaching to learning to evaluating, “If we covered this in class and expected them to learn it, then we should be testing for it”, and reading the text as a re-telling of consumed knowledge, “I look for what we’ve studied in class”. The ‘final’ agon seems to be caught in dilemmas of how ‘language and content’ criteria are understood and applied.

Consumable knowledge and language mastery dominate the discourse of one teacher in the comment,

Reflecting-in-action: commenting on writing while marking (COMMENTARY)
• Why after teaching these structures on the cause and effect of environmental issues and using them over and over in class, they still can’t do it on their own appropriately. It’s as if they are blocking it, determined to write in their own Japanese way. I can’t give them decent marks if they don’t follow the model and use the structures... this just isn’t acceptable writing

A student confers a presumed need to write like ‘people like us’,

Reflecting-on-action: on what it means to write in another language (ACCOUNT)
• I try to write like my teacher. I want her correct everything. But my Japanese is big problem. I can’t get rid of it.

In teaching structures and genres of specific academic discourse communities, is this an attempt to protect students from entering the messiness of their doubling wor(l)ds of language and culture? Is its purpose to offer a path of least resistance to success in future English endeavours? Many students request this assistance, presuming that ‘people like us’ write it right. I wonder, can ELL inscriptions be reduced to specific, distinct, and predeterminant structures of definable discipline-specific discourse communities? Acts of evaluation, framed by meta-texts of dilemma ideologies between and within, seem reduced to judging the effective teaching and learning of legitimated tricks of academic writing so that learners can write like ‘people like us’. 

At another marking session, the following dialogue between a teacher and the researcher took place as s/he was in the ‘final’ stages of marking essay exam questions:

Reflecting-on-action: on ‘final’ judgments (ACCOUNT)
T: I read through all the essay questions to get a sense of the range of answers. That helps me think about the spread of marks I will give.
R: How important are the original criteria at this point?
T: They have a role but sometimes as a teacher I misjudge what I expected from the students, or I see they read the question differently than I thought so for me the criteria changes and I alter what I will give marks for.

Reflecting-in-action: on the ‘final’ judgment of the text (COMMENTARY)
T: For example, with these essays I’m just about ready to give them marks. I’ve read them all, seen the range and now have to make some very difficult decisions. Our system here in terms of evaluation is based on numbers. I have to turn in a number for the student for this course to the registrar at the end of term.
R: Can’t you give a letter grade for the essay?
T: If I could just give a letter grade it would be easier but the students know the final mark for the course is out of 100. So even if I give a grade, the students want to know what that means in numbers.
R: Makes it very difficult.
T: And risky . . . the essay is worth twenty marks. Language and content are both important so 10 marks go to content and 10 to language. It’s probably not fair. It’s a senior course and content should be weighted more.
R: Do the students know the 10 and 10?
T: Ya, I explained it to them and it’s written in the instructions.

Action: marking the text with indelible ink (ACTS)
T: The problem is with essays like these two. One has written some good ideas I think, but the language is funny, awkward, something’s not quite right but the message is there. The other has language that is much more controlled and readable but I don’t think they really said very much. If I followed the criteria, I think I would have to give them both the same mark. But, it doesn’t feel right. The first one is better, more informed. I’m giving it a higher mark.

For this teacher, the site was a dilemmatic one. Practices lived in persistent instabilities within pre-conditions of decision-making, instabilities that seemed to have emerged from fragments of conflicting models of language, the possibility of unshared interpretations of the prompt, and the imposed drive to quantify written content. Midst his/her agon, language and content relations seem uncontested in the paper wherein “language [ ] is much more controlled and readable” but empty in meaning, and contested in the paper wherein “the language is funny, awkward . . . but the message is there”. In the crucial point of decision-making, the contested space, the space where the teacher is somehow aware that the student is constructing meaning, within what s/he seems to recognise as faulty writing, is valued more. Students struggle with similar concerns. One student shared,

Reflecting-on-action: on writing and marks (ACCOUNT)
• My English is good so I can give my teacher what she wants. I know these thing. I can get high mark I know. But topic big and I know more than she wants. This is big problem for me. I want to say in my own words what I
know but probably I make too many ah, how do you say, tech, technical errors. I wish she would mark me for how I tell my knowledge, not how many little errors I make.

Teachers and students independently struggle to determine what to write and how to read the writing, both living within fragmented orientations of language/content relations. Here, the teacher seems to move beyond the limitations of viewing language as grammatical correctness (or formal) and a vehicle for meaning, and instead places value on the faultiness of a learner’s lexicogrammatical (or functional) expression of meaning. Similarly, another teacher wrote this commentary on an ELL paper,

Reflecting-in-action: on the meaning of a mark(COMMENTARY)
•Although you still have problems with grammar, you have clearly expressed ideas. Remember, when we talk about possible outcomes we need to use ‘may’ instead of ‘will’.

For this teacher, grammatical correctness seems to be the language side of the language and content equation, while “clearly expressed ideas” and uses of “may” and “will” speak to a functional use of language and seem to reflect comments on content. A language and content perspective considers how meaning is made in language. Could it be that this phrase language and content is understood as a co-joining of conflicting models as in ‘formal (language) and functional (content)’? Or do these two models conflict and confuse teachers in trying to understand the phenomena of language, and content is understood as something else?

When each teacher was asked what the term language and content meant to them, a variety of responses were given, among and within, individual teachers. In one account of the dilemma, a teacher offered,

Reflecting-on-action: on the meaning of ‘language and content’ relations

ACCOUNT
•I think it means that we need to consider both the language demands and content knowledge in the curriculum we teach. If we teach language and content, we should test for language and content. This is clear to me but, when I have to mark a paper, I still get confused with how the language affects the content and how I should deal with it.

In another account, a teacher argued,

Reflecting-on-action: on the meaning of ‘language and content’ relations

ACCOUNT
•Language has to do with how we express an idea and content has to do
with what we say. At a distance, that seems obvious and very comfortable to me. But when I have to judge their writing, I have trouble trying to figure out whether it is their language that is affecting what they are saying, or whether it is that they really don’t know the content. Up close, I don’t understand what I am looking at. I go back and forth between trying to figure out the message from the language and just wanting to mark for grammar mistakes. It’s a messy area.

Teachers struggle with students’ expressions of meaning and it often becomes a “stuck place.” Drawn to a formal view for the comfort it seems to offer, teachers presume to separate language and content in a move away from the messy area rather than working their way through.

Students independently shared their experiences in writing content,

Reflecting-on-action: on the meaning of ELL writing (ACCOUNT)
•I write only what I know I can say correctly.
•What I write usually only tells you little what I know.
•I need more vocabularies. My ideas are simple without more words.
•I chance writing in own words. But, I know teacher’s words are more clearly.

The students, once again knowingly limited by their language resources, write less in their second language of what they know in their first and are haunted by the security of writing simply and correctly and constituting more meaning than they know in their own ‘faulty’ words. Control of meaning, implying the possibility of an autonomous text, seems to be valued. Students’ discursive discomfort became more explicit in contexts where they realised the possibilities for knowing more than they could say and saying more than they could know are enacted in their writing.

In practice, teachers seem to dwell in the undecidability of the judgment. The use of pencil prevails as the values are erased and then rewritten. The tensions surface in acts of erasure and re-marking.

Reflecting-in-action: on the felt messiness of deciding (COMMENTARY, ACTS)
•I know I teach language and content but look at this, he’s really trying to get the message across. I know he knows the topic, its just that his language skills aren’t very good. He’s thinking in Japanese so that’s problematic. He’ll eventually lose it and think in English. Just tells me he’s not there yet. I’ll give him 7 out of ten. No, I have to give him credit for what he’s trying to say. This is so hard. I’m changing it to an 8.

This teacher separated language and content at the point of decision making and made a
value commitment to privilege content but ignored what the learner was doing with language “to get the message across.” Tensioned uncertainty emerged in the attempt to separate meaning constructed in language even when the learner had a ‘problem’ of “thinking in Japanese.” Is the teacher possibly attempting the impossible? Can the first language be separated from an other? Can language be separated from content? Another teacher suggests a struggle in the valuing of language and of content from a separatist’s view in the commentary, “It has the ideas I was looking for but it is so difficult to read” and another comments, “the ideas aren’t clear.” These comments suggest a valuing of ideas over language; “if I know what the student is trying to say I’ll give them the marks.” Language, often placed in a secondary position as a mere tool or instrument of communication, is reflected in the commentary,

Reflecting-in-action: on the felt messiness of deciding (COMMENTARY, ACTS)

•There’s something in this sentence I don’t like. Other places it’s too wordy. I bet he didn’t think about his topic before he wrote this. His Japanese is coming through here, must have tried to translated some of this but it doesn’t quite work. It’s interesting though, a different twist. This is good content. This is very good. So it’s just a few sentences. Oh, let me look back at the others. It could be a four or five out of five . . . I’ll give him five. I like his ideas.

This seems appropriate in the affairs of the larger society; the disciplines of “content” (e.g., the Sciences) are given more import, more power, than disciplines of language (e.g., the Arts). Is it evidence of a larger structure in society imposed on what was thought to be a “straightforward” activity of integrative evaluation? It seems that the students use of his/her lexicogrammatical abilities was ignored.

Discourses of teachers offered evidence of the continued struggle with fragmented orientations to language/content relations. Reference to first language and culture is conveyed as faulty, as interference, as a problem with translation. In conversing with a student as s/he worked on her/his essay, s/he commented,

Reflecting-in-action: on the felt messiness of writing (COMMENTARY)

•I am translation student but its more than translate, more than right words and correct grammar. I see how language work affect my way to see world and cultures. It make me change. Sometimes when I write I not Japanese, not Canadian . . . I’m both - it strange and frustrate, difficult to explain . . . I write my ideas in both languages although English is what you see on paper. I am to be mix and I write my ideas that way now. I think gives me new life.
This student struggled with a new but uncertain emergent meaning of translation, coming to realise that translation is not just a matter of attending to word choice and grammar. In translation, words and worlds seem to unfold in a hybridity of doubling that is incomplete, neither East nor West, neither Japanese nor Canadian. What s/he had come to know as ‘self’ shifted to an ambiguous, tensioned terrain where ‘self’ and ‘other’ interplayed their subjectivities in uncertain ways. For her/him, it seemed to be a generative space that gives her “new life.” Teachers viewing the ‘mix’ as a negative space, work diligently to remove the interference, the faultiness, the presumed translations that did not work. I wonder, what would judgments of language/content relations be if the ‘mix’ was viewed as a generative space?

Frequently, in discussions, the teachers were drawn to the message of the text in determining the mark given. How does this seemingly natural occurrence inform our understanding of language/content relations? Is language a tool of communication or is language communication? Do teachers pay attention to how meaning is made or to something separate called content that presumes to pre-exist without language? Can there be one without the other? When a teacher says, “It doesn’t matter how they say it. I just want the idea”, is this giving priority to content? When content is privileged over language, is it a position of language as a messenger, marginalized because of its lack of meaning potential? When language and content are integrated, is it a position of language and content as inseparable wherein in the act of ‘languaging’, content is constituted? Are these positionalities binaries, only one or the other? These musings open new areas of inquiry for educators essential to understanding the simple phrase, language and content.

Dilemmatic discourses continue to contribute to persistent instabilities of integrative evaluation practices. In a case of crucial decision-making regarding an essay, the following dialogue ensued:

Reflecting-in-action: on the ‘final’ judgment of the text (COMMENTARY)
T: This one I’m still trying to decide. You see she didn’t answer the question. She wrote an interesting paper though. Some parts made me think. She didn’t just repeat what was learned in class. She has some unique, maybe even original, ways with her own words that made me rethink the topic a bit. But it wasn’t the answer I was looking for.
R: Was it a wrong answer or a different answer?
T: Hmm. Good question. I think mostly different. There are gaps in
meaning. I mean I couldn’t understand everything she said. Maybe it’s a
language problem, she couldn’t express what she wanted to say clearly
even. I’m not sure. She seems to know the topic though.

Action: marking the text with indelible ink (ACTS)

T: I have to decide whether to give this an “A” or not. If I use
the criteria that I marked the others with, she might not even pass because
she didn’t answer the question. One criteria is that they explain the cause
of the debt crisis. There’s no causal statements in here. Yet, if this was the
answer to the question it would be an “A”. Maybe because she’s written
differently, I like it and I don’t. Look here. She shows me she knows
about international debt. It’s thoughtful. It’s actually a more interesting
answer than most of the others. She’s written it well to get across her
ideas. Few grammatical errors too. But, how can I give her an “A” when
she didn’t answer the question? It’s not fair to the others. I need to treat
them the same. If I give her something lower though, I know I’ll feel
guilty . . . I know its worth an “A”.

The visual in Figure 8 maps the decision-making process. Working his/her way through,
s/he lived tensioned and dilemmatic pre-conditions. A strong commitment to the criteria and
to demonstrate consumable knowledge, that is presumed to be recoverable within a static
text, conflicts with an appreciation of meaning that this student has written “with her own
words” something that is unrecoverable in its performativity. How does one mark the
unexpected? In this case, the crucial decision became a guilty judgment.

A crucial decision point, Should I give this paper an “A”? is dilemmatic. If an
“A” is given, presumed fairness and consistency linked to use of criteria would be lost.
The criteria reflect expectations of predictability and consumable knowledge. Although the
teacher personally valued the student’s “thoughtfulness” and “unique . . . original ways
with her own words”, even with “gaps in meaning”, discourse evidence suggests that
being perceived as fair and consistent to all the students weighs heavily with this teacher.
S/he holds strongly to the linear notion that what has been taught must be evaluated and
what criteria is established must be applied consistently. In order to apply the criteria, the
teacher presumed a predictable response. The learner responded differently - an aporia in
the making. Within a meta-text of literacy, at least two models conflicted: the criteria
implied a static text of expected causal statements yet the teacher’s response to the writing
made him “re-think the topic” and struggle with the “gaps of meaning.” As a site of
multiple positionalities, criteria as acts of fairness and consistency dominated the decision
(In)commensurate Discourses of Language/Content Relations

Evidence of persistent instabilities seems to surface when teachers attempt to make sense of language/content relations in ELL texts prior to ‘final’ judgments in non-authentic marking sessions. An opportunity to explore this specifically was provided when teachers were asked to mark at least five of fourteen samples of ELL written content provided for them. Fourteen teachers agreed to spend from thirty to sixty minutes marking the texts, texts written by ELLs unknown to them. I have arbitrarily selected two samples of ELL written content and consider the teachers comments as they specifically relate to language and content relations in the texts. I then offer an analysis of knowledge structures identified within those texts, as one way of considering language and content integration.

Although multiple factors influence the mark, teachers were asked to specifically focus their judgment and comments on the language and content of the text. Tables 6 and 7 Knowledge structure analysis (KSA) is an approach to the discourse analysis of Mohan's (1986) knowledge structures (KS) currently a work in progress by Mohan and his former and current graduate students. For each knowledge structure of classification, description, sequence, principles, choice and evaluation, this work graphically maps the macro-structure of the KS and provides a discourse layout of the most common ways the knowledge structure is constituted. Although still in its infancy, it holds promise for understanding 'language and content' relations.
summarise teachers’ independent marks and comments on two sample ELL texts. My intent is not to inquire into which judgments were ‘correct’ but to attend to the differences in teachers marks as effects of positionalities within and between meta-texts of language/content relations. Following the teachers’ comments, Tables 8 and 9 analyse the macro-structure of each text using knowledge structure analysis to locate integrated macro-structures of language and content relations elicited by the prompt. In this case, learners responded to a prompt designed to elicit causal explanations of climatic change (see Appendix 5 for the specific prompt and further examples of knowledge structure analysis of ELL texts in response to the prompt). Evidence in the discourse consistently suggests teachers struggle to make sense of language/content relations. In offering a discourse layout of language structures in which cause and effect is constituted, I offer another possibility of language/content relations for consideration. How marks or comments may alter using this approach is unknown. However, it seems to have the potential to reduce, but not eliminate, what appears to be some of the tensions within a meta-text of language/content relations.

The written ELL responses in Tables 6 and 7 are based on the following prompt:

You have been learning about climatic change. Write a well organised paragraph about one of the following topics.
A. Explain one cause of climatic change.
OR
B. Explain how climatic change causes one human or planetary health problem.

Knowledge structure analysis of each students’ text indicates that most students have some linguistic resources to express linear cause and effect between events in at least two ways: within the clause and between clauses. They have used conjunction and lexis to realise causal relations. Some students seemed to have difficulty expressing their ideas as in sentence (8) in sample text 1. However, only one teacher commented on the students’ expression of causes or results of the topic, “This is a good expression of the effect of climatic change, they’ve used a conjunction.” Instead, comments such as, “This is confusing. What is the writer trying to say?” or “the meaning is clear” frequently preoccupied the teacher in trying to make sense of written meaning.
(1) Global warming is one cause of climatic change. (2) Global warming is to rise temperature unnaturally in an earth. (3) Carbon dioxide in the air increase, temperature is goes up. (4) Therefore, we should think the way of using Carbon dioxide. (5) Carbon dioxide mainly comes from cars and industries. (6) If we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature, we could get ocean water evaporation, and the permanent ice melting. (7) These cause big climatic change. (8) Example are the dead of fish which can’t be used to speedy of temperature rising in water and huge storm in which many species could get damages. (9) Many circle of natural chain reaction could be destroyed.

(10) Now, we come to the period when we have to confront global warming. (11) It can’t stop without our doing anything to it. (12) I am sure we all hope peaceful life and future, so let’s think about it and do anything to get safety future.

(Yumiko’s response to an exam question, 11/23/95)
Teachers constantly interpreted what they thought the students meant, crossing out words and adding their own to the student’s text. “It’s important that I fill in the gaps so I can understand what the student is saying” or “No, I think he meant the temperature will rise.” Teachers do not seem to attend to how students use their lexico-grammatical knowledge of English to make meaning. Instead, attention is sometimes given to structural organisation, sometimes to clarity of meaning (at a general level), and frequently to grammatical errors at the sentence level.

There appears to be a recognised lexicon of content and a recognised lexicon of language in the criteria used by the teachers. Content lexis from the discourse(s) data comprise of such words as ideas, points, details, meaning, topic, understand, and message. Language lexis include terms such as sentence structure, sentence fragment, paragraph, essay, grammar, and spelling. Lexicon used to describe the criteria of language and content evaluation often seem to be distinct and dealt with language and content separately rather than in an integrated way, as in the following comment, “I’ll give five marks for content and five marks for language.” It may be that teachers assume the criteria of marking schemes as a duality of opposed, or unrelated, elements, “I wouldn’t mark down too much for all the errors in verb use but the writer has to include the main points” rather than marking schemes that are relational and aim at the realisation of meanings.

Clearly, there is little evidence of a sustained functional perspective in the ‘talk’ about evaluation criteria. Most express a perspective of difference, an unrelatedness of language and content that permeates their use of criteria. Sometimes evaluators use formal criteria “If it’s a spelling or grammar error I circle it only once even though the mistake is repeated”, and sometimes they reject them “an ‘e’ on the end of explain and grobal instead of global doesn’t concern me.” Sometimes they ponder the functional relation between content and expression: “misuse of articles I don’t pay attention to, I can understand the sentence”, “grammatical errors bother me if I can’t understand what the writer is saying, if it’s interrupting the meaning in any way.” While some teachers show insight into functional problems, they use different sets of criteria to evaluate the same text. Some look for meaning, while others’ judgment is influenced by the violation of language rules.
Table 8 Sample ELL Text 1 and a Discourse Layout of its Cause and Effect Structures.

(1) Global warming is one cause of climatic change. (2) Global warming is to rise temperature unnaturally in an earth. (3) Carbon dioxide in the air increase, temperature is goes up. (4) Therefore, we should think the way of using Carbon dioxide. (5) Carbon dioxide mainly comes from cars and industries.

(6) If we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature, we could get ocean water evaporation, and the permanent ice melting. (7) These cause big climatic change. (8) Example are the dead of fish which can’t be used to speedy of temperature rising in water and huge storm in which many species could get damages. (9) Many circle of natural chain reaction could be destroyed.

(10) Now, we come to the period when we have to confront global warming. (11) It can’t stop without our doing anything to it. (12) I am sure we all hope peaceful life and future, so let’s think about it and do anything to get safety future.

(Mako’s response to an exam question, 11/23/95)

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<th>Between clauses</th>
<th>link</th>
<th>effects/results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>causes/conditions/reasons</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>ocean water evaporation and the permanent ice melting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature</td>
<td>could get</td>
<td>temperature is goes up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon dioxide in the air increase</td>
<td>[when]</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Within clauses

i) agent

<table>
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<th>huge storm</th>
<th>could get damages</th>
<th>many species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to speedy of temperature rising in water</td>
<td>can’t be used</td>
<td>dead fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii) cause/condition/reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>these</th>
<th>link</th>
<th>effect/result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>global warming</td>
<td>cause</td>
<td>climatic change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is one cause</td>
<td>climatic change</td>
<td>Many circle of natural chain reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| [from global warming] | could be destroyed | |

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Table 9  Sample ELL Text 2 and a Discourse Layout of its Cause and Effect Structures.

(1) Today, there are climatic changes. (2) These are caused by a greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino etc. (3) Greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino may trigger weird weather so people’s life style change. (4) For example, global warming make a rainfall change. (5) A temperature up so plants and trees can’t grow. (6) Also, people have some health problems, too. (7) Climatic change is bad for our life because these may be destroy many thing and change to our life styles.

(Shino’s response to an exam question, 11/23/95)

1. Between clauses

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<th>link</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino may trigger weird weather</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>people’s life style change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a temperature up</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>plants and trees can’t grow also people have some health problems too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climatic change is bad for our life</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>these may be destroy many thing and change to our life styles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Within clauses

i) agent

<table>
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<tr>
<th>agent</th>
<th>process</th>
<th>medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

ii) cause/condition/reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cause/condition/reason</th>
<th>link</th>
<th>effect/result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>these (climatic change)</td>
<td>may be</td>
<td>destroy many thing change to our life styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino</td>
<td>are caused by</td>
<td>these (climatic change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global warming</td>
<td>may trigger</td>
<td>weird weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>make</td>
<td>a rainfall change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do they think of integration of language and content at the local level or global level (of words/ideas or at the level of genre, for example)? Do their views agree or conflict? Are expert members of this community converging in their judgments? In Swales’ (1990) course on thesis writing for ELLs, learners were “moving towards membership of a chosen discourse community via effective use of established genres within that community” (pp. 77-82). While they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the writing at text-level, as well as at sentence and word level, there is no evidence that teachers use the concept of genre as an integrating element in their evaluation. “This is a good beginning, they give lots of information about the results of global warming, . . . look grobal not global.”

Implicit in one teachers’s discourse was a functional perspective when s/he commented, “I look for how they’ve structured their ideas and then the sequencing of their ideas and the rhetorical structures.” However, this same teacher talked in a discourse of fragmentation and unrelatedness when s/he explained her/his reasons for giving a certain mark, “I gave it four out of ten. The writer is off topic. S/he did not answer the question. The language is very readable though with minimal errors.” The text is considered from two evaluative perspectives, not a single integrated one. There is no relation made between “causes / results” and language use, between communicative purpose and textual form, between content and expression.

A (Re)Turn to the Questions

My purpose in this chapter was two-fold: to explore the difficulties in practices as they emerge in particular instances of integrative evaluation for a group of teachers, and, through those difficulties, consider relations between meta-texts of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration within living practices of integrative evaluation. It is an attempt to undo teacher’s discourses, in particular those that dilemmatically dwell in ‘stuck places’, agons, and felt messy texts of integrative evaluation practices. Three sets of data were considered: teachers’ discourses from authentic marking sessions, learners’ discourses from authentic writing sessions, and teachers’ discourses from non-authentic marking sessions. Probing of troubled positionalities primarily focused on teachers’ discourses in authentic marking sessions. In particular, three sites of “stuck places”
became evident in the discourse data: creating prompts, (re)turning to criteria, and felt messiness of inscribing marks of indelible ink. Students’ voices, often presumed to be present only in the words on the page, were heard in polivocalic relations with teachers’ discourses within the felt messiness of integrative evaluation.

Throughout activities of integrative evaluation, disruptions and “stuck places” were consistently evident. Interrelations of discursive acts, commentaries, and accounts of the process became sites of contestation. Teachers’ accounts of integrative evaluation frequently conflicted with their commentaries and acts; establishing criteria seemed “straightforward” until a felt messiness emerged when applying it to written content. Traces of positionalities suggested a privileging of a technical imaginary within which knowledge was made supposedly objective, criteria were structured as countable and static, and judgment was a search for univocality and commodification. Reading texts prior to judgment was often acts of reading presumed autonomous texts, seeking one meaning - the intended response - one known-in-advance by the teacher. It was well intentioned ‘support’ to the English language learners taught.

Teachers often appropriated students’ words to align with the structures and knowledge studied in class. Teachers seem to seek specific anticipated responses and other responses became faulty. Students tried to determine what that response might be. Some learners, in trying to write like “people like us”, questioned the interference of their first language and how it led to faulty writing. Others, in a similar struggle, recognised that living in the two-folds of languages and cultures could be a generative space, that one cannot and should not erase the texts (their Japanese language and culture) that have come before. Relations between multiple texts of teacher, learner, writer, reader, were in constant movement; reciprocal intentions often collided in tensioned, fissured positionalities.

The importance of content prevailed in discussions of prompt, criteria, and expected responses. Yet, once into the felt messiness or undecidability of integrative evaluation, discussions of language and content relations dominated; disruptions of positionalities involving fragments of formal and functional theories of language mediated and complicated living practices. “Stuck places” emerged from teachers’ reflections-in-action wherein evidence of commentary, accounts, and acts and their relations became a space of
undecidability enacted through guilty judgments and risky practices. In most “stuck places”, teachers seem to choose dominant well-worn paths within a technical imaginary. At the point of crucial decision-making, it seemed that teachers heeded the force of the technical rationality in their reliance on and re-turn to discursive traces of mastery in accuracy, of curricular linearity, of the possibility of knowledge as commodity, of a disintegration of language and content, of markable learning and hope for a univocal text. Few took the risk of laying down a new passage while working through uncertain and ambiguous spaces of living practices of integrative evaluation. Some of the difficulties of integrative evaluation emerged from the mis/alignment of a form of evaluation and the phenomena (a social and integrated text) whose interests it purported to serve. Teachers intentions to “get it straightened out first” presumes linear, objective evaluative practices and seems to conceal other positionalities the two-folds of integrative evaluation. For most, “the extent to which it is possible to separate language and content, ideas and expression, remains . . . an unresolved problem” (Norton & Starfield, 1997, p. 291).

Current critiques of technical rationality offer useful interpretations of instances of integrative evaluation practices. In the insistence of a technical form of evaluation for texts that are explored as interpretive and social literacy, teachers experience guilty judgments and risky practices. What is needed is a form of evaluation that aligns with ambiguous and difficult texts of language learners. Chapter six is interpretive work that attempts to de-center the technical and begins an exploration of integrative evaluation practices in a dialectic of radical hermeneutic and functional linguistic stances.
Chapter Six
Guilty judgments and risky practices: a discussion

Appreciating that tenuous and delicate situation of judgment which is addressed by the name "undecidability"... does not detract from the urgency of decision; it simply underlines the difficulty.

John Caputo, Against ethics

In recent years, increasingly curriculum scholars have opened themselves to the realm of language, linguistics, discourse and narratives to understand their own field. Within this curricular turn, language is understood not so much as a disembodied tool of communication caught up in an instrumental view of language, but more so language understood in an embodied way -- a way that allows us to say, "we are the language we speak."

Ted Aoki, The call of teaching

Each aspect - task, writer, scoring procedure, reader - interacts with the others, creating a complex network of effects which to date has eluded our efforts to control. We will not, I believe, solve the problems of writing assessment until we look at this total picture rather than each facet in isolation... We must use a context-embedded approach, capitalising on what has so far been seen as the central problem of writing assessment - the fact that in all its stages it is a wholly human endeavour.

Liz Hamp-Lyons, Second language writing assessment

The major influences in ESL - its scientific orientation in research, its pragmatism, and the conservatizing effect of EFL - work against a movement toward either left-wing ideology or radical pedagogy.

Terry Santos, Ideology in composition: L1 and ESL
“Underlining the Difficulty” of a “Wholly Human Endeavour”

Through the beginnings of a published pilot study (Mohan & Low, 1995), this project has emerged as an inquiry similar to what Davis (1996) describes as an interpretative framework of enactivism that seeks out middle ways amid disparate perspectives. But such middle ways should not be thought of as compromises. Rather, they represent attempts to sidestep seemingly irresolvable tensions by drawing attention to and offering alternatives for the assumptions that underlie varied opinions. (p. xxv)

It is an inquiry that attempts to make sense of, find ‘middle ways’ through, the difficulty of disparate discourses that are evident in the instances of discursive pre-conditions of teachers judging ELL inscriptions in academic environs. I structured the struggle as questions of inquiry which, over the time of the study, have been re-written through an exposure to an obvious process of continued reading - recursively and anew - as I attempted to make sense of instances of integrative evaluation practices. I found myself engaged in a process of re-structuring as a way to address my increasing awareness of the importance of complexity and difficulty that I was coming-to-know. The questions are restated here:

1) How do teachers, in their practices, construct the activity of integrative evaluation? In particular, do current critiques of a technical rationality contribute to useful interpretations of integrative evaluation practices?

2) How do teachers relate practices of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration?

Before highlighting the interpretive work guided by these questions, I turn to introductory comments made in Chapter One to briefly review current critiques of technical rationality. The remaining pages focus on the effects of teacher positions through concerns of validity and ethics in integrative evaluation practices as a way to “underline the difficulty” of a “wholly human endeavour.”

Concerns with technical rationality imbricate many levels of life. In the broader society, Lyotard (1997) invites his readers to resist the ‘thingness’ and linearity of
Modernity’s metaphysical assumptions of presence, Taylor (1991) questions Western beliefs that one can be in control of one’s life, and Caputo (1987) “attempt[s] to stick with the original difficulty of life, and not to betray it with metaphysics” (p.1). In education, Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993) question technical rationality and call for a reflective rationality. Jardine (1992, 1998) and Smith (1999), both with hermeneutic interests, argue for an attunement to, rather than a concealment of, difficulties of life in the classroom and Miller (1997) admits to a general tendency to “technologize the purposes and forms of research” and therefore attends to the experiences that disrupt those tendencies, arguing that the disruptions “daily reconfigure not only the curriculum theories that frame [her] work but also the ways in which [she] conduct[s] research with teachers” (p. 199). In second language writing pedagogy, Zamel (1997) and Spack (1997) both claim traditions of ELL writing pedagogy are reductionistic and deterministic, Hamp-Lyons & Kroll (1996) call for a context-embedded approach to writing assessment in resistance to more traditional, context-reduced approaches, while Santos (1992) is critical of what she calls a major scientific orientation to the teaching of English as a second/foreign language. Telescoping and inter-related imbrications suggest a strong influence of broader societal concerns that have filtered down to influence classroom practices, especially in second language instruction.

Each instance offered in Chapter five belongs to integrative evaluation practices and “is fecund: [they] keep the story [of integrative evaluation] going . . . those shared and contested understandings in which we live are called to account by this instance, made to ‘speak,’ change, accommodate, and so to speak, ‘learn’ through this encounter” (Jardine, 1998, p. 42, original emphasis). Particular instances draw our attention to integrative evaluation practices so that we do not render it something “that no longer concerns us”, but instead remain attuned to the contested sites that give it life. It is an obligation I believe we have to students, especially in instances of evaluation. Table 10 reflects how each instance has “add[ed] itself to what [integrative evaluation] can now be understood to be” (ibid., p. 40).
### How I Now Understand Integrative Evaluation To Be

#### Table 10 Highlights Interpreted Integrative Evaluation Practices

1) How do teachers, in their practices, construct the activity of integrative evaluation? In particular, do current critiques of a technical rationality contribute to useful interpretations of instances of integrative evaluation practices?

- Teachers engaged in difficult practices of multiple “stuck places” of uncertainty, conflict and ambivalence when creating the prompt, establishing and applying criteria, and in the pre-conditions of decision-making.

- Teachers experienced hermeneutic acts of literacy and functional relations of language and content integration in the pre-conditions of decision-making.

- Teachers used a technical form of evaluation in order to satisfy technical requirements (submission of a mark) established by the institution.

- Teachers filled in the meaning gaps of ambiguous texts to ensure univocality (one reading, ‘the’ reading) of the text when deciding a mark.

- As the researcher, current critiques of technical rationality helped to question the ‘problem’ of difficulty and to become attuned to its impositions; in particular, radical hermeneutics invited a re-positioning of difficulty to an ambiguous and generative space.

2) How do teachers relate practices of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration?

- Prior to agreeing to a prompt, teachers explored literacy as ambiguous and social interpretations but, in their uncertainty of how to mark such a text, they returned to a question for which there was a ‘correct’ and ‘controlled’ response.

- When applying evaluative criteria, teachers were confused by discordant relations of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration. They sometimes acknowledged functional views in integrating language and content, yet when they did, they were vague and uncertain about how to mark in an integrated way.

- Teachers struggled with meaning of ELL texts at the level of discourse but then focused on language accuracy at the sentence level when deciding a mark.

- Teachers said that ELL texts were difficult to interpret but they then imposed their own ‘straightforward’ readings on the texts to reduce and simplify the difficulties.

- Teachers acted on dominant technical positions in acts of decision-making and attempted to align a technical form of evaluation with ELL texts by imposing instrumental acts of simplification and distortion on literacy, and language and content integration.
Teachers engaged in difficult practices of multiple “stuck places” of uncertainty, conflict and ambivalence framed within a linear, staged context of creating the prompt, establishing and applying the evaluative criteria, and reading the text prior to decision-making. In this process teachers experienced hermeneutic acts of literacy in their troubled interpretations of student texts and explored functional relations in their commentaries on how language constructs meaning. A presumed linear order was disrupted by an increasing number of undecidabilities as teachers moved closer to determining a mark. Re-turns to the criteria interspersed with re-turns to the prompt and re-turns to the text became unpredictable actions in the name of fair and consistent judgments. The (dis)order was often a signpost of re-marking - a technical form of evaluation used in order to satisfy technical requirements (that is, a submission of a mark for each student) established by the institution. This became a point of difficulty in which teachers found themselves wanting-to-be-sure on the form, filling in the meaning gaps of ambiguous texts to ensure one reading, ‘the’ reading, midst the uncertainty of their judgments. Current critiques of technical rationality helped to question the felt need for certainty, for wanting-to-be-sure, for viewing difficulty as a problem needing to be fixed and to become attuned to its impositions on literacy, and language and content integration. In particular, difficulties were interpreted as generative when re-positioned by radical hermeneutics.

In several discursive instances, at least two conflicting models of language led to an uncertainty of how to mark criterion-specific language features of the text. As well, there was strong evidence of a content focus in discussions on prompt design, evaluative criteria and overall purpose of judgment, e.g., “to get the ideas across”, and of a language focus on accuracy at the sentence level. Yet, even with these foci of presumed shared meaning, multiple interpretations of previously agreed upon language and content prompts and/or criteria became uncertain, ambiguous intentions. Midst these struggles, teachers explored differing epistemological stances, willing to turn a new and somewhat ambiguous theoretical position into practice. But once into the ambiguity and indecision of uncharted terrain, they chose to return to the familiar and, in so doing, became complicit in perpetuating a system they knew “needs to be changed, but if we can’t agree on a way to do it let’s go back to the original question.”
Prior to agreeing to a prompt, teachers explored literacy as ambiguous and social interpretations but, in their uncertainty of how to mark such a text, they returned to a question for which there was a ‘correct’ and controlled’ response they could justify. When applying evaluative criteria, teachers were confused by discordant relations of evaluation, literacy, and language and content integration. Teachers applied both formal and functional views of language in their deliberations. They sometimes acknowledged functional views in integrating language and content, yet when they did, they were vague and uncertain about how to mark in an integrated way. Of the two theoretical stances, formal linguistics seemed to have more of a stabilising presence, whereas a functional framework seemed to be incomplete and unstable, being somewhat unknown to many. As a way out of the disparate conditions, a familiar path was taken wherein a formal position, one of a seemingly less ambiguous system for teachers, dominated decisions of integrative evaluation. Teachers struggled with meaning of ELL texts at the level of discourse but then focused on language accuracy at the sentence level when deciding a mark. Teachers said that ELL texts were difficult to interpret and then imposed their own ‘straightforward’ readings on the texts to reduce and simplify the difficulties. Assumptions of reading a text that was fixed and stable and represented what the student knew of language and of content predominated, while an interpretive position and “having to guess what s/he means” was enacted but not valued.

Teachers acted on dominant technical positions in acts of decision-making. They seem to conceal their experiences of hermeneutic acts, and functional relations, and attempted to align a technical form of evaluation with ELL texts by imposing acts of simplification and distortion on literacy, and language and content integration. Technical rationality operated as a powerful apparatus that seemed to contain and control ways in which relations of literacy, and language and content integration got done.

The complexifications of integrative evaluation became a difficult act of trying to clean up ambiguous and contrary themes both within and between at least the three meta-texts discussed in this study. The explicitness of the prompt and the proliferation of evaluative criteria were attempts to “get it right” by turning a living practice into technical details that worked to conceal the difficulty. The way out for many then was to find “a
technical fix” to the difficulty of a social practice called integrative evaluation.

These instances raise serious concerns in practices of evaluation, literacy and language/content integration, especially when technical forms of evaluation are paradoxically aligned with social and integrated texts. In light of current critiques of technical rationality and the interpretations in Table 10 of what integrative evaluation can now be understood to be, I argue for a loosening of the powerful hold of the technical as a ‘regime of truth’ on classroom evaluative practices. In so doing, I discuss a decentering of the technical and possible implications for integrative evaluation re-positioned in radical hermeneutics and functional linguistics. Then I re-visit the questions of inquiry in light of teachers’ broader concerns of fairness and consistency through issues of reliability, validity, and ethics, and in a discussion of the effects of positionalities on evaluative practices.

Decentering the Technical

A pre-condition of decision-making was a space of indecision; questions-in-flux seemed to enact constant instability and resist the temptation of ‘being sure’, of a mastery that assumes it could bring clarity to decisions. For many teachers pre-conditions emerged as a disabling space of impossible difficulty, a “stuck place” for which the only way out was to travel well worn paths - those instrumental actions of concealment and containment - to cover up and control the cracks, fragments, breaks and ruptures in the routine called marking ‘language and content’ texts. Concealment, as teachers found out, brought only momentary relief. When faced with another text to mark, the cracks re-turned only to, once again, be concealed, contained, controlled - a series of discomforting and limiting repeat performances that had come to be routine in evaluative practices. I wondered, could “undecidability” become an enabling space of difficulty, as the promise of enactivism suggests, wherein working the cracks, fragments, breaks, and ruptures enacts a middle way through acts of denial to conceal, contain, and control? Its promise seemed to lie in decentering - a breaking with but not casting away - the technical.

In what follows, I struggle with undecidabilities of integrative evaluation and consider issues of reliability, validity, and ethics that seem to be raised primarily in language testing research and in “stuck places” evidenced in this inquiry. I conclude with a call for a
valuing of the difficulty of integrative evaluation and enter a conversation on how, as educators, we might learn to “live with it well.”

Many have taken the bold step of arguing against the technical to remind us of its powerful imposition of a way of thinking that has forced many of us in education to act in particular ways. Postmodern writers Usher and Edwards (1994) argue that modernist (technical) discourses of education posit such claims as: 1) knowledge is a master signifier with an aim of cumulative and progressive mastery; 2) the teacher, as the-one-who-knows, transmits knowledge unilaterally to the learner; 3) individuals intentionally impart meaning to empty words - language is transparent and can represent fully and completely that which it signifies; and 4) knowledge is a closed system that is dominating because it forces learners into the system and totalising because it is pre-given and strives to envelop all there is to know. In taking such a position, I ponder Althusser’s musing,

How many [teachers] (the majority) do not even begin to suspect the “work” the system (which is bigger than they are and crushes them) forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness . . . . So little do they suspect it that their own devotion contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School. (Althusser cited in Chow, 1995, p. 108)

Dominant positions (e.g., “the system”), competing with other motile and multiple traces that emerged in this study, seem to be powerful determinants of how teachers accomplish their work.

In Chapter five, the need to measure, to quantify, to objectify as a number within evaluative practices imposed a structure on teachers that inevitably led to a separation of language and content relations midst their discomfort of such an act. One teacher’s comments seemed to communicate a recurring theme found in many of the instances of discourse,

Reflecting-on-action: teacher comments on integrative evaluation practices (ACCOUNTS)

• I know I should somehow consider the language and meaning connection in a more holistic way but its so difficult and, although it is somewhat arbitrary, I find separating language and content for specific marking purposes the best way to come to a mark that for me is fair and consistent.
But, even as I comment on the language, I'm thinking about the meaning and when I comment on the meaning, I'm thinking about how the language was used to make meaning - meaning that I might not even be understanding in the way it was intended. So, at some level even when I separate language and content, I'm not separating them.

Paradoxes perform as incomplete and often ambiguous systems as in the separation/integration of language and content relations. Another performative paradox occurs in the teacher’s comment on interpreting meaning and her/his struggle to know where meaning resides. This teacher’s use of ‘intended meaning’ suggests an assumption of an autonomous text while juxtaposed within knowing her/his reading of the text may not be as it was ‘intended’. As Caputo (1993, p. 3) claims, it is a difficult “tenuous and delicate” space of “undecidability.” What is certain is the imposed necessity of a numerical value that will mark the text. The structure of the technical imaginary seems unquestioned and, in so doing, many teachers continue to assume that their role as evaluators can be objective and distant, that the text can be considered outside of its context, that language can stand on its own, and that content, in its wanting-to-be-sure, seeks language structures that will carry its certainty. While the force of the technical works to enact these assumptions, pockets of resistance surface in knowing that unacknowledged relational processes are involved in judging a written text.

Evaluation, as a marking-for-life, is for most a well-intentioned site where social entanglements of power, interpretation, and positionality invoke difficulty and “undecidability”, and disrupt the felt need for linear practices and presumptions of autonomous texts. Of interest in this study is integrative evaluation in the context of living, cultural practices. Such an approach acknowledges social relations and their inherent ambiguities and difficulties; it is a re-positioning that questions the assumptions underlying a technical imaginary and the possibility of taking an ethical stance. I wonder, how can one dwell in a technical imaginary in the name-of-the-good and enact fair and consistent evaluative practices, while reducing voice and situatedness to presumed unitary, definitive, and closed texts, and claiming the innocence of a language that is bound in presumed mechanistic work and ‘does as it is told’? My intent is not to rescue the readers of this text from the demise of the technical imaginary, nor is it to offer an ‘other’, new, and improved position and take up its cause. Instead, I am attempting to show how and the extent to
which what currently matters in integrative evaluative practices is revived - brought back to life - and strengthened by a re-positioning of ‘difficulty’.

Evaluation, as well-intentioned acts, remains at the centre of schooling. While approaches to evaluative practices have changed over time in an attempt to maintain its good name, the struggle to ‘get it right’ continues. Presumed secureings to foundations of presence, objectivity, mastery, and certainty attempt to hold ‘technical’ evaluation in place. Yet, entangled in the foundations are “undecidabilities” that loosen the hold and invoke the telling of a difficult story - a story of integrative evaluation that admits to subjugated knowledges, situatedness, and social relations. It is a painful jouissance of evaluative practices that claims an impossibility in the name-of-the-good. Evaluation, it seems, can no longer maintain accurate reflections of the worthiness of the ‘real’ (in this case, the ‘real’ student). Difficulties with its imbued foundational slippages, shifting ontologies and epistemologies, ambiguous cultural practices, and (un)certain constituting effects of language contribute to an “undecidability” that has weakened, perhaps even ruptured, a technical hold. Viewed in this way, evaluation could be thought of as an aporetic evaluation, no longer technically sure of itself and therefore becomes an attunement to ‘middle ways’ out.

The historical condition of scientific reason contributed to a longing for order in what was thought to be a dis-ordered world and technical, instrumental thinking has no doubt contributed to that ordering. Carried over to pedagogical sites, numerical impositioning was an obvious move to an assumed need for control of evaluative practices. Yet, as evidenced in the discourses of teachers engaged in integrative evaluation, it is not a site of clarity but one of contestation. What if a re-positioning decentered the technical to make possible thinking of integrative evaluation as aporetic? Such a re-positioning acknowledges both the limits and promise of a space wherein entanglements of cultural practices, social relations, and constituting effects of language play out in performative paradoxes of “undecidabilities”. Could it be a re-positioning which imagines integrative evaluation as a movement of linearity and complexity of evaluation, of fixedness and openness of literacy, and of separateness and integrativeness of language and content relations?
Research is neither window nor mirror. Stripped of simple reference, embedded in a proliferation of differences and failures of Enlightenment categories, caught between the no longer and the not yet, we cannot not know the non-innocence of language and the weight of culture in our portrayals of the world. (pp. 3-4)

Evaluation, like research, dwells in subjectivities and cultural practices. I wonder, as an evaluator, what conditions make it possible to assume a distant and neutral stance? How can we claim exact numerical measurements to mark the worth of one’s text? These are questions asked of difficult stories - difficult stories and their meaning for evaluation in terms of validity, as a concern of ethics, and, of ethics itself. I now tell of one difficult story in the name of validity.

From Certainty to Guilty Judgments

After a discomforting experience with 'undecidability', a teacher placed a mark on an essay and commented,

Reflecting-in-action: on legitimating a mark (COMMENTARY)

•This is one of the most difficult jobs we do as teachers. I want to treat all the essays fairly and be consistent, but it feels like an impossible task . . . . Look at this one. I know I’m reading into what has been written here. I am his teacher, I know what was covered in class. Hmmm. I know this mark is important to him. It will impact him now and in the future and it reflects on me as his teacher. That makes me nervous. Some would say it reflects on how well I have taught and how well he has learned. But I don’t think it gives those kinds of answers. That mark represents my judgment - what I know of what this student knows based on what and how he has written - at least it’s supposed to. But, how can a number represent my marking when it is so subjective - even with this criteria in front of me - and the essay - like all essays in my experience - just isn’t totally clear? I know I had to mark it but I’m feeling really uncomfortable - even guilty - in justifying that mark.

A discomforting experience of giving a mark seems to be linked, first of all, to underlying epistemological assumptions that the teacher can ‘know’ the language and content of the essay as a representation of the ‘presence’ of the learner’s knowledge of content and of language; assumptions seemingly perpetuated by a regime of ‘truth’ that informs the
presumed ethical use and interpretation of the evaluation results. Yet, in the discourse data of the above example is evidence of a hesitancy to ‘know’ such ‘truths’ as ‘pure presence’, recognising that “the essay - like all essays . . . . just isn’t totally clear.” In questioning a powerful tradition, the teacher validates his/her evaluation of a mark through the difficulty of guilty judgments.

Part of the difficulty that leads to guilty judgments may relate to concerns of reliability (e.g., teachers’ repeated desire to be consistent), validity, and ethics (e.g., both validity and ethics are linked to teachers’ need to be fair). I briefly comment on reliability before exploring concerns of validity and ethics from the language testing literature in relation to classroom integrative evaluation practices. Assumptions of reliability seem to be embedded in notions of replication and repetition in suggesting fixed, static contexts wherein judgments can be repeated in consistent ways. A troubled technical control, attempting to silence the contextual embodiment of integrative evaluation, is further troubled through the persistent instabilities of on-going and ever-changing social relations; it is part of the difficulty of rendering a motile site reproducible.

I now turn to a discussion of validity and its assumptions, informed by historical and current conditions, to suggest that the pre-conditions of decision-making contribute to a validity that can never be sure of itself. As a way of addressing concerns of validity that emerged in the discourse data, I re-visit the first question of inquiry to consider how the discourse evidence contributes to interpretations of validity as ‘difficulty’. Validity, as referred to here, is concerned with “the conditions of the legitimation of knowledge” (Lather, 1994, p. 36); that is, attention is given to the historical and/or current conditions that allow bounded meanings to be constructed in particular ways. For example, already discussed are the conditions constructed in the discourse above regarding assumptions of ‘truth’ and ‘representation’ made midst the difficulty of legitimating the teacher’s knowledge through her judgment of the learner’s knowledge of the content and language of the essay. Debates in the field of language testing over the last decade or so, concerned with validity and test influence, have moved away from a narrow focus on washback, a consequential aspect of validity that is ‘measurement-driven instruction’, to explorations of

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81 One of the uses of evaluation results is an ethical concern termed ‘washback’ and refers to “a set of beliefs about the relationship between testing and teaching and learning” (Hamp-Lyons, 1997, p. 295).
broader notions of impact (Hamp-Lyons, 1997).

Many use validity criteria categories to legitimate testing instruments and the knowledge they purport to measure: “face validity (student perceptions of the test), content validity (asking whether tutors thought that test content represented programme content), construct validity (through a correlational study), [and] concurrent validity (with self-assessment, and the assessment of tutors)” (Fulcher, 1997, p. 115). Current work by Messick (1994, 1995, 1996) defines a broad notion of construct validity. All seem to attempt, albeit in different ways, the validation of the testing/evaluation instrument as one that captures ‘real’ student competence/performance. It is a stance that continues to be entangled in the crisis of representation and its assumption of an obtainable ‘pure presence’. Yet, teachers also acknowledge a gap in ever-coming-to-know completely what is constituted in the words written, calling into question the possibility of ‘pure presence’ of knowledge assumed to be represented in the text.

In the title of one current article in language testing, validity is considered an ethical issue (Hamp-Lyons, 1997). Some categories of validity criteria, such as face validity, blur with ethical concerns of test influence and learner affect. It is a shifting ground wherein current discussions of validity in research practices question “the continued dominance of homogeneous criteria as formulaic, readily available codes that reinscribe a realist ontology and serve a regulatory, policing function” usurping them “to a space of relational practices in situated contexts of inquiry” (Lather, 1998, p. 4). Exploring notions of validity as it relates to research, Lather’s (1986) concept of catalytic validity is one that “represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energises participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it” (p. 72). It is an example of a shifting orientation of validity - a middle way; it is “a situated, constitutive validity . . . based on multiple voices about what knowledge should matter.” (Lather, 1998, p. 4). This shift can be tracked in language testing in an obscuring of distinctions between validity and ethics (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Lynch, 1997). Re-written for evaluative practices, validity becomes an ethical concern wherein legitimization of what-knowledge-should-matter is constituted by multiple, relational

Messick describes construct validity as including “evidence and rationales for evaluating the intended and unintended consequences of score interpretation and use in both the short- and long-term...[and] unfairness in test use, and positive or negative washback effects of teaching and learning” (Messick cited in Hamp-Lyons, 1997, p. 298).
voices of the 'testmaker' and 'testtaker'.

Evident as traces throughout the discourse data, such possibilities emerged when teachers recognised that their method of evaluating was a situated response contextualised by conditions, for example, within which the prompt and criteria were established. In acknowledging the cultural and relational dynamics of the whole activity, teachers began to question the ethics and responsibility of assuming the position of expert as a normative condition for evaluative practices and instead began to understand it as a "wholly human endeavour."

From Ethics to Obligation as/in Risky Practices

Ethical concerns in language assessment, framed by questions of impact as effects, are of current import such that a whole issue has been devoted to this topic in a well respected journal on language testing (see the journal of Language Testing, 1997, Vol. 14). While many studies inquire about ethics from perspectives of teachers and test-makers, the current call is for further research on learners, "views and their accounts of the effects on their lives of test preparation, test-taking and the scores they have received on tests" for both traditional and alternative forms of assessment practices (Hamp-Lyons, 1997, p. 299). In light of this call, the ethicality of tests has been questioned (Davies, 1997; Elder, 1997; Lynch, 1997; Shohamy, 1997). Defining ethicality "in terms of issues such as harm, consent, confidentiality of data and fairness", Lynch (1997) boldly asks, can "any test . . . be defended as ethical, or moral" (p. 315)? He argues for "alternative forms of assessment" as "our best hope of improving the morality of procedures and the decisions that result from them" (p. 324) and suggests that their legitimation will require "different procedures from those currently employed for traditional tests...and may involve goals that are difficult to capture with precise instruments of measurement" (ibid.). It is a shift in the language testing literature that resists the "quest for accurate measurement - and control" and argues "for [more] educationally and morally defensible policies" (ibid.). It is, as Lynch claims, a continued search for ethical assessment - an ethics-in-the-name-of-the-good - that may involve risky practices in its defiance of accurate measurements and control.

I turn briefly to the work of Caputo (1993) and his argument against ethics as a way of thinking about ethics as risky practices. Taking a deconstructionist stance, his denial of
ethics and its good name is "an operation aimed at appreciating that tenous and delicate situation of judgment which is addressed by the name 'undecidability'" (p. 3). He claims that to speak against ethics-in-the-name-of-the-good and its deconstruction is to own up to the lack of safety by which judging is everywhere beset . . . [It] is the loss of the assurance, the lack of the safe passage, that ethics has always promised. Ethics makes safe. It throws a net of safety under the judgments we are forced to make, the daily, hourly decisions that make up the texture of our lives. Ethics lays the foundations for principles that force people to be good; it clarifies concepts, secures judgments, provides firm guardrails along the slippery slopes of factual life. It provides principles and criteria and adjudicates hard cases. Ethics is altogether wholesome, constructive work, which is why it enjoys a good name.

The deconstruction of ethics, on the other hand, cuts this net. Or . . . shows that the net is already torn, is 'always already' split, all along and from the start . . .

Deconstruction shows how a film of undecidability creeps quietly over the clarity of decisions...clouding judgment just ever so much, so that we cannot quite make out the figures all around us. (p. 4)

His Derridean use of deconstruction is an attunement to the unfolding of an aporia wherein the path is not as clear and complete as he suggests ethics would have us believe, but instead it is a path "still under construction" in the middle of life's difficulties. He turns to the idea of 'obligation' as something that is not secure and suggests "the life of obligation . . . is a rather more difficult, risky business . . . that ethics cannot make safe" (ibid.). His use of the term obligation, does not mean answering the call of Being, . . . instead [it refers to] a . . . communication between one human being and another, a certain line of force that runs along the surface upon which you and I stand; the obligation I have to you (and you to me, but this is different) and the both of 'us' to 'others' . . . [it is] the feeling that comes over us when others need our help, when they call out for help, or support, or freedom, or whatever they need, a feeling that grows in strength directly in proportion to the desperateness of the situation of the other.

To be sure, the oldest and most honourable work of ethics has been to defend and honour obligation, to make obligation safe. But my impious thought is that obligation is not safe and so . . . it is just in virtue of obligation that ethics comes unstuck . . . Obligation . . . makes ethics blush, [it is what] ethics must reject or expel in order to maintain its good
name . . . . Ethics contains obligation, but that is its undoing (deconstruction). (p. 5)

In deconstructive acts of finding a way through aporetic situations, “ethics sets obligation loose from its containment . . . lets that being-set-loose be seen . . . as it exposes the vulnerability, the frailty and fragility of obligation” (ibid.). In understanding relations of ethics and obligation in this way, I turn to the discursive ‘stuck places’ of teachers and consider their undecidabilities as risky practices - a deconstruction of ethics on route to middle ways in alternative assessments and counter-practices.

For many teachers in this study, integrative evaluation was a risky practice; that is, in their stuck places, they began to question, through undecidabilities, their role as expert in the legitimation of knowledge (e.g., language and content) and saw their work in evaluation as a way of being at risk. Resisting modernism claims of the possibility of expert knowledge, my interest has been, and continues to be, in exploring the terrain outside of mastery as a site of possibility - a site that encourages a non-mastery reading; a reading that displaces consciousness and intentionality and makes room for counter-practices; a reading of text as multiple on-going stories that troubles the ‘real’ and disrupts attempts to reach consensus in finding one centred story. Instead, it becomes a reading of fragmented stories that speak to historical and current conditions, situated selves, and contested meanings lingering in the ‘undecidability’ of reading and judging the text; a reading that disturbs the possibility of ethics in-the-name-of-the-good and turns to obligation for advice. In thinking of ethics as obligation and its risky practices, I turn to the discourse evidence to reflect on teachers’ ‘stuck places’ in integrative evaluation and the possibility of its potential for alternative assessment practices of a different kind.

An assumption of evaluation is that its purpose, its ‘measure’, is to be of use - to teachers, to learners, to institution(s), hence the discourse evidence of a seemingly unrelenting quest to put the measure to ‘good’ use - to be ethical - in teachers’ practices. Yet, Sumara (1997), in reworking Foucault’s idea that no act is innocent, explores reading as an act of surveillance. The presumed innocent act of reading turns against itself as learners write as situated selves, midst contested meanings and within trans-cultural contexts. Stuck with “having to fill in the gaps” and “figuring out whether the language is
interfering with meaning or meaning is interfering with language”, teachers’ pathways become clouded with hesitation and doubt. Their obligation to the learner is unquestionable but some are “not sure how to mark this” and in the fragility of the moment ask “what is ‘good’ writing anyway?” and “how can I possibly know what s/he knows from this writing?” Teachers, in trying to make judgments that would be of ‘good’ use, continued to comment, “I know how I would respond to the prompt but if that’s what I expect maybe that’s not learning - maybe I need to rethink what essay writing is all about”, and, “sometimes when I read this essay, I think he knows more than he is saying and other times I wonder if I’m reading into it more than he knows.” Grappling with language and its effects, the undecidabilities of judgment continue to make teachers nervous in their evaluative practices. One teacher, while open to multiple responses, commented,

Reflecting-on-action: a teacher’s comments on integrative evaluation practices (ACCOUNT)
•I know I’m interpreting the meaning according to my expectations which is for them to tell me what I already know. Yet, I encouraged them to try different ways of writing their ideas that could reflect their double cultures. Like, I had them double write - between the lines - so that two ideas were running at the same time. I wonder, at what point can I take them out of the realm of traditional academic work - which I am obligated to teach them - and let the richness of their double lives be written as they make sense of these topics. I always feel drawn back into what must be - its still too much of a risk - I wouldn’t have any idea how to mark a different way of writing and that wouldn’t be fair. At the same time, I don’t want to perpetuate that world so much that it takes the life out of their words. It’s a difficult place to be in.

In acts of interpretation, there is still a security in remaining complicit in what we know and its acceptance in broader realms of educational practices. In the good name of ethicality, their concern with the impact of their practices and a marking-for-life paradoxically returns them to “accurate measurements and control”, perpetuating that which can no longer claim ethical and moral grounds (Lynch, 1997). Contested sites of undecidability loosened the hold of ethics to expose obligation and its performative, risky practices. These sites seem to invoke an exploration of a space of generative possibilities in coming-to-know what it means to write for English language learners. Yet a final decision, enacted in the-name-of-the-good - in attempts to erase a riskiness that could not be erased - teachers returned to a position that presumed their expertise and control; the judgment became an effect of teacher positionality on integrative evaluation practices that had become a concealed but risky
Effects of Positionalities

As stated elsewhere in this dissertation, dilemmatic discourses were most commonly found in the pre-conditions of decision-making practices. Hence, my specific interest is in the effects of positionalities on teachers’ evaluative practices prior to decision-making. In probing those effects, I bring in conversations (reflecting-in-action) I had with students while they wrote essays that were to be judged as a way of seeking insight into the second question of the inquiry concerned with relations - in this case, relations between writer and evaluator. I address positionalities through disruptions in the discourses of teachers, students and the researcher. In risking those disruptions, I am forcefully reminded of the ways I may remain fixed in theoretical stances I claim to work against. Such “jarring” disruptions leave my work open to unexpected discourses of teachers’ and students’ living practices.

On Integrative Evaluation Practices

As already discussed, disruptions in the discourse data (enacted as contested positionalities in the pre-conditions of decision-making) seem to indicate multiple and motile traces within all three meta-texts until a decision was made. Then, in the act of decision-making, a dominant position of the technical imaginary became evident. In decisions of a mark or a grade, teachers consistently separated language and content, although intuitively they suspected that it was an act of distortion that concealed something much more complex. Before giving a grade, teachers frequently sought clarification of the writer’s intentionality, evidence of assumptions of an autonomous text. Overriding decisions of how to address relations of language/content and literacy concerns was the obvious mandate to evaluate the essays. Given the legacy that evaluation has been understood within a predominately ends-means (technical) position and was the primary thrust of the activity, there is evidence that that particular orientation influenced how language/content relations and literacy were enacted. For example, one of the first questions raised by teachers in numerous collaborative discussions was, “how should we mark the
response to this question?” knowing that in the end a number or grade had to ‘mark’ the text. As a presumed end point, the focus was on developing a means to reach it. Once a number or grade was agreed upon, teachers asked questions of themselves and others in seeking efficient ways to think about language/content relations and literacy concerns for evaluative purposes. The need to mark the text seemed to force teachers to separate language and content, and in so doing, drove them to an analytical idea of language. Reflecting-in-action, teachers commented, “five marks for language and five for content”, “I’m looking for complete sentences that are grammatically accurate” and “under language I’ve listed subject-verb agreement, plurals, and article use”; they made decisions about language that seem focussed on surface errors. Language was claimed to be those discrete and detached bits and pieces that could be tracked and evaluated. Similarly, the need for a sense of order and objectivity in judgments represented by ‘marks’ seemed to influence teachers to read the text as if it were autonomous, evidence of another trace of the historical legacy of technical and instrumental reason. Not only has the technical position been privileged in the discourse evidence of the meta-texts explored, but its strongest advocate, meta-texts of evaluation - as an end point to the purpose of the activity - seems to effect positionalities of the other two meta-texts.

Although the technical imaginary seemed to dominate all three meta-texts, as has been argued throughout this dissertation, individuals do not dwell completely in one and only one position. This is partly because no one position is a complete and closed system; traces of other positions are always evident and often in conflict (Billig et al., 1988). As well, as individuals interact, their positions seem to shift, constantly being (re)constituted in discursive exchanges with others. Fragmented traces of other positions surface as ambiguous or contrary themes in disruptions and “stuck places.” For example, discourse evidence of decisions to separate language and content for marking purposes were foreshadowed by positional movements between “I know language creates meaning, they are not really separate things” and “in order to count my marks, I had to separate them.” Other comments reflected the ambiguity of incomplete systems,

Reflecting-on-action: teachers’ comment after the marking was complete (ACCOUNT)
• I know they [language and content] work together in some way but I don’t
know how to talk about it. So, I can be clearer and explain the criteria to students better if I separate them. That’s what I did in class and they seemed to indicate it made sense to them. Its only when the message is really unclear that I get stuck in trying to determine if the language is the problem or the student’s knowledge of the topic makes the meaning unclear.

Reflecting-on-action: teachers’ comment after the marking was complete (ACCOUNT)

•I’m always reading into what they write. I know I should only pay attention to the words on the page but I can’t help myself. Sometimes structurally well-written essays are not so interesting. The ones with a few gaps in meaning often spark a response in me as I read. I wish I could give a higher mark to those ones but I don’t know how to justify it when the other is obviously grammatically correct and offers the material covered in the course.

Uncertainty involving language and content integration in the first quote and the role of textual interpretation in the second quote were a place of discomfort for some teachers. It was a space of varying, incomplete, and ambiguous positional traces that played out in the pre-conditions of decision-making. Undecidability, “underlining the difficulty” of decision-making, was a constant feature. Recurring contested themes in the discourse evidence of indecision, involving at least two positions in each of the three meta-texts, are presented here as questions: 1) are language and content relations integrated or separated? 2) is textual meaning autonomous or social (interpretative)? and 3) are evaluation purposes means-end or subjective and relational? Emerging dominant positions seemed to establish binary or opposing relations. Yet, the space of undecidability was much more complex, involving multiple positional traces of contested meanings and situated selves (teachers and learners in specific contexts) in entangled relations within and between meta-texts. ‘Stuck’ in the felt messiness of these contested spaces, in the end teachers seemed to be drawn to axioms of instrumental reason that presumed to restore order to the purpose of the activity - leaving a justifiable ‘mark’ in indelible ink.

On Teacher/Researcher Practices

Where are the learners in all of this? What has taken place for the texts teachers mark to be written in particular ways? In the space between creating the prompt and marking the composition, learners write. Writing activities in the classroom seem to focus on interventions that support revision and editing practices. Little time is given to hear the
writers’ experiences of writing. For purposes of briefly exploring this area, I share a
difficult story of my experience as a teacher/researcher. It is a story of the disruption and
its effects of one student’s comment on my practices as a researcher and an evaluator of her
writing. An ELL, while writing a composition to be judged, commented,

Reflecting-in-action: ELL commenting while writing an essay (ACCOUNT)
*I try to write like my teacher. I want her correct everything. But my
Japanese is big problem. I can’t get rid of it.

I listened to her dwell in a space of difficulty - writing in-between East and West - and, I
struggled to make sense of her ‘problem’. This student, like many of the young adults
studying at this international Canadian college for Japanese nationals, is required to write
compositions in subject-area courses. As a regular activity in classrooms at this college,
Japanese learners engage in writing content and are guided by well-intentioned pedagogical
interventions aimed at ‘fixing’ their ability in order to write well in English what they know
- a pedagogical position based on unquestioned assumptions of its possibility. Her claim of
her L1 being a problem that could not be ‘gotten rid of’ was an unexpected disruption for
me; it went against my tendency to view writing problems as something that could be fixed.
She continued,

Always I want say different than what is in my English only.
Japanese not good in English work, I know, but maybe I
can’t help. I know how to cover my Japanese with English
little. But I can’t cover enough. You know, sometime I want
my Japanese heard. I get confusing.

The disruption alerted me to the problem of difference as it related to writing in English for
Japanese students. Turning to contrastive rhetorics as an established approach to exploring
L2 writing, I began structuring her problem as a question of difference. What I did not
question at the time was my positionality as the researcher or the positionalities of the
teachers who were teaching her/him to write content well.

Perceiving ELL writing content to be a complex experience, my questions asked
about difference: differences between English and Japanese languages and cultures; and of
the different assumptions Japanese writers make. Contrastive rhetoric, which claims
interdisciplinary and multidimensional approaches and asserts that language and writing are
cultural phenomena (Connor, 1996), seemed to offer promise as a method. Kaplan’s
(1966) early work documented comparative studies of writing styles and patterns that began with a troubling, simplistic view of difference. Others (Liebman, 1992; Purves & Hawisher, 1990) since have argued for a broader scope, recognising the complexity of engaging in contrastive rhetoric studies. Here I comment on a central positionality of authorial texts of contrastive rhetoric by exploring the notion of difference within writing, language, and culture. (For a review of contrastive rhetoric, see Connor, 1996.)

My initial interest in difference was embedded in a constructivist approach of contrastive rhetoric that “emphasises the different assumptions that writers from different groups and cultures bring with them” (Connor, 1996, p. 79). In particular, Swale’s (1990) notion of discourse community and his work in genre analysis was influential in addressing difference through context and situation in various models of writing for ELLs. More recently, Johns’ (1997) contribution to notions of academic literacy highlighted the importance of text, role, and context in explorations of difference. Whereas earlier studies of contrastive rhetoric seemed to have ignored content, more current work in academic settings has begun to acknowledge a need to ‘control’ content in inquiry practices (Connor, 1996).

In the classroom, I posed questions to the writers as we conversed about writing, language, and culture while they were engaged in pedagogic activities of content-based writing. As I listened for the “different assumptions that writers from different groups and cultures bring with them” (Connor, 1996, p. 79), I began to map out categories of cultural assumptions for Japanese and for English. My position claimed at least two primary assumptions: 1) that cultures are distinct and knowable and, once known, 2) that teaching or learning to write well means reducing or erasing traces of the L1, in this case Japanese, in learners’ writing. Determined to access the different assumptions Japanese bring to their English writing, I interpreted the data haunted by the words of the learner in my class. How would I categorise her English writing if she claimed her Japanese was ever present? Is it possible that her writing could no longer claim a space of either English or Japanese? How could her writing be understood as both ‘Japanese and English’? In questioning my own stance, I realised I still remained entrenched in a central, modernist position of contrastive rhetoric.

The notion that content could be and needed to be controlled was, for me, a disruption that went against my tendency to view language as constituting content (culture, world view) - an example of a conflicting position and its potential effects of researcher interpretation.
rhetoric that seemed to advocate universal categories of language and culture; full of promise in its interdisciplinary and multidimensional approaches, it seemed to remain limited within a Cartesian dualism of self and other\textsuperscript{84}, replete with deterministic and reductionist tendencies (Kubota, 1999, Spack, 1997; Zamel, 1997).\textsuperscript{85}

Language, in Cartesian terms, assumes the possibility of a technical purity which, according to Spack (1997), “assumes a standard that measures what is different against what is not different” (p. 766). Derrida (1998) in Monolingualism of the Other muses that,

\begin{quote}
We only ever speak one language . . .
(yes, but)
We never speak only one language . . .
\end{quote}

Derrida considers the impurity of language, a position different from one that views language as a tool that, if written well, can bring closure to meaning. He suggests that learning ‘one’ language may be a continual process of being and becoming a language in translation. Post-colonial writer Trinh’s (1992) work, long considered by publishers to be “not good writing because it’s too impure” (p. 138), was so hybridised by colonial invasion “that [it] would not fit.” She speaks of colonised acts and imposed wor(l)ds wherein “dominated and marginalised people have been socialised to see always more than one point of view” (p. 149). She repositions language and culture so that they are not universal categories of East or West, but hybridisations of East and West - a positionality wherein writing has the potential to inscribe meanings beyond writers’ knowing (Felman, 1987) and a metonymic space of difference that Aoki (1996) invokes in his work entitled “In the Midst of Doubled Imaginaries”. Could this stance be a space in which Zamel (1997) calls for transcultural understandings of difference and that claims the necessity of involving “students in the messiness and struggle of authentic work that begins, values and builds on their own ways with words” (p. 343)? A possible repositioning of language,

\textsuperscript{84} Smith (1999), claiming to be “a person formed by both Eastern and Western traditions” (p. 12), alerts us to “the snares and entrapments of Self and Other thinking” (p. 25) in his “East/West” inquiry of identity within acts of pedagogy, as does Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997) in their work on “idealised native speakers, reified ethnicities and classroom realities” (p. 543)

\textsuperscript{85} The current debate surrounding Spack’s (1997) and Zamel’s (1997) critique of contrastive rhetoric within the context of English teaching parallels questions raised in my own research regarding positionality (see Carson, 1998; Nelson, 1998; Spack, 1998a, 1998b). Following Spack’s and Zamel’s work, I argue that in research practices contrastive rhetoric fails to acknowledge the embodiment of teachers’ and students’ living experiences - a writing-as-living in the two-folds of languages and cultures. Writing so re-positioned becomes texts of the planned and the living (the unplanned).
culture, and writing emerges in ELL inscriptions in which “language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries. It speaks itself against [their] will...” (hooks, 1994, p. 167).

Undoubtedly, ELL writers occupy a messy and difficult space of difference. How teachers and researchers make sense of it is effected by their positionalities, which are themselves complex and incomplete. Claiming that research is constituted in living practices, I heed Jardine’s words and think of difference within the potentiality of a generative space, alive with possibilities that “re-collect the contours and textures of life we are already living” without “render[ing] such a life our object” (Jardine, 1992, p. 116). ELLs’ content-based writing is much more than a technical problem requiring a technical fix. I have begun to see difficulties within ELL writing as complex, interrelated, often ambiguous, often contested practices we have been entrusted to improve. To teach language as an analytic process in the name of clarity is to be “betrayed by metaphysics” (Caputo, 1987, p. 1). Heeding Santos’ (1992) call for a radical pedagogy, ELL writing and its evaluation becomes a tensioned hermeneutic activity wherein traces of technological and other discourses both mediate and complicate our valuing of writing, language, and culture relations.

For me, the English language learner’s ‘problem’ is a performative disruption within an embodied, generative curriculum (Doll, 1993). As a teacher/researcher, the effects of the re-positioning worked to renew ELL inscriptions to their “original difficulty” and claim ELL written content as “that [which] cannot be mastered but only lived with well” (Jardine, 1992, p. 117). Positionalities taken by teachers and researchers engaged in contrastive rhetoric is helpful in constituting general cultural categories of writing difference. But that is not enough. The re-positioning of teachers and researchers toward a radical hermeneutics of difference opens ELL inscriptions to the possibility of performative movements between particular hybridisations of writing and broad cultural categories - not as a movement from one to the other, as the notion of mastery might suggest, but in a motility that re-positions difference to acknowledge the interplay of multiple traces of positionalities at work.

I have briefly explored the premise that positionalities effect inquiry practices. Positionality as a movement between various stances resists the assumption that fixed
standpoints or systems of ‘truth’ exist. The way teachers and researchers ask what it means for ELLs to write should reflect an examination of the what (as) and of where (in) that underlie methods of evaluation and inquiry and its interpretations. I believe we, as teachers and researchers, are obligated to acknowledge our tendencies to particular ways of making sense of our work and to reconsider their fragmented instabilities. A turn to radical hermeneutics may help us enter the living practices of evaluation and research and dwell in spaces of difficult, disparate discourses such as those found in the complexity of ELL inscriptions and difference.

**Middle Ways: “Living With Them Well”**

The significance of the struggle of integrative evaluation first became evident to me in 1993 when a group of teachers gathered as a curriculum team to collaborate within well-intentioned purposes of providing consistent and fair evaluation practices toward ELL essays. Using discursive instances on integrative evaluation to explore assumptions that underlie varied opinions and actions, I have come-to-know the difficulty of integrative evaluation differently. Teachers seemed to struggle in the tensions between their awareness of a formal orientation focussed on surface errors of grammar at the sentence level and sensibilities of functional relations at the level of discourse. It was my hope that this work in language and content evaluation would contribute to a re-positioning of pedagogical considerations in what I saw as a necessary shift from formal to functional linguistics in that linked to functional linguistics is a position that claims relations of language and content integration within broader relational practices (Mohan, 1986). It was a plan I embraced in the initial stages of this project and one that continues to be central to my work.

At a time well into my studies, I was introduced to notions of ambiguity and difficulty through fissured texts of Smith (1999) and Jardine (1993, 1998). Jardine’s reference to Caputo’s (1987) work on radical hermeneutics exposed me to Caputo’s (1993) position on the limits of ethics and the promise of “undecidability.” While musing with Caputo’s thoughts against ethics, I re-read Lather’s (1998) account of aporetic sites in “the context of doing qualitative research, particularly the context of feminist ethnography”, for her a “praxis of stuck places”, that alludes to the ambiguity and difficulty of “undecidability” and underlines the complexity and struggle of living practices. This led
me to re-consider the significance of difficulty of "undecidability" within the activity of integrative evaluation.

While I do believe the ideas presented in the last 168 pages of this text are of significance, the question still remains, "where do we go from here?" From the beginning, I have not promised solutions to a problem, nor answers to a question. What I did promise was an exploration of the difficulties in instances of integrative evaluation practices and to that, I believe, I have responded. However, throughout this metonymic journey, as a teacher/researcher I could not help but engage in a re-conceptualisation of an imaginary that decentered the technical and "underlined the difficulty" of a "wholly human endeavour." The motility of my positionalities realised disparate discourses that enacted a difference in the way I lived integrative evaluation in my classroom practices. What I will offer is the early stages of a wary and nervous reconceptualisation and brief description of one activity and its evaluation that I am currently exploring with English language learners I teach.

Creating a new imaginary of integrative evaluation for me entails living in the borders between systems, a space where neither system operates unto itself but is instead a space wherein one system implicates and is implicated by another. In this imaginary of multiple positionalities fragmented and motile, writing and reading are embodied, social acts of communication wherein autonomous meaning is troubled, can-never-be-sure, because of a 'third' embodied text invoked between reader and writer.\textsuperscript{86} Valued is the writer's ability to offer enough bounded meaning so the reader may enter and then dwell in the performativity of a textured 'third space'.\textsuperscript{87} In this space, an essay, with its language/content relations understood as words and grammar, is first considered in terms of its bounded meaning (purpose, intentionality) as a whole discourse rather than a meaning of a word. Students work with the meaning of the text as a whole and consider how that meaning is constructed and what words and grammar play a role in the construction of that meaning. Attention is first given to the word as part of the resources for constructing meaning in a discourse rather than the word as a part of the dictionary or thesaurus. It is an

\textsuperscript{86} Here, I imagine the first text to be the writer's, the second text to be the reader's reading of the first text, and the third text to be a text of hybridity that is neither completely the writer's nor reader's text but a textured tension that performs between what is written and what is read.

\textsuperscript{87} I am reminded of a conversation between Bhabha and Rutherford (1990) in which Bhabha articulates a 'third space' of hybridity and difference.
orientation to meaning as an effect of language. The dominant orientation to
language/content relations relies on a questionable assumption that vocabulary, grammar,
and discourse should be treated separately. However, understanding words in terms of
their relations in discourse opens to new possibilities. A meta-text of evaluation at the
college where I teach is structured such that I must submit a numerical mark for purposes of
transcript and GPA (grade point average); it is a system of necessary illusions that is
currently entrenched in the day to day operations of many educational institutions.
Working within that system, I have the responsibility of creating the process through which
judgment is determined and then represented in a number. Part of that process involves the
student as a way of accessing a textured ‘third space’. Although I maintain some
conventional assessment practices, I am trying alternatives that explore the valuing of an
embodied text. In so doing, judging an embodied text has become, for me, an aporetic site
where the quest is for the teacher and student to judge together and “live with [the
judgment] well.”

I think of the difficulties, or stuck places, students encounter in their writing as
important points of learning that should be marked. The difficulties mark their quest to
work through the struggle of writing meaning and to find middle ways out. Over a term of
three months, I asked the students to mark in footnotes the stuck places in their writing and
to explain briefly their way out of their difficulty. Thinking they were humouring a dis­
oriented teacher, they obliged. Whether footnotes contained comments of grammar and
word choice or concerns of cultural hybridity and its effect on meaning, some - not all -
began to use their undecidabilities as a generative space of learning. Their obligation to me
and mine to them created an opportunity to together address difficulty and explore its
evaluation. Knowing each mark had to be justified, I considered three criteria-in-flux for
purposes of evaluation. First, in the text above the footnotes, I explored how students used
their language resources to establish a meaning of the whole discourse and how words and
grammar were used to realise that meaning. Second, in their footnotes of stuck places, I was
interested in whether students took middle ways or remained in the difficulty. Third, I was

Appendix 5 offers a discourse analysis of several ELL compositions using this approach to evaluate their
words and grammar to constitute meaning. Through this analysis, the teacher can see the resources (words
and grammar) the learner is using to construct meaning (purpose, intention) as a whole discourse.
curious to know if a third text was co-constructed in conversation (intertextual negotiations) with the writer that was different from the first and second. These questions guided my obligation to the student in fluid ways and were re-written each time this writing task was offered, an evaluation-in-flux, an evaluation influenced by radical hermeneutics. The mark was not attempt to represent ‘pure presence’ but instead reflect a value that each writer and I discussed over a period of time implicated by our values and established as one that we could both “live with well”. It was a (re)turn to the promise of assidere (assessment meaning to sit beside) as a participatory endeavour entangled in subjective positionings between teacher and student. In sharing these ideas, my intuitive comment is that the promise of difficulty in evaluative practices is limited only by the insistence of a necessary, but illusory, numerical mark.

Ending Right in the Middle of Things

Undecidability, as a place of difficulty in integrative evaluation practices, has been central to this inquiry and explored primarily through discursive instances of teachers’ practices. In considering the idea of difficulty as an embodied, generative text of undecidabilities, I was alerted to the possibility that “we are the language we speak” (Aoki, 1993a, p. 88). Therefore, discourses became the primary source of evidence for exploring living instances of integrative evaluation. Using discourse, one aspect of the analysis attempted to trace positionalities in practices of teachers engaged in integrative evaluation. Categories of reflecting-on-action (accounts), reflecting-in-action (accounts, commentary and/or acts), and actions (acts) were used with the discourse. In so doing, I argued that accounts, those discourses explaining the background of immediate action, contain insight into theoretical understandings of practices; commentaries, articulated in action, offer further insight into theoretical understandings; and acts, as moments of decision-making. Of particular interest were discourses troubled by undecidability. Reflecting-in-action was a category that seemed to locate the difficulty and provide a way to explore undecidabilities, replete with contrary themes and fragmented ambiguities, as “tenuous and delicate” interactions among accounts, commentaries and acts. I have found it a helpful approach with discourse that is worthy of consideration in future methods of inquiry.

As this project unfolded, I became increasingly aware of the dominance of the
technical in its attempt to control and conceal difficulty. Under a technical hold, teachers seem to deny their own experiences. In pursuit of a mastery of evaluative practices, they became weary and were often “stopped in [their] tracks”. Reiterations of Smith (1999) now hauntingly return to ask, have “we inevitably suffer[ed] the cultural diseases of our time, . . . then . . . reproduce them in our children [students] to the degree we have not healed ourselves” (p. xiii)? Had the technical become a disease that, through our weariness and immobility from doing integrative evaluation, we could not rid ourselves of and, instead, have become complicit in its perpetuation? In attempting to distance ourselves from the difficulty of writing and its judgment, compositions become lifeless, begin to decompose and soon have nothing left to say. Both difficult and worthwhile, integrative evaluation as embodied practices cannot be reduced to understanding language as surface errors and analytical forms isolatable from content. In a living system, as I believe language is, no linguistic form can be detached from the relations that write meaning.

Risking disruptions, as Miller contends, was a way to be alerted to the ruptures, breaks, and unexpected discourses that “constitute living practices” and effect persistent instabilities in positionalities that sought to close and conceal the difficulties of life. Instead, a re-positioning of the difficulties offers useful interpretations of the what and where of difficult practices. My intent is to return integrative evaluation “to an openness to the complexity of relations among things and people” (Sumara & Carson, 1997, p. xv) and “to the original, serious and difficult interpretive play in which we live our lives together” (Jardine, 1992, p. 124).
Postscript

Rather than serving the academy, accommodating it, and being appropriated by it, we ought to work with others to engage in an enterprise that is far more dynamic, complex, collaborative and intellectually engaging, an enterprise whereby we and our students contribute to, complicate, and transform the academy. This is, after all, the way all cultures, including academic ones, come to be, continually re-created by those who enter and the languages they bring with them.

Vivian Zamel, *Questioning Academic Discourse*

If we keep on speaking the same language together, we’re going to reproduce the same history.

Luce Irigaray, *This sex which is not one*
an invitation to keep the conversation going . . .

the scholarly struggle of my work
inscribes a colloquy
with those i read,
dialogue with,
listen to -
voices fissured
into the two-fold uncertainties
of my inscriptions.

coming-to-know this dissertation
as academic discourse
was an invitation to live
in complex and difficult expectations
of communities of scholars,
to strive for intellectual engagement,
to make a difference.

i invite the reader
to enter my colloquy
not to bring the conversation to a close
but to begin anew in
openings made in difficult
textured metonymic moments
that knowingly play in the field of
what is said and what is not.

my words struggle
in their historical desire to close,
be finished with, bring to an end, meaning
while knowing they
hang precariously to meaning
not fully understood
by me, by others,
and always saying more
than i could ever know.

i ask, how will the reader know what i mean?
‘if your text is so clear there will be nothing more to say,
it will no longer concern us’, the scholar said.
‘give it life
invite a conversation
and keep it going
through the struggle of your work’,
through this text of difference.
As I reflect on this text of difference, I am reminded that my work - braided in roles of educator, inquirer, and writer - has always been grounded in direct pedagogic experience. Mediating these grounded, intertextual, complex strands, offered engagement in intellectual struggle that often led to insightful understandings both for my roles as educator, inquirer, and writer and for instances of integrative evaluation. I now look back on the process of writing this project and attend to particular tensions that contributed to the ‘agon’ of dissertation writing.

In the classroom, the lesson plan - a tool that would lead to competent teaching so I had been told - for me was problematic as I seemed to frequently want to slip from the plan. Though I recognised the need for a plan, and could argue its existence in my head, my hesitancy to comply with the details of such typical classroom conventions often led to venturesome pedagogic experiences I would not have thought possible if I had stayed with the plan. A turn to hermeneutics helped me to understand that my ‘slippages’ could be experienced as generative spaces of difference. Yet, it is as a writer that my wilful disobedience has posed the greatest struggle. I learned early in the process of doing academic writing that to qualify as a legitimate practice, a precise outline based on a detailed research proposal is required prior to the writing act. While seemingly obvious support to the writer, I found myself wanting to both comply with and drift from these predictable structures that were there to guide me. My writing, initially scaffolded by a priori plans, began to shift and change in ways that challenged the very structures I had imposed. It was being and becoming a text of difference.

As author of the current text to which this writing contributes, I continue to question a separatist’s position of language/content relations in terms of what it means to write and then judge that writing. In the process of this inquiry, the ambiguities and inter-relations involved in what it means to judge academic discourse and how it is understood, especially texts that are doubled in languages and cultures, became very apparent. As I re-wrote instances of integrative evaluation, I was doubled in my own living practices, experiencing writing academic discourse as I constructed my knowing through the language processes I engaged in. The very concerns I raised regarding presumed reductionist and formulaic patterns of academic discourse, I found myself acting out in tense performativity - as I
struggled to write the text, the text struggled to write me.

Writing as an academic, I tried to anticipate what my audience wanted to hear in order to reproduce those acceptable truths, while imitating the gestures and re/turning to the rituals of the academy, not having enough confidence in my own ideas and how they might be written. It was more than using the discipline-specific language, norms, and conventions, the texts of authorities on academic writing seem to imply. Expectations of academic discourse I had come to know through prior experiences, that led to the writing of a dissertation required for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of British Columbia, became a theoretical framework and instructional model - the orderly adherence to stating the problem, reviewing the literature, claiming the methodology, generalising from the findings, and summarising the conclusion (often presumed to be the solution/answer) - that for me oversimplified the understanding of my academic work, reduced it to a fixed idea that did not represent my experiences. With this (mis)information firmly in hand, I began to write, as this was how I understood work gets done at the university. Yet, early into the project I felt a discomfort in fitting my experience into a structure that seemed not to fit. I began to explore the dissertation work of others, and soon came to realise that there is not a ‘discourse community’ of the university; that academic discourse is not unitary; and, that the model instructing my thinking at that point was a dominant frame with a firm hold on writers such as me.

Assuming that there was one academic discourse I should adhere to, I neglected to attend to the full complexity of the particular gathering of particular teachers and students of which I was a part. Silent assumptions of academic writing as a uniform set of norms and conventions seemed to have convincingly crossed my threshold and, until that silence was broken, I struggled to gain membership into ‘the’ presumed academic community that was ‘out there’; the one to which I thought I wanted to ‘belong’. Once I understood ‘discourse community’ as culture - that the community itself was subject to continual reshaping as members entered and altered its terms (Zamel, 1993) - I realised that I needed to acknowledge my histories and those of others, as they were unavoidably being brought to

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89 Through my experiences of writing this dissertation, I am now wary of the article ‘the’ and its definitive and determinative work. In this example, I am questioning how the ‘the’ works to allegedly situate the noun it fronts - problem, literature, methodology, findings, conclusion - in a space of certainty and fixedness, and ask, what has been covered up, concealed, in order for the ‘the’ to be so sure of itself? 176
each discussion, reading and writing task I undertook towards the work of this project. I began to realise that these language processes could only be understood in terms of the contexts in which they occur. For me, the context of my writing included my committee members, the possible but as yet unknown examiners, other readers of my text I hoped to engage, the field in which I situated my text, and the specific topic. My initial silence and compliance to an academic discourse I thought I knew, confined my own engagement in coming to know the full range of writing within the context I had entered. Now aware of the language processes that helped to shape those regulations, I sought ways to enter the community while retaining my own voice - a kind of dialectical interplay of my voice and other voices of presumed authority. By the time I had written Chapter Three, my stance had shifted from writing to ‘serve’ the academy to writing to ‘change’ the academy (Zamel, 1993).

Caught in the disjuncture between the modern practices of academic discourse and my own experiences of writing and inquiry, I now write more interpretively than prescriptively, while recognising that traces of both permeate this text. It is a text-as-process and it acknowledges constant re-writing of me, the writer, and of those who have influenced my journey.

Arguing that formulaic assumptions of academic discourse can confine and restrict, and perhaps even instruct, one to write topics in particular ways, I have sought different instances of dissertations as a way of coming-to-know how academic discourse can be understood. Working with scholars that value intellectual activity foremost and who are not fully comforted by the conventional and arbitrary signs of academic discourse, offer their expertise in support of a text that may push at the boundaries of conformity. They invite my voice to be visible, woven into a dialectical interchange that has the potential to both trouble and engage the reader. As my context reshaped what it means to write academic discourse, so too were my preconceived assumptions of academic discourse thoughtfully re-altered.

I view this text of difference as an instance of academic writing. Those that read it will use it to build on their experiences of reading other instances of academic writing as a way of coming-to-know how academic discourse can be understood to be. It is an invitation
to conversations on the rich relations of literacy, evaluation, and language/content integration invoked in ambiguity. It is an invitation to keep the conversation going through the living moments of familiar instances of the work that we, as educators and scholars, do.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Appendix 1

Educational Mandate
Educational Mandate

The educational mandate, as stated in curriculum premises and program goals, is reflected in all curricula across programs. It provides a foundation for programs that are designed for students who aspire to broaden and deepen their global perspective and work towards becoming world citizens in the 21st century and is supported by the Mission statement of the College.

Program Goals

The goals, as outlined below, are based on this college’s commitment to academic excellence.

**International Studies - Two Year Program**

The goals of the Two Year Program are for students to:

1. develop a knowledge base and critical thinking skills through a core of common coursework in multi-cultural and current issues;
2. develop a global perspective through studies and experiences that increase global awareness, understanding and responsibility;
3. develop fundamental skills and knowledge in a chosen major/field;
4. increase competency in English through integrated studies in and out of the classroom;
5. extend personal growth by developing
   a) self-direction
   b) a sense of community service
   c) a responsibility to the working and living environment

**International Relations - Four Year Program**

The goals of the Four Year Program are for students to:

1. develop a knowledge base and critical thinking skills through a core of common coursework in international studies;
2. develop a global perspective through studies and experiences that increase global awareness, understanding and responsibility;
3. develop skills and knowledge in a chosen major/field;
4. develop upper intermediate competency in English through integrated studies in and out of the classroom;
5. extend personal growth by developing
   a) a creative and aesthetic appreciation
   b) self-direction and a commitment to life-long learning
   c) an understanding of interdependence, a sense of community service, and a responsibility to the working and living environment.
Statement of Curriculum Premises

The following premises are based on the assumption that learning is an integrative process to which each student brings a rich background and a unique approach, and in which the student must participate actively and take responsibility for his or her learning. Underlying the premises is the understanding that,

1. language is learned through the expansion of the students’ knowledge base and development of their process skills.
2. the challenges facing our world indicate that for any knowledge and skills to serve citizens of the twenty-first century well that knowledge and skill must incorporate a globalist perspective.
3. assessment is an integral part of curriculum design and teaching and learning.

Influences on learning

Students’ have their own learning style and rate.

Students’ learning is affected by their cultural background and first (native) language.

Students’ learning is influenced by the new cultural setting.

Language learning

Students learn language by using language to learn meaningful content.

Students learn both oral and written language through a holistic or integrated and systematic process rather than by studying isolated skills.

Students learn language and content by interacting with other students, faculty, staff, and community members in meaningful activities.

Students learn language and content by direct involvement in natural contexts such as social, physical and cultural activities.

The learning process

Students learn by setting goals, taking responsibility, planning, following through on courses of action, and dealing with the consequences.

Students learn by taking risks in new learning situations.

Students learn by engaging in a self-evaluation process.

Students learn by applying appropriate learning strategies to given tasks.

Students make greater commitments to learning when they contribute to the development of these learning experiences.
Developing a globalist perspective

Students develop a globalist perspective by studying about and interacting with people from other cultures.

Students develop a globalist perspective by studying global conditions and current issues.

Students develop a globalist perspective by reflecting on their own and others value perspective.

Assessment

Assessment procedures display for the students the expectations that the College has for their learning.

Assessment procedures require that objectives, criteria, and standards be specified in advance of teaching and learning.

Assessments relate to program goals: students' attitudes, their understanding and application of learning strategies, their cognitive and linguistic performances, their growth in understanding and knowledge, and their personal growth.

Students benefit by taking part in a broad range of activities which involve assessment, such as, oral presentations, research projects, quizzes, standardized language tests, performance tests, aesthetic creations, or reflective journals.

Students benefit by participation in self-assessment and program assessment.

Students warrant specific feedback from instructors, peers, and the community when the feedback can be carefully and thoughtfully given.

Students, over time, have the right to realize or understand how their growth in global understanding, their linguistic and academic achievement, and their personal growth compares with graduates of international high schools, junior colleges, and four-year colleges.

Influences on thinking

Students need to practise critical and creative think skills in order to develop them.

Students' dispositions to engage in thinking processes are influenced by their cultural backgrounds.
ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE
A TWO YEAR PLAN
APRIL, 1994 TO MARCH 1996

The goal of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) is to work with faculty to establish clear instructional objectives, and standards, in curricula. The following plan identifies large and small group activities that work towards that goal.

Please note: This plan depends on the availability of human resources in leadership roles (e.g. Curriculum Heads, Academic Committees).

STRUCTURE OF PLAN: Curriculum Teams and Faculty Meetings

PART A - Small group: curriculum teams

Goals:
1. to further clarify, for common understanding, learning outcomes (criteria) as stated in curriculum scope and sequence
2. to develop curriculum activities and teaching strategies to support students' progress towards, and beyond, established learning outcomes

For each annual course offered, a scope and sequence for that course will identify criteria relating to learning outcomes for the development of: language and content; attitudes towards a globalist perspective; and skills and strategies. Please note that content refers to subject matter or knowledge that includes higher order thinking. Evaluated student target tasks will also be included in the scope and sequence.

The Process

• faculty* participate in curriculum teams (see below).

• identify ASC members to take support roles with specific curriculum teams - the ASC member's role is to provide support (not leadership) to the curriculum team to assist them in reaching common understanding of criteria and developing activities and strategies to teach criteria.

• the curriculum team meetings will occur at times other than scheduled faculty meetings.

• ASC support member will call the curriculum team together during April CD weeks and together the team will decide the most convenient times to meet during the terms. The curriculum team members will then determine the focus of discussion for each curriculum team meeting.

*Note: This is an expectation of full time faculty on continuous or one year contracts. Part-time temporary faculty are welcome to participate but for them it is an optional activity.
CURRICULUM TEAMS (note: ES is excluded from this grouping and will be supported by ASC through the regular ES meeting structure)

- GS & SI 200
- GS 300
- GS 400
- CCI 200
- Gen CCI 200
- Gen Major 200
- MES 200, 300, 400
- IT 200, 300, 400
- BUS 200, 300, 400
- BMGT 200
- ENV 200
- BSIT 200, TJFL 200

PART B - Large group: faculty working sessions (meetings)

Goals:
3. to establish systematic relationships between criteria across courses within one year of a program or within the same course over three years.
4. to reach common understanding of criteria with the large group.
5. to establish standards for annual courses in both TYP and FYP.

There will be several faculty meetings scheduled throughout the school year, 1994-95. A majority of this time will be used for working sessions that are guided and focussed discussions, including an opportunity to explore new ideas and perspectives, on topics of concern in the area of teaching, learning, evaluation and standards. These sessions will be organized by the members of ASC, with input from faculty, and may include workshops by 'experts' (internal and/or external). Groupings at faculty meetings will vary to ensure discussion opportunities for faculty teaching in courses in one program year as well as for faculty teaching in the same course across years.

The Testing Committee will have an integral role in this plan as both Testing and AS Committees explore the relationship between curriculum activities and testing. These committees will work with faculty to clarify and deepen the understanding of the criteria, and how to evaluate them, essential to successful completion of our programs. The Chairs of these committees will work closely together to involve the Testing Committee in appropriate discussions and faculty working sessions.

This plan is identified as a two year plan. The process is complex and requires time to work through. It is anticipated that the first year will achieve goals 1-4, although goal 2 will continue to be an on-going task. A thorough review of the implementation of this plan will occur with faculty throughout the year but especially in Term III and, with their feedback, a plan for 1995-96 will be developed.

ASC mandate specific to 1994 - 1995:

a. to work with Curriculum Heads in furthering their understanding of curriculum components
b. to clarify and make recommendations regarding content overlap issues
c. to complete a general scope and sequence for each annual course offered
d. to engage in discussions across courses within years and across years in the same course relating to the goal of systematically organizing scope and sequence

The curriculum components that will be the focus of discussion during 1994-95:
- FYP - language and content
- TYP - content and learning strategies and skills
Appendix 3

Handout for First Debriefing Session
Debriefing session #1

Project title: Assessment of language and the assessment of content: compatible discourses?

Researcher: Marylin Low

Date: November 24, 1995

Subject: Making sense of the discourse data

Background

Issues in integrated language and content approaches seem to be surfacing in the area of assessment. What is integrative assessment? Central is the assessment of both language and content - not just assessment in general, not just the assessment of academic writing, not just the assessment of ideas.

In an institution committed to integrative language and content teaching and learning, there is a requirement to do integrated assessment. How does the process work? What is the nature of the process? How do teachers talk about integrated assessment? What assumptions about language and content are encoded in their “talk”?

Programs with second language learners are supposed to facilitate the development of knowledge and skills so that students can express their ideas clearly. This assumes the teaching and learning of language as a signifier of meaning. One issue is the relation of content/expression in students’ essays. Can the students express what they know? Can the assessor interpret what students mean from what they say? This issue is highlighted because they are writing in their second language, however, it is a generic issue for all assessment which uses the evidence of discourse, and indeed for all study of semiotics (sign systems).

A second issue relates to the criteria used for integrative assessment. Are language assessors and subject area assessors assessing the same set of criteria for marking? Are the assessors’ criteria based on a formal view of language (e.g., language as a set of rules) or a functional view of language (e.g., language as a resource for meaning)? Functional linguistics is also concerned with texts rather than sentences, with text/context relations rather than decontextualised texts, and with language as a system for constituting/construing meaning rather than a conduit for thought (Halliday & Martin, 1993:22-3).

A third issue relates to the assessors’ views of integrated assessment. Do they think of integration at the local level or global level (of words/ideas or at the level of genre, for example?) Do their views agree or conflict? In Swales’ (1990:77-82) course on thesis writing for NNSs, the students were “moving towards membership of a chosen discourse community via effective use of established genres within that community”. Is there evidence of a coherent discourse community “possessing” genres, are expert members of this community converging in their judgments?

Inquiry into the models assessors operate with seems to imply a number of assumptions which are incompatible with an integrated approach.

Purpose of study - to explore the processes and perspectives of the assessors of LEP writers to further understand the issues involved in the assessment of written tasks.

Many students with limited English proficiency (LEP) participate in academic courses at the tertiary level that are primarily based on the learning of content. In many of these classes students are required to demonstrate content understanding through written assignments. Teachers are expected to assess the written task by assigning a mark or grade. Grading processes are influenced by teachers’ perspectives of language, of content and of relationships between language and content. What are those processes? What are those perspectives? Can we assume that the discourse of content assessment and of language assessment are compatible and mutually complementary, or disparate discourses?
The context
Assessment of second language writers is explored and interpreted within a Canadian private post-secondary international college setting. All students attending this institution are second language learners studying in a two or four year academic program.

Using interviews and documentation, the researcher interviews teachers to explore their processes and perspectives on assessment. Teachers in different courses (e.g., language courses and content courses) the same course (e.g., multiple sections of one course and more than one teacher teaching those sections) and at different levels (e.g., year two and year four) are participating in this inquiry. Four different sessions involved group discussions (e.g., joint marking sessions, teachers discussing their marking schemes). Current assignments are marked while teachers discuss the process and their perspectives on assessment.

Mapping the points of tension - see attached

Theorizing the Practice - reflections on the discourse data
A. Assessing second language writers
1. I think about the criteria so that it is clear in my mind before I mark. For this question, one point for the introductory sentence that should say ‘Matsuura argues...’ and two points for saying that Japan has done well by others and now it is their moral obligation to give back.
   He's got the idea, that Japan has to give back. What has he done here?
   He didn't say moral obligation but that's what he means. I don't know, let me go back. It's awkwardly written but he's got the idea. Four? Ya, I'll give him four.
   • assumption: criteria can be objective and unchanging
   • actual acts of marking are in conflict with above assumptions

2. For structure, one point for the opening sentence...For content, one point for the identifying the right issue...
   • evidence of text-level as well as sentence and word level attention
   • text analysed from two assessment perspectives, not a single integrated one

3. Your (content) is good but your expression is weak.
   You've included the main points, but there is no concluding sentence.
   Four marks for [structure] and four for content.
   • vocabulary of content is different from vocabulary of language
   • language and content are opposed rather than related

4. I always note the missing 's' at the end of verbs
   we aren't really marking for grammar
   although she didn't really say that, so as the reader I have to assume that's what she meant, yeh I have to fill in the blanks.
   I find it difficult because I know what they are saying, but is it clear? I know what they are saying but maybe that's because I know these students. It's not necessarily very good English.
   • evidence of both formal and functional criteria
   • not used consistently

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The discourse of Language and Content

1. Comments about criteria from teachers individually marking common exam questions:

I'm looking for the understanding of that idea.

...each of these arguments has at least two main details ...I usually leave about one mark for the overall organization, the spelling of key words...

• seems to be an unshared understanding of the phrase 'language and content'

2. I think I know what she means here - not 'remain' but 'maintain a high standard' - ya, now let's see, I'd give her three for the (main ideas) one for the introductory sentence, but there's no conclusion and she's made several grammar errors. I'd give her four out of five.

• the intended meaning is often assumed and the form is sometimes altered
• when this happens the criteria and the mark are implicated

3. Clearly expressed ideas. Remember, when we talk about possible outcomes we need to use 'may' instead of 'will'.

• this seems to be evidence of a different way of thinking about language and content - more holistic - integrated

4. There's something in this sentence I don't like. This is good content though. This is very good. So it's just this one sentence. Oh, let me look back at the others. It could be four or five. I'll give him five.

It doesn't matter how they say it. I just want the idea.

• content most important
• language just a tool
EVALUATING LEP WRITING TASKS IN POST SECONDARY STUDIES:
MAPPING THE PROCESS AND POINTS OF TENSION

1. Prompt is developed.
2. Student responds to prompt.
3. Student turns in writing task for marking.
4. Evaluator establishes, or reconfirms by review, criteria for marking
5. Evaluator reads text.

Marking scheme
Seems to reflect:
- pre-established criteria
- information contained in the prompt

Assigning a mark
- appears to be a recursive process
- involves dilemmas between language and content

Evaluative Comments
- teachers seem to comment on their area of expertise - language or content

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Appendix 4

Handout for Second Debriefing Session
Debriefing session #2

Project: Assessment of language and the assessment of content: compatible discourses?
Researcher: Marylin Low
Date: February 8, 1996
Subject: Making sense of the discourse data

Background
Issues in integrated language and content approaches seem to be surfacing in the area of assessment. What is integrative assessment? Central is the assessment of both language and content - not just assessment in general, not just the assessment of academic writing, not just the assessment of ideas.

In an institution committed to integrative language and content teaching and learning, there is a requirement to do integrated assessment. How does the process work? What is the nature of the process? How do teachers talk about integrated assessment? What assumptions about language and content are encoded in their ‘talk’?

Programs with second language learners are supposed to facilitate the development of knowledge and skills so that students can express their ideas clearly. This assumes the teaching and learning of language as a signifier of meaning. One issue is the relation of content/expression in students’ essays. Can the students express what they know? Can the assessor interpret what students mean from what they say? This issue is highlighted because they are writing in their second language, however, it is a generic issue for all assessment which uses the evidence of discourse, and indeed for all study of semiotics (sign systems).

A second issue relates to the criteria used for integrative assessment. Are language assessors and subject area assessors assessing the same set of criteria for marking? Are the assessors’ criteria based on a formal view of language (e.g., language as a set of rules) or a functional view of language (e.g., language as a resource for meaning)? Functional linguistics is also concerned with texts rather than sentences, with text/context relations rather than decontextualised texts, and with language as a system for constituting/construing meaning rather than a conduit for thought (Halliday & Martin, 1993:22-3).

A third issue relates to the assessors’ views of integrated assessment. Do they think of integration at the local level or global level (of words/ideas or at the level of genre, for example?) Do their views agree or conflict? In Swales’ (1990:77-82) course on thesis writing for NNSs, the students were “moving towards membership of a chosen discourse community via effective use of established genres within that community”. Is there evidence of a coherent discourse community “possessing” genres, are expert members of this community converging in their judgments?

Inquiry into the models assessors operate with seems to imply a number of assumptions which are incompatible with an integrated approach. The findings indicate that there are often at least two different traditions operating and suggest that there are considerable problems involved in integrative assessment.

Purpose of study - to explore the processes and perspectives of the assessors of LEP writers to further understand the issues involved in the assessment of written tasks.

Many students with limited English proficiency (LEP) participate in academic courses at the tertiary level that are primarily based on the learning of content. In many of these classes students are required to demonstrate content understanding through written assignments. Teachers are expected to assess the written task by assigning a mark or grade. Grading processes are influenced by teachers’ perspectives of language, of content and of
relationships between language and content. What are those processes? What are those perspectives? Can we assume that the discourse of content assessment and of language assessment are compatible and mutually complementary, or are they disparate discourses?

**The context**

Assessment of second language writers is explored and interpreted within a Canadian private post-secondary international college setting. All students attending this institution are second language learners studying in a two or four year academic program.

Using interviews and documentation, the researcher interviews teachers to explore their processes and perspectives on assessment. Teachers in different courses (e.g., language courses and content courses) the same course (e.g., multiple sections of one course and more than one teacher teaching those sections) and at different levels (e.g., year two and year four) are participating in this inquiry. Four different sessions involved group discussions (e.g., joint marking sessions, teachers discussing their marking schemes). Current assignments are marked while teachers discuss the process and their perspectives on assessment.

**The school culture**

![Diagram of core pedagogy, structure, and norms]

- Core Pedagogy:
  - Program goals clarify expectation of faculty to expand students' knowledge base and develop language skills.
  - "To integrate language and content" is a stated educational goal.
  - Faculty meetings are viewed as professional development opportunities, e.g., sessions have focused on integrating language and content, learning strategies, thinking skills, testing target tasks, developing a global perspective.

- Structure:
  - Regularly scheduled meeting blocks.
  - Academic Standards Committee provides leadership for establishing and clarifying criteria for assessment.
  - Curriculum Heads lead curriculum teams to deal with scope and sequence concerns.
    - Faculty meet to discuss cross-disciplinary issues.

- Norms:
  - Curriculum teams develop and follow a common course outline and use common assessment tools.
  - Most faculty teach and mark autonomously.
  - Supportive and collaborative.

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EVALUATING LEP WRITING TASKS IN POST SECONDARY STUDIES: MAPPING THE PROCESS AND POINTS OF TENSION

*All courses involved in this inquiry are content oriented; that is, their main purpose is to extend the student's knowledge in a subject area.

1. Prompt is developed.
2. Student responds to prompt.
3. Student turns in writing task for marking.
4. Evaluator establishes, or reconfirms by review, criteria for marking.
5. Evaluator reads text.

Marking scheme
Seems to reflect:
- pre-established criteria
- information contained in the prompt
- some notion of expected standards for students at a particular level
- perspectives and/or intuitive feelings of evaluator about language and content
- perceived needs of students
- what was taught
- what evaluators feel confident to justify

Assigning a mark
Appears to be a recursive process often involving a dilemma of tension, conflict, fragmentation and intuition.
- Is there a dominant voice?
- Does it override discipline voice?
- Does it override language voice?
- Does it override criteria?
- Does it override super voice? (meaning/function)

Evaluator Comments
Seem to reflect an area of expertise or what teachers feel they can defend.

Teacher knowledge - influenced by the school culture, teacher expectations, teacher expertise (background knowledge)

Student knowledge - influenced by cultural understandings, knowledge of subject matter, ability to express subject matter, interpretation of prompt, strategic competencies, understanding of teacher expectations

6. Place mark on paper
7. Write evaluative comments on paper

need to reread text? no
need to reconsider mark? no
Theorizing the Practice - rewritten, collective reflections on the discourse data

Data Coding Key:
1. ( ) indicates the vocabulary of content
2. [ ] indicates the vocabulary of expression
3. statements which include both content and expression, but do not relate them are underlined
4. *statements which relate content and expression are starred * and underlined

Assessing second language writers

1. Assessors want to clearly define criteria on which to base their evaluation. When talking about their marking scheme one assessor commented, 
"I think about the criteria so that it is clear in my mind before I mark. For this question, one point for the [introductory sentence that should say 'Matsuura argues...'] and two points for [saying] that (Japan has done well by others and now it is their moral obligation to give back)."

This seems to be based on the assumption that criteria are concrete, unchanging and exact. Evidence in this inquiry suggests a fluidity, a multiplicity of interactions that result in more than one generic way to express an idea. The same assessor, while in the process of marking, commented, 
He’s got the (idea), that (Japan has to give back). What has he done here?
*He didn’t [say] (moral obligation) but that’s what he (means). I don’t know, let me go back. It’s (awkwardly written) but he’s got the (idea). Four? Ya, I’ll give him four.

2. While they work at text-level as well as sentence and word level, there is no evidence that the assessors use the concept of genre as an integrating element in their assessment.
For [structure], one point for the [opening sentence]. For (content), one point for the identifying the (right issue).

The text is analysed from two assessment perspectives, not a single integrated one. There seems to be no relation made between “issues” and “sentences”, between communicative purpose and textual form, between content and expression.
3. There appears to be a recognised vocabulary of content and a recognised vocabulary of expression used by the assessors.

Content: issues, idea, follows logically, gaps, message, information, argument, points, details.
Expression: sentence, paragraph, words, verbs, grammar, spelling, (good) English

However, often content and expression are opposed rather than related, particularly in joint marking comments following the pattern

*Your (content) is good but your [expression] is weak. You’ve included the (main points), but there is no [concluding sentence].*

It may be that the assessors assume marking schemes that are classifications of opposed elements “*Four marks for [structure] and four for (content)*” rather than marking schemes that are relational and aim at the realisation of meanings.

4. Sometimes assessors use formal criteria:
*I always note that ['s' at the end of verbs],
and sometimes they reject them:
*We aren’t really marking for [grammar].*

Sometimes they ponder the functional relation between content and expression:

*Although she didn’t really [say] (that), so as the reader I have to assume that’s what she (meant), yeh I have to (fill in the blanks).*

*I find it difficult because I know (what) they are [saying]. But is it clear? I know (what) they are [saying] but maybe that’s because I know these students. It’s not necessarily very [good English].*

While assessors show insight into functional problems, there is little evidence of a sustained functional perspective, or a developing convergence.

**The discourse of Language and Content**

1. for many, it has become less, rather than more, clearly defined. Differing perspectives reflect **unshared** understanding of this phrase and the words within it.

Comments about criteria from teachers individually marking common exam questions:

*I’m looking for the understanding of that (idea).*

*...each of these arguments has at least two (main details) ...I usually leave about one mark for the [overall organization, the spelling of key words]...*
2. For some, it has a notion of ambivalence of meanings-a coexistence within the assessor of opposites towards the same situation. Within the phrase itself a duality/polarity is established that seems to easily position the assessor in a model that assumes a fragmented structure. Assessors deconstruct components of the system for evaluative purposes. They often assume the intended meaning and sometimes alter the form. Yet, that deconstruction distorts the ecology of the system. Do the sum of the parts equal, or are they different, from the whole?

Assigning a mark: *I think I know what she (means) here - not 'remain'
but 'maintain a high standard' - ya, now let's see. I'd give her three for the (main ideas) one for the [introductory sentence], but there's no [conclusion] and she's made several [grammar] errors. I'd give her four out of five."

3. For some it seems to be a way of thinking, a disposition, a model that is holistic in nature rather than a set of subskills to be mastered. Within the whole, some of the connected parts are loose, wrongly connected or missing but the system is still working. The whole seems to be a complex system of interrelated components that are ecologically related to make meaning - disturb one component and the meaning may be altered.

Giving an evaluative comment: *Clearly [expressed] (ideas). Remember, when we [talk] about (possible outcomes) we need to [use 'may' instead of 'will'].

4. has a sense of privilege or emphasis on content; often the meaning of language seems to be placed in a secondary position as a mere tool or instrument of communication.

Assigning a mark: *There's something in this [sentence] I don't like. This is good [content] though. This is very good. So it's just this one [sentence]. Oh, let me look back at the others. It could be four or five. I'll give him five.

Clarifying the marking scheme: *It doesn't matter how they [say] it. I just want the (idea).

References

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Appendix 5

Examples of Language/Content Integration in ELL Compositions

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The Prompt

Climatic Change

You have been learning about climatic change. Write a well organized paragraph about one of the following topics. Make sure you:

• organize your ideas by using a graphic
• introduce your topic
• express your main purpose
• express your ideas with clear cause and effect statements
• conclude with a strong statement about the cause or effect and its impact on the future.

Choose to write about only topic A or only topic B:

A. Explain one cause of climatic change.

OR. (Only write about one of these topics)

B. Explain how climatic change causes one human or planetary health problem.

Note: this was a timed, in-class writing experience.
What is global warming and how does it happen? Now, I'm going to explain about these.

Global warming is the worldwide temperature rising. It happens when ozon layer is destroyed. Air pollution that happen in many different parts of the world damage and break ozon layer, so much more sunlight can through from the wholes of ozon layer to the earth surface. Therefore, the temperature of the world rise.

Global warming rise not only air temperature but also ocean temperature. It many trigger drought, red-tides, tornade, scattering sunlight, unseasonably warm winter, and wierd wether. Flooding might be also partly caused by global warming when the high temperature melt the ice of Antarctic and Arctic Ocean.

I ask you again what global warming is and how it happen. Now, you must be able to answer them. It's very important for each person to know about global warming because if you don't know what global warming causes in the future you don't try to reform the present situation of the earth seriously. We must think more how we can stop global warming and plan for it in reality.

**KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS**

1. **Between clauses**

   **Causes/Conditions/Reasons**   **Link**   **Effects/Results**

   ozone layer destroyed

   air pollution damage and break ozon layer

   so therefore

   when

   ozon layer is destroyed

2. **Within clauses**

   **i) Agent**

   global warming

   Process: concrete rise

   high temperature

   melt

   **abstract**

   it may trigger

   drought, red-tides, tornade, scattering sunlight, unseasonably warm winter, and wierd wether

   **ii) Cause/condition/reason**

   link

   global warming

   might be also partly caused by

   flooding
Today, there are climatic changes. These are caused by greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino etc. Greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino may trigger weird weather so people’s life style change. For example, global warming make a rainfall change. A temparture up so plants and trees can’t grow. Also, people have some health problems, too. Climatic change is bad for our life because these may be destroy many thing and change to our life styles.

### KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

1. **Between clauses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes/Conditions/Reasons</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Effects/Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino may trigger weird weather</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>people’s life style change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a temperature up</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>plants and trees can’t grow also people have some health problems too</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Climatic change is bad for our life because these may be destroy many thing and change to our life styles.

2. **Within clauses**

   i) **agent**
   
   process
   
   medium

   ii) **cause/condition/reason**
   
   link
   
   effect/result

   these (climatic change) may be destroy many thing and change to our life styles
   
   these (climatic change) are caused by

   a greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino

   greenhouse gases, global warming and El Nino may trigger weird weather

   global warming make a rainfall change
Global warming is one cause of climatic change. Global warming is to rise temperature unnaturally in an earth. Carbon dioxide in the air increase, temperature is goes up. Therefore, we should think the way of using Carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide mainly comes from cars and industries.

If we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature, we could get ocean water evaporation, and the permanent ice melting. These cause big climatic change. Example are the dead of fish which can’t be used to speedy of temperature rising in water and huge storm in which many speicies could get damages. Many circle of natural chain reaction could be destroyed.

Now, we come to the period when we have to confront global warming. It can’t stop without our doing anything to it. I am sure we all hope peaceful life and future, so let’s think about it and do anything to get safety future.

### KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

1. **Between clauses**

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<th>Link</th>
<th>Effects/Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>if we leave producing carbon dioxide and rising temperature</td>
<td></td>
<td>we could get ocean water evaporation and the permanent ice melting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon dioxide in the air increase</td>
<td>[when]</td>
<td>temperature is goes up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Within clauses**

   i) agent

   huge storm

   process: abstract

   could get damages

   medium

   which many species

   effect/result

   climatic change

   climatic change

   Many circle of natural chain reaction

   dead fish which

   can’t be used

   to speedy of temperature rising in water
A4. student text

I would like to explain about global warming. Global warming is caused by greenhouse gases, so I will explain about these two things.

We have to think about global warming. What we have to do is that reduce greenhouse gases. How to reduce? We shouldn’t make greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases are made of CO₂, O₃, NH₃, CHC’s etc. Main gas is CO₂. How to reduce CO₂? We shouldn’t burn fossil fuels and we shouldn’t cut trees, because trees can change CO₂ to O₃.

I explain why greenhouse gases cause global warming. Greenhouses gases surrounding earth. Light from the sun come to earth. When light touch ground, it change to heat. Heat can’t go out because of greenhouse gases. That’s why earth will warm. If earth were warm, the ice will melt and some city will be in water. some plant will die etc.

Now global warming is serious problem in the world. We have to reduce greenhouse gases to protect our earth. The important thing what I can is to think about this problem.

Knowledge Structure Analysis

1. Between clauses

cause/condition/reason | link | effects/results
---|---|---
we shouldn’t burn fossil fuels and ... cut trees | because | trees can change CO₂ to O₃

when

light touch ground | it change to heat

if

the earth were warm | the ice will melt and some city will be in water, some plant will die

2. Within clauses

i) agent | process | medium
---|---|---

ii) cause/condition/reason | link | effect/result
---|---|---
greenhouse gases | is caused by | global warming

because of

greenhouse gases
I would like to write about one causes of climatic change, El Nino. It gives earth big damage, so I think people should know how it affects at earth.

El Nino is becoming sea hot and it change the ocean currents. Changing the ocean currents could unseasonable warming. In addition increasing of bacteria is result of El Nino.

I think El Nino is the one of the threat climate change. It may trigger not only unseasonable warming, but also short of water and food in near future.

KSA ANALYSIS
1. Between clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cause/condition/reason</th>
<th>link</th>
<th>effects/results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Within clauses

i) agent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>El Nino</th>
<th>process:</th>
<th>abstract</th>
<th>medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>it</th>
<th>gives</th>
<th>Earth big damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
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<th>is result of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<thead>
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<th>It</th>
<th>may trigger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

unseasonable warming...short of water and food

ii) cause/condition/reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>changing the ocean currents</th>
<th>link</th>
<th>effect/result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

unseasonable warming