

**A DESCRIPTION OF  
ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION  
IN CANADIAN PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION**

**BY**

**PATRICIA GAY SADOWY**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Ph. D. in Education Department  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**© December, 2004**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA**  
**FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
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## ABSTRACT

In the present study the state of the art of language arts (LA) curriculum and instruction (C&I) for undergraduate preservice teachers of children from nursery to grade 8 was investigated. The study involved content analysis of 64 surveys and 110 syllabi from instructors of mandatory, first-language LA C&I courses in accredited teacher education sites across Canada in 1998-99.

Rate of return from department heads (initial contacts) was 86.7 percent, and from instructors was 46.1 percent for surveys and 42.0 percent for syllabi. Demographic data suggest that returns represented Canadian demographics in terms of gender, language, and location.

The typical instructor of LA C&I was female, held a Ph.D. degree received in 1990 from a Canadian university, and worked full time as an associate professor. The typical course, enrolling about 35 students and lasting about 35 hours, was a stand-alone C&I course covering all six modes of language.

Cognitive interactionist was the predominant orientation in instructors' theoretical approaches to language acquisition. Process was their predominant orientation in the language arts/literacy orientations. The technological orientation predominated in their pedagogical orientations, followed closely by the personal and practical/craft orientations.

Most courses (90.9%) required textual material and just over half of them (52.8%) recommended it. Among the required materials were: survey textbooks (38.2%); monographs (65.5%); package of readings (19.1%); journal articles (41.8%); government curricular documents (74.5%); and children's literature (46.4%), with only 10.9 percent

naming Canadian children's literature. Although most books named by instructors were American, a small number of popular materials (included in multiple syllabi) was identified, of which over 60 percent was Canadian.

Standard instructional activities predominated. Most prevalent were: lecturing, class presentations, demonstrations, general discussions, unspecified group activities and specific discussions. The cumulative top topics evidenced in over half the syllabi included: general assessment, government curriculum, instructional planning, approaches to instruction, theory and research, and children's literature, as well as the general modes of writing and reading. Presentations, in-class activities, group projects, and end-of-term exams, each evidenced in over half the syllabi, were the most popular assessment activities. Most accounted for only a portion of the final grade. Little evidence was found indicating choice or negotiation of assessment activities, though choice of topics within assignments was widely available. Concerning assessment criteria, almost two thirds of the syllabi included subject matter knowledge and/or pedagogical knowledge; insight/critical thinking was also popular. Criteria tended to be objective rather than subjective.

## DEDICATION

When I was little, my baba would sometimes ask me to sort buttons for her. She would dump the contents of her button box on the kitchen table and inform me that she needed all the white ones and blue ones separated from the others for a special sewing project. When I had accomplished that initial sorting, she would realize that she needed only little white ones and medium-sized blue ones, and that she needed light blue, not dark blue. With her guidance I would complete the task of sorting the buttons as needed, and she would praise me generously for my important efforts. She did not get to see my involvement with content analysis, but I know that her teaching was the beginning of my enjoyment of this type of research. With love and gratitude I dedicate this work to her.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me throughout the entire endeavour that has resulted in this dissertation and I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank them. My research involved a lot of counting. Thank you to all of you for all the things that cannot be quantified.

Thank you, first of all, to all the members of my advisory committee. Dr. Stan Straw served as my advisor. Stan, when I started my master's degree with you many years ago, you asked me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Without hesitating I replied, "You!" To share with teachers a vast knowledge and a deep passion about language arts and the research related to it seemed to me a very worthy career. Now that I do this work, I know I was right to choose this goal and I know that I was right in asking you to lead me toward it. Thank you for your direction, your advice, and your unfailing confidence in me. From the very beginning you acknowledged the value of the work I wanted to do and my ability to do it. You helped me overcome a variety of obstacles along the way. You provided the insight and the incisive analysis I needed to wrestle my chapters into their final shape. Thank you for being my doctoral advisor, a true mentor, and my friend.

Dr. Beverley Zakaluk provided thoroughness as a reader, and her editing suggestions added clarity and coherence to the final version of the dissertation. She also offered her extensive knowledge and caring about the field of language arts. Dr. Beverly Cameron provided useful editing suggestions, and more important, she provided a professional, grounded perspective and a deep respect for postsecondary teaching, as well

as an outsider's view of my field. Thank you both for your interest in my work, your advice, and your support. Thank you also to Dr. Trevor Gambell of the University of Saskatchewan who served as the external reader, for his expertise in the preservice teaching of language arts and for his willingness to offer it, as well as for his detailed editing and his generous, thoughtful commentary. I would like to thank the entire committee for their encouragement, for their faith in me, and for their patience (as they continued to put up with my ridiculously shortsighted timelines). I learned important things from each of you and that learning will serve me well as I continue my work in research and teaching.

I would like to thank all my research assistants. Tammy Cardinal and Gail Mariash helped with the typing of instructors' reading lists. Louise Sabourin created all my initial spreadsheets, devoting hours to the keying in of data. I would especially like to thank the person who served as the second rater in my study for her time, her expertise, and her warm willingness to help me. I know that hers was an arduous task and I appreciate her involvement very much. I would also like to thank the anonymous angel who helped me to pay for the research assistance.

I would like to thank my colleagues at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface—Gestny Ewart, Hermann Duchesne, and Krystyna Baranowski—for assistance with the translation of all required documents and text passages.

I would like to thank my fellow doctoral students, those who blazed the trail for me—Laura Atkinson, Sandy Baardman, Charlotte Evans, and Barbara McMillan—or who walked the trail with me—Krystyna Baranowski, Diane Driedger, Gestny Ewart, Donna

Haydey, Irene Huggins, Karen Krasny, Matthew Kwok, and Karen Smith. I would especially like to thank Laura for being a model of excellence as a researcher and a writer, for believing in me, and for taking a deep interest in my work. I would also like to thank Karen S. and Gestny for being my friends as well as my doctoral colleagues, for always being there for me when I needed them in any capacity.

I would like to thank my family, my friends, and my co-workers, both academics and support staff, at the Faculty of Education for their support throughout the years of this project. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for being my first teachers and for helping me initially to learn the skills and values essential to doctoral work—critical thinking, perseverance, patience, attentiveness to detail, an appreciation of language, and the ability to find joy in important work and in a job well done. Thank you to my friends Bobby Beaulieu and Susan Popeski for caring about me and my work and for reminding me that there is life beyond the university. Thank you to my best friend, Pamela Jakubec, for the time you spent helping me with “all those little numbers” as we double- and triple-checked data tables. Thank you for helping me to remember, especially through those seemingly endless weeks of coding and analysis, that the completion of a dissertation (and, with it the achievement of a doctorate) was always one of my dreams, and for helping me, too, to dream about holidays, about wine, and music, and so many other wonderful things in the world that were not related to my study. Thank you for starting the French Club, “the best damned club I ever belonged to!”

I would like to thank those colleagues near and far who gave me their syllabi for my pilot study and to others who shared books and articles, expertise, advice, and

encouragement. I would like to thank the University of Manitoba library staff, especially Brenda Wiechert of the D. S. Woods Education Library and the staff at Document Delivery for helping me access materials. Thank you, too, to Julianna Enns. From the day you set up my proposal defence through to the end of this work you have called me “Dr. Pat” and I appreciated it deeply every time.

Finally, I would like to thank all the department heads and office assistants in faculties of education across Canada who provided information to me about instructors in their institutions. Above all, I would like to thank all the instructors who participated in my study and without whose input this study would not have been possible. One of the greatest joys of this entire endeavour was to read the syllabi you developed. Every faculty member should have such a privilege. Thank you for sharing that facet of your professional lives with me. I was honoured to be entrusted with your words and the important ideas they represented. I have tried hard to do them justice.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The education of a society's young people is one of its most important enterprises. With many currencies, people invest heavily in their expectations of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that their young people will come to hold, hoping they will apply their learning to those spheres of life that members of the older generation, as individuals or social groups, hold dear. Most of the sharing of our personal and collective ideas and ideals occurs by means of language. Parents are a child's first teachers of language, but most often the role is soon shared or given over to the institutions known as schools and to the important individuals we call teachers.

I certified as a teacher in the early 1970s and spent several years teaching in northern Manitoba. Eventually, I was lured back down south to my university, anxious to learn how to improve my teaching practice. My intention was to return to the north, but while I was taking courses, I was asked to teach a curriculum and instruction (C&I) course to preservice teachers. I accepted the task. I read the textbook in August and began teaching in September.

The course concerned the teaching of language arts (LA), the area in which I was specializing in my master's work. I believe, nonetheless, that regardless of the content, I would have taught it the same way: on Day One I distributed a course syllabus, reviewed it briefly by reading it to the class, then spent the remainder of class time providing a resume of the first chapter of the course text, slowly enough that students could take notes

for the end-of-term exam. At the end of the class, I assigned the reading of the second chapter, warning that we would have a brief test of its contents at the start of next week's class. The following week, true to my word, I put four multiple-choice questions on the overhead projector, collected responses, and proceeded to provide my version of the highlights of Chapter Two. Ultimately, I chose not to return to my elementary school in the north, choosing instead to continue working with preservice teachers, as I continue to do to this day.

I can no longer teach the way I taught a decade and a half ago. The memory haunts me and hurts me. The practices I initially followed are rightly criticized now in light of new ideas about what teachers need to know, to do, and to be. As I strive to change my own practice, I am heartened to realize that I do so in a wide-ranging spirit of educational reform, but I recognize, too, that I am pressured, and often seriously constrained, by the various contexts of which my work as a teacher educator is a part, and by the differing reform agendas within those contexts.

Important to consider, too, are the influences brought about by theoretical and practical changes within the field. Older concepts and practices of language and literacy learning are regularly being dismissed or augmented by newer concepts. What sense might my colleagues and I begin to make of the myriad possibilities available to us as teacher educators as we attempt to achieve useful and coherent daily practice? How do all these new ideas play out in preservice classrooms? To what extent are the ideas we read about in professional journals, hear about at conferences, and try out in our own classrooms representative of existing practice?

In the present study I examined several aspects of current Canadian language arts curriculum and instruction courses in preservice teacher education. While I recognize that Canadian theory and practice tend to look quite a bit like American theory and practice, I know, too, that there are some aspects of teacher education that are unique to the Canadian context. One aspect that is especially important in a study concerning language arts is that Canada is an officially bilingual country. Second, Canadian education at all levels (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary) is governed provincially and is thereby influenced both by provincial and regional politics and by geography. Third, the provinces themselves are subject to external influences: They are influenced by each other, by the United States, and, in terms of language arts certainly, by Great Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand, among others.

The field of teacher education in language arts is dynamic and complex. To come to know the Canadian field in detail, I used course syllabi as an initial way to look into my colleagues' classrooms. By means of my analyses, I was ultimately able to develop several pictures, both close-ups and panoramic views of the state of the art of the teaching of elementary language and literacy curriculum and instruction for preservice teachers across our country.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

Within this dissertation I provide a discussion of: (a) the specific nature of the knowledge I was seeking and why that knowledge is important, including a discussion of those to whom it might be important; (b) the background of the study and related research

in LA C&I; (c) specific details concerning the procedures I used, as well as a rationale for those procedures; (d) my findings and their specific importance to the field; and (e) the overall significance of this set of work, some of its general limitations, and some suggestions for future directions. These five general areas correspond to the five chapters of the present document. The latter portion of the document comprises the various appendices integral to the work I undertook.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is no existing characterization of preservice curriculum and instruction courses in language and literacy at the elementary level in Canada. While many people may have opinions about these courses, including opinions about the goodness of any or all aspects of them, no one knows for certain what constitutes them. This study was designed to provide overall characterizations based on specific, public information gathered from instructors currently teaching these courses. It was designed as well to provide sets of specific information about postsecondary curriculum and instruction for teacher education within these elementary curriculum and instruction courses for children's education. The types of information sought included such areas as instructors' theoretical orientations, topical coverage, textbooks, and student assessment. As well as viewing the nation as a whole, the study was intended to provide information in terms of selected groupings of teacher education sites across the country, especially regional and language groupings.

## Purpose of the Study

The present study is part of a long personal quest to delineate an “ideal” curriculum for preservice teacher education in language and literacy, one that would be both theoretically sound and practically feasible. I have long been interested in several aspects of such a curriculum: (a) what it might best include, (b) how it might best be implemented, (c) how students might best be assessed, (d) how the instructor and the curriculum themselves might best be assessed, and (e) the rationales for the above decisions. I am interested in the scope of such a curriculum and the relationship it has to preservice teachers’ practicum experiences. Having worked in this field for over a decade when I proposed this study, I had a solid basis upon which to contemplate the teaching of language and literacy methods. I felt that I had a fairly solid notion of my own practice in relation to my previous practice and in relation to that of my colleagues within my institution. However, I knew that, in spite of my bits and pieces of randomly-gathered knowledge, I could say very little definitively about the field at large. I wanted to know the field in some more assured way. I wanted some way to look upon the nation and account for details I felt were important.

Any of us who teach a course can think of alternatives to the content and methods we use. We can see changes over time, and we can attribute the changes to one factor or another, perhaps even to several. We think of other instructors and institutions we know and consider ourselves in relation to them—kind of like *a*, but not quite, way better than *b*, and never as good as *c*—by whatever measures we use to assess our merits. We make assumptions, sometimes tacitly, that most of our colleagues across the nation are quite

like ourselves, or that we are outstandingly different on some or several attributes. From time to time we ask ourselves questions, comparing our practice to that of others: Do others include this in their courses? What do others believe about what they are trying to accomplish? How do others organize their instruction? How do others assess their students? How am I similar to others? How am I different?

By means of the present study, I set out to establish a foundation upon which to base answers to such general questions, and upon which to base further research initiatives that might help answer them. In addition to providing a detailed view of the *status quo* in this area, this foundational material might contribute to the understanding of why the field is in its present state and to the making of some suggestions as to its possible directions. To establish the foundation, I studied course syllabi from mandatory, preservice language arts methods courses across Canada. By means of content analysis, I examined various aspects of these syllabi (and brief surveys of instructors) so that my results might introduce a baseline for national discussion and action concerning current and future language and literacy curriculum development and instructional practice in the preservice teacher education classroom.

### **Research Questions**

The set of questions presented below refers to information provided for one academic year by instructors of mandatory, elementary language arts curriculum and instruction courses in accredited Canadian preservice teacher education sites. The research questions that motivated this study were:

1. What are the *demographic characteristics* of the sample studied, both in terms of the individual instructors and in terms of the specific courses represented?
2. What *theoretical orientations* underlie the work of the instructors? What are their orientations to how language is initially learned, to how language arts/literacy might best be taught at school, and to how a course for preservice teachers should best be taught?
3. What are instructors' expectations (requirements and recommendations) concerning *textual materials* for use in their courses?
4. What *instructional activities* are included in the entire set of activities that comprise regular class time? What activities are used most and least frequently?
5. What *topics* are covered in these courses? Across the sample, which topics are allocated the most and the least attention?
6. What *assessment activities* are used by instructors? Across the sample, with what frequency are the various assessment activities used and to what degree are they represented as portions of students' final grades? To what degree do the assignments provide for *student choice*? By what *criteria* are assignments graded?

In several instances, the aspects of instructors' decision making that I was interested in exploring were considered in terms of a variety of predetermined categories representing existing classifications within Canada, the field of education, and the field of language arts/literacy instruction. These categories were: (a) the provincial and regional location of the institution ("Location"), whether Western, Central, or Eastern Canada;

(b) the language of instruction (“Language”), whether English or French; (c) the level of preparation (“Level”), whether Early, Middle, Elementary (including Primary-Junior), or some other designation involving age/grade level; and (d) the mode(s) of language arts focussed upon in the course (“Mode”), whether speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, representing, all, or some of these six.

### **Significance of the Problem**

In recent years, the field of education has given heavy support, in time, in money, and in emotional investment as well, to several major education reform ventures. Often, an institution attempting change must work within the context of several varied and often competing reform agendas. As an example of the vastness of such ventures, we can look at the context of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. While attempting to realize its plans for undergraduate program change, as laid out by its own Task Force on Initial Teacher Education Programs (Hughes, Irvine, Jansson, Long, & Stapleton, 1993), the faculty was influenced by other teacher education reformers and reform agendas, both American (e.g., Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Goodlad, 1990, 1994; Holmes Group Executive Board, 1986; Shulman, 1987) and Canadian (see Van Fossen, 1990). The Manitoba change was one of several across the country: Among the changes in teacher education programs at the time were those ongoing or under consideration in Alberta (Alberta Education, 1995; Anderson, 1987; Johnson & Skau, 1992), Saskatchewan (Cherland, 1985; Newton, 1994); Ontario (Berkowitz, 1996; Russell, 1999, 2001), and Nova Scotia (Education Review Team,

1994).

More directly, the Faculty worked within the supports and constraints of the provincial government that had its own agendas governing elementary and secondary education (Manitoba Education and Training, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) and postsecondary education (University Education Review Commission, 1993). Agendas from the Manitoba Teachers' Society (1998) also made an impact on the Faculty's decisions. The University of Manitoba itself had new agendas, formally laid out by its Task Force on Strategic Planning (University of Manitoba, 1997a, 1997b, 1998), that its Faculty of Education was expected to account for in planning.

Manitoba's instructors currently work within the agendas of all these general administrative bodies and also within the jurisdictions of their own particular fields. Instructors in language arts and literacy education work within the influences of a group called the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. Comprised of ministers of education from the governments of the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan as well as the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory (the territories as they existed at the time; Western Canadian Protocol, 2001), this group, commonly called the "Western Consortium," decided formally in December of 1993 to collaborate in establishing a common base for all curricula from kindergarten to grade 12. A few years later *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts Kindergarten to Grade 12* (Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 1996, 1998) was developed to guide all future curriculum planning of English language arts in Western Canada. (According to Iveson [2000], the earlier

document included a draft section for grades 10 to 12 that was adopted in 1998). Each provincial department of education has based its curriculum planning for all English language arts instruction directly on this common document.

Another ever-present factor in the work of teacher educators is that of the media. Especially when results of large-scale assessments or new educational tax levies are announced, attention is directed to the inadequacies of schools, teachers, and universities. However, in spite of these general cries of anguish and outpourings of prescriptions, very little attention has been directed to the day-to-day activities of instructors in preservice curriculum and instruction courses. Although many teachers willingly return to their faculties of education for further course work (e.g., Sutton, 1998), and although, as in the Manitoba example, suggestions have been made to the provincial government to require particular types of upgrading and to tie that upgrading to salary increases (Scurfield, 1998), for many teachers their preservice course in a particular subject area may be their only formal opportunity to learn what to teach in that area, the ways in which teaching might happen in that area, and the theoretical rationale for particular approaches. In preservice courses teachers encounter ideas and materials to take with them into their earliest years of practice, ideas and materials that will, in large part, form their view of that subject area and their facility with it, and that may well constitute the whole of their formal encounters with that field. One university instructor might help over a hundred preservice teachers each year to learn elements of curriculum and instruction in a given subject, and each of those hundred may go on to teach twenty-five children per year for a decade or two or three, sometimes with no additional formal learning in that subject.

In spite of the importance of these pivotal preservice C&I courses, the specific aspects of what occurs in them are rarely investigated. Even at the level of teacher education reform within an institution, the details of what happens in course work are often left to the discretion of whoever is charged with teaching the courses from year to year. Preservice teachers may fall victim to the stagnation that can accompany a retiring professor's teaching or to the willfulness of a professor exercising academic freedom. While the instructional force often includes competent full professors with decades of experience and expertise, often too, it may include sessional instructors or graduate students, bright, hardworking, and eager to learn, but not necessarily well supported as they carry out the decision making necessary to develop sound courses for higher education. They may be skilled at working with children, or they may be skilled at scholarship, but neither of these aptitudes guarantees success in teaching adult preservice professionals. Sometimes one's only support is a set of previous years' course outlines and a small selection of recent texts, with the vague suggestion to follow whatever aspects of them that one wishes.

Though many people believe that the task of a university-level instructor is to prepare lectures and to repeat them annually to adoring mobs of hopeful students, the task of teaching anything in higher education has always been complex, and is becoming increasingly so. The study that I have conducted highlights some of that complexity. Instructors in any professional faculty must follow their profession at the same time as they lead it, must keep abreast of innovations while they themselves research innovations of their own and produce the scholarship to disseminate their results, must navigate

technological changes, sociocultural changes, pedagogical and androgogical changes, all within a climate of increasing public accountability and decreasing resources.

I believe that knowledge about the state of the art of LA C&I in Canadian preservice teacher education might be of direct use to several groups of people. Primarily, of course, it will be of use to instructors of such courses in comparing their own work to that of their country's colleagues. The study will give them a gauge against which to appraise their own work and also an overview of alternatives available for course planning. Instructors' decisions will, in turn, be important to their students, the preservice teachers, and ultimately, to Canada's children. Canadian teacher educators and researchers in disciplines beyond language arts and those outside of Canada may find the result of the present study of interest for comparative purposes. Instructors and program planners from any professional faculty could find parallels herein to their own courses as could any university personnel interested in university-level teaching. Curriculum theorists and graduate students in education might also take direction from the findings of the present study.

Outside the university milieu, this study could be of interest to classroom teachers immersed in language and literacy education or to those working as collaborating teachers in preservice practica, as well as to their administrators. The study will provide them an overview of current C&I content as offered to preservice teachers. Furthermore, the results of this study could help the general public to recognize the scope of responsibility involved in the overall work of preservice instructors and in the vast amounts of very specific decision making involved in any one year when teaching a particular course.

Last, this study provides a starting point for future research. It invites many kinds of follow-up work including studies about individual instructors' decision-making practices, rationales for course development, and implementation practices, and preservice teachers' views about courses. As well, the present study invites comparison studies and critiques of its methodology and analyses.

### **Definitions<sup>1</sup>**

Below are several definitions that governed my study. Any term provided within the text of a definition (in bold print, on first use) has a definition of its own that should also be considered as relevant to understanding the term being defined. Except where indicated, definitions are my own, and are provided here as used in the present study.

**Bachelor's Degree** – A designation recognizing the successful completion of an initial **program** of **postsecondary** study in a specific discipline. In the field of **preservice** teacher education, a student might enter directly from high school and receive a Bachelor of Education degree upon completion. Alternately, a student might require a bachelor's degree (usually a bachelor's degree in Arts, Science, Physical Education, or Fine Arts), in order to be admitted to a program, but would then receive a second bachelor's degree, a Bachelor of Education, upon successful completion of that program. Some institutions are currently designating such an Education degree as a **master's degree**.

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions of terms that appear in the Main Coding Instrument, please refer to Appendix F, Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding.

**C&I** – See **Curriculum and Instruction**.

**Certification** – See **Teacher Certification**.

**Class** – See **Section**.

**Component** – A subsection of a **postsecondary course**. A component may have its own **instructor** and its own **course syllabus**, or one or more components may be taught by the same instructor or **instructional team** using only one syllabus for the entire course. For the purposes of this study, an **LA C&I** component was considered as a course.

**Course** – A short time of **postsecondary** study, usually lasting less than one calendar year, that has a specific title, a specific focus, and that comprises part of a larger **program**, and for which official course credit is received upon successful completion. The content of a course is severely limited in relation to the entire scope of a field of study because there is usually a fixed amount of time available for the teaching of it.

**Course Outline** – See **Course Syllabus**.

**Course Syllabus** – A written document, made available by an **instructor** or **instructional team** to each student in a **course** of study at a **postsecondary** institution, that summarizes the instructor's purposes, intents, and requirements for the course, especially requirements concerning student evaluation. The syllabus is an official institutional document. A course syllabus is often called a "course outline."

**Curriculum and Instruction** – In a **program** of studies in a Faculty of Education, the portion of the program involving what is to be taught and how one might best teach it, often as distinct from portions of the program involving educational psychology, educational foundations, or the **practicum**. A curriculum and instruction **course** may be general (as in “Models of Instruction” or “Planning Thematic Units”) or subject-specific (as in “Elementary Science Curriculum and Instruction” or “Teaching Mathematics in the Middle Years”). Curriculum and instruction courses are also known as “methods courses,” “methodology courses,” or by the abbreviation “C&I” and its variants (e.g., CI, C/I).

**Doctor of Education Degree** – A designation recognizing the successful completion of an advanced **program** of **postsecondary** study in the specific discipline of Education, usually the terminal program. A **master’s degree** is generally required for admission. This degree is often referred to by its initials Ed.D. An Ed.D. is often considered equivalent to a **Ph.D.**, the former said to be more concerned with practice and the latter, with theory.

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree** – A designation recognizing the successful completion of an advanced **program** of **postsecondary** study in a specific discipline, usually the terminal program. A **master’s degree** is generally required for admission. This degree is often referred to by its initials Ph.D., from its Latin equivalent, *Philosophiae Doctor*. Also see **Doctor of Education Degree**.

**Early Years** – A level of schooling for students from nursery to grade 4 (abbreviated as –4), and, in parallel, a **program** of teacher preparation. Early Years preservice

teachers are those whose education is designed specifically to prepare them to teach in the Early Years. Some schools, school divisions, or provinces do not acknowledge the nursery level at all and some characterize Early Years as spanning kindergarten to grade 3 (K-3) or kindergarten to grade 5 (K-5). Age levels matching Early Years are ages 4 to 9.

**Ed.D.** – See **Doctor of Education Degree**.

**ELA** – See **English Language Arts**.

**Elective Course** – A **postsecondary course** that a student *may* complete in order to graduate from a **program**, but which is *not required* for graduation. If a course is not elective, it is a **mandatory course**. An elective course may also be called a “non-required course,” a “recommended course,” or a “complementary course.” Any particular course may be mandatory for students in one program and elective for students in another program. For the purposes of the present study, elective courses were not considered if they were not mandatory for *any* program. Any elective course was considered as mandatory in cases where it was required that one or more course(s) (of a choice of two or more courses) *must* be successfully completed to complete a degree program.

**Elementary** – A level of schooling for students from kindergarten to grade 6 (abbreviated as K-6), and, in parallel, a **program** of teacher preparation. Elementary **preservice** teachers are those whose education is designed specifically to prepare them to teach in the elementary grades. Some schools, school divisions, or provinces characterize elementary grades as spanning kindergarten to grade 7 (K-

7), kindergarten to grade 8 (K-8), or kindergarten to grade 9 (K-9). The term is used to characterize schooling that precedes **secondary** schooling, commonly called “high school.”

**English Language Arts** – A school subject in which teachers instruct students to become competent users of the English **language** in contexts where most students have English as their mother tongue and/or the daily activities of the school are conducted in English. This subject is often abbreviated as ELA, which parallels the generic use of the abbreviation LA. Also see **Language Arts**.

*Français* [French] – A school subject in which teachers instruct students to become competent users of the French **language** in contexts where most students have French as their mother tongue and the daily activities of the school are conducted in French. Although the term is not popular, this subject could be conceptualized as “French language arts” to distinguish it from **English language arts**. Also see **Language Arts**.

**Graduate Studies** – A student’s advanced university studies that are beyond a **bachelor’s degree** and that could lead to an advanced degree, usually a **master’s degree** or a **Doctor of Philosophy degree**. The present study does not concern graduate studies except that some instructors in teacher education are graduate students.

**Higher Education** – See **Postsecondary Education**.

**Inservice** – A descriptor denoting the period of time after one has been certified and hired and has begun working as a teacher. Usually, a teacher’s inservice time is

considered to be the duration of his or her active teaching career. Inservice teacher education can consist of lectures, discussion groups, workshops, and other delivery models at the school or division level (often referred to as teachers' "professional development"), as well as post-baccalaureate **courses** and/or **programs** or work in **graduate studies** programs at a university. Inservice teacher education is often considered as being distinct from **preservice** teacher education, especially because of the amount of experience an inservice teacher has accrued. The present study does not concern the work of inservice teachers.

**Instructor** – A person who individually or as a member of an **instructional team** is charged with the responsibility of teaching a **postsecondary course**. This person may have a number of other titles as well, based on experiential and academic background and professional union (or association) classification; these include: graduate student, teaching assistant, seconded teacher, sessional instructor, lecturer, sessional lecturer, adjunct professor, visiting professor, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. For the purpose of this study the term "instructor" was used to designate *all* such persons. The instructor is the person ultimately in charge of delineating the specific content of a course of study and submitting final evaluations of individual students registered in the course.

**Instructional Team** – A group of two or more **instructors** who together share the responsibilities of a single instructor.

**Intermediate** – A level of schooling for students from grades 4 to 6, once used widely and currently less popular. In the province of Ontario the term "Intermediate" is

currently used to designate a level of schooling for students from grades 7 to 10.

Also see **Junior**.

**Junior** – A level of schooling for students from grades 4 to 6, currently used in the province of Ontario. Also see **Intermediate**.

**LA** – See **Language Arts**.

**Language** – This term has a variety of meanings within this study. In general, language is a system of symbols by which meaning is shared. When used in the phrase “Language and Literacy” or “Language Arts and Literacy” the term is intended to suggest a unity, and a broader conceptualization than language or **language arts**. In this broader use, language is also conflated with the term **literacy**, so that “language” denotes oral/aural aspects of learning, sometimes called **oracy** and made up of the acts of speaking and listening, as distinct from literacy, the print-based aspects of language learning made up of the acts of reading and writing. Most recently, the area of visual symbolism is also being considered as part of language, as in the term **visual literacy**. Language is also used to denote a specific symbol system used by one group of people, as differentiated from that used by another group, as in “the French language.”

**Language Arts** – A school subject in which teachers instruct students to become competent users of the common **language** of the school and/or community.

Bromley (1998) provided the following definition: “The meaning of *language arts* comes from the definitions of *language*, defined as an ordered system of symbols for transmitting ideas and information, and *art*, defined as the ability to effectively

and creatively execute or make something. Together, the two suggest that *language arts* means effective and creative execution of a symbolic system of communication” (p. 3). Effective use of the language arts implies competence in all **language modes**. Language Arts is often abbreviated as LA. For the purposes of this study, Language Arts does not include teacher education **courses** in English as a Second Language (ESL), nor does it include second-language courses such as courses in the teaching of French immersion, aboriginal language education, or heritage language education. In reference to children, the term Language Arts in this study does not include core/basic French courses provided to English-speaking children, nor the parallel English courses offered to French children; neither does it include ESL courses, or aboriginal or heritage language courses provided to children.

**Language Modes** – The ways, methods, or channels by which human beings make use of **language** for meaning making. The field of **language arts** currently recognizes six language modes. The receptive or comprehending modes (by which an individual takes in the meaning of others) are listening, reading, and viewing. The expressive or composing modes (by which an individual puts forth his or her own meaning) are speaking, writing, and representing.

**Literacy** – A term which within the last decade or so has come to replace the term **language arts**, or to be considered as adjunct to it. Although literacy is founded on competence in the various **language modes** of language arts, it is a broader term, designating not merely one, narrow, school subject, but a cluster of abilities

and understandings with personal and cultural dimensions, applicable throughout the day both inside and outside the school setting, during and after one's formal school years. In its earlier sense the term "literacy" referred to global competence in the print-based language modes of reading and writing, and this is the definition most prominent in the present study. However, in its most general sense the term "literacy" is sometimes used as a synonym for "knowledge," and/or "competency," thereby yielding terms such as **visual literacy**, "cultural literacy," and "computer literacy."

**Mandatory Course** – A **postsecondary course** that a student must complete successfully in order to graduate from a **program**. If a course is not mandatory, it is an **elective course**. A mandatory course may also be called a "required course." For the purposes of the present study, only mandatory courses were considered.

**Master's Degree** – A designation recognizing the successful completion of an advanced **program** of **postsecondary** study in a specific discipline, usually the initial program of a student's **graduate studies**. A master's program generally requires a **bachelor's degree** for admission, and, in turn, is itself a requirement for admission into a doctoral program. In the present study, (when the qualifications of **instructors** are discussed) a master's degree usually refers to a Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.Sc.), or a Master of Education (M.Ed.). Some programs require a preparatory pre-master's year between the bachelor's degree and the master's degree.

**Methods Course** – See **Curriculum and Instruction**.

**Methodology Course** – See **Curriculum and Instruction**.

**Middle Years** – A level of schooling for children from grade 5 to grade 8 (abbreviated as 5-8), and, in parallel, a **program** of teacher preparation. Middle Years **preservice** teachers are those whose education is designed specifically to prepare them to teach in the Middle Years. Some schools, school divisions, or provinces characterize Middle Years as spanning grades 4 to 8 (4-8), grades 5 to 9 (5-9), or grades 6 to 9 (6-9); in a couple of institutions (largely within Ontario) Middle Years extends to grade 10. Though the philosophy and instructional methods differ, the age/grade range of Middle Years generally corresponds to the older designation of “junior high.” Age levels matching Middle Years are ages 10 to 13.

**Oracy** – The set of oral/aural **language modes** that includes speaking and listening.

Oracy is often considered as a foundation for **literacy**. The term “oracy” is often used as the opposite or complement of literacy. Also see **Language**.

**Ph.D. Degree** – See **Doctor of Philosophy Degree**.

**Postsecondary** – A level of schooling following **secondary** schooling. Usually postsecondary schooling refers to education or training at a college, community college, or university. The successful completion of a **program** of postsecondary study results in the student’s receipt of a degree, diploma, or a certificate. Postsecondary studies may be **undergraduate** or **graduate studies**. The postsecondary level of education is sometimes called “tertiary education” or “higher education.”

**Practicum** – In a professional **program**, a mandatory period of practical field experience that requires the student to work on site to apply knowledge previously acquired and/or to acquire firsthand practical knowledge. A practicum in **preservice** teacher education usually involves placement in the classroom of a host teacher during the regular school year for a period of time ranging, (depending on the university program requirements and the requirements for **teacher certification**), from a few weeks to the entire academic year. A practicum is also known as “practice teaching,” “student teaching,” a “teaching block,” or merely a “block.”

**Preservice** – A descriptor denoting the period of time in a teacher’s career before he or she is certified and employed. Usually, a teacher’s preservice time is considered to be the duration of his or her initial teacher education **program**. Preservice teacher education is considered as distinct from **inservice** teacher education. A preservice teacher is commonly called a **teacher candidate**, or a **student teacher**, or sometimes a “teacher in training.”

**Primary** – A level of schooling for students from kindergarten to grade 3, once used widely, and currently used in the province of Nova Scotia and Ontario.

**Primary-Junior** – A level of schooling for students from Kindergarten to grade 6, constituting a combination of the levels **primary** and **junior** and is used in the province of Ontario. Primary-junior parallels the level that is elsewhere called **elementary**.

**Professor** – See **Instructor**.

**Program** – A set of specific **postsecondary courses**, (some of which are definitely **mandatory courses** and others possibly **elective courses**), designated by the governing body of an institution which, when successfully completed by a student, warrant the receipt by that student of an official certificate, diploma, or degree. Sometimes the term “program” is also used to designate a major portion of a full, multi-year program, in such cases as “the first year program” or “the final year program.”

**Secondary** – A level of schooling for students from grade 9 to grade 12 (abbreviated as 9-12), and, in parallel, a **program** of teacher preparation. Secondary **preservice** teachers are those whose education is designed specifically to prepare them to teach in the secondary grades. Secondary is a level of schooling corresponding to **Senior Years**. “Secondary” is an older term that popularly described people and programs related to high school. Teachers prepared for secondary teaching often did preparation for both junior high school (traditionally grades 7-9) and high school (traditionally grades 9-12/13). In Ontario, a student’s secondary schooling ended after grade 13, however this expectation changed in June 2003, when grade 13 was eliminated. Secondary schooling is not within the parameters of the present study.

**Section** – A group of **postsecondary** students assigned by a **program's** administrators to take a specific **course** at a specific date, time, and location with a specific **instructor** or **instructional team**. A section may consist of as few as five students (for example) or as many as several hundred, however, for the purposes of this

study a section is generally considered to be about 30 to 35, the number of students who fit comfortably in a standard-sized classroom. A section is often referred to as a “class” or “group.” Sections are generally named by numbers (as in “I teach Group 2 at 10 o’clock.”), by letter codes (as in “He’s covering YA and YD this **term**.”), or by alphanumeric designations (as in “I teach F03.”).

**Senior Years** – A level of schooling for students from grade nine to grade 12 (abbreviated as 9-12), and, in parallel, a **program** of teacher preparation. Senior Years **preservice** teachers are those whose education is designed specifically to prepare them to teach in the Senior Years. Some schools, school divisions, or provinces characterize Senior Years as spanning grades 8 to 12 (8-12) or grades 10 to 12 (10-12). In the province of Ontario, Senior has been a level of schooling for students from grades 11 to 13 (the Ontario Academic Credit year or OAC). For the purposes of this study, Senior Years teacher preparation was not considered. Age levels matching Senior Years are ages 14 to 17.

**Student Teacher** – See **Preservice**.

**Syllabus** – See **Course Syllabus**.

**Teacher Candidate** – See **Preservice**.

**Teacher Certification** – The granting to a qualified person of the right to teach within a given jurisdiction. Usually, in Canada, the government of a province grants teacher certification to those persons who have successfully completed its certification requirements. These requirements are sometimes confined to the acquisition of a Bachelor of Education degree, comprising specific **course** work

and the **practicum** time mandated by the province. In some jurisdictions teacher certification may require the passing of a test created and administered independent of the university teacher education **program**. This testing requirement may be in place of or in addition to the degree. Often, too, the payment of a certification fee is required.

**Teacher Educator** – See **Instructor**.

**Team** – See **Instructional Team**.

**Term** – A standard portion of a full academic year in a **postsecondary** institution. A full academic year (usually September to April) is called a “full term,” and a **course** lasting that full year is called a “full-term course.” The usual partial designation is a “half,” thus a course running from September to December or from January to April (for example) is called a “half-term course” or a “half course.” Specific lengths of terms may vary in specific institutions or for specific **programs**.

**Tertiary Education** – See **Postsecondary**.

**Textbook** – A book in which a survey of a field of study (or a significant part of a field of study) has been created especially for use in a **course** about that field of study. A textbook often begins with an overview chapter, then has separate chapters for each major subtopic, and ends with a summative chapter. A textbook often contains highlighted vocabulary, questions about each chapter, a glossary, an index, and suggestions for student use of it, and may be accompanied by an **instructor’s** edition, an instructor’s manual, a bank of test questions, and/or other instructional supports (e.g., videos, blackline masters, CD ROMs).

**Undergraduate** – A descriptor denoting the period of time in a student’s **postsecondary** academic career during which he or she is working toward a **bachelor’s degree**. Undergraduate work follows **secondary** schooling and precedes **graduate studies**. In teacher education the term **preservice** is sometimes used as a synonym for undergraduate, as most undergraduate Education students are preservice teachers, and most preservice teachers are undergraduate students; exceptions, though rare, are possible. Also, people who have a **bachelor’s degree** in Education and **teacher certification**, and who return to a post-baccalaureate **program** of practical, professional studies below the level of graduate studies are also considered to be undergraduates, although they have completed at least one degree. Within the present study, for clarity and consistency, the term “undergraduate” is used rarely, in favour of the term “preservice.”

**Visual Literacy** – A set of abilities comprising the **language modes** of viewing and representing. Visual literacy involves the ability to comprehend and compose by use of a **language** that can be seen and which differs from oral/aural **language** or print **literacy**. Visual literacy involves the ability to get and give meaning using static, nonverbal, two- and three-dimensional meaning systems (e.g., newspaper advertisements, political cartoons, photographs, book illustrations, street signs, maps and globes, charts, models, paintings, sculptures), and dynamic systems (e.g., drama and dance, as improvisations and performances, both original and interpretive), including electronic media (e.g., television, film, video, computer graphics, and hypertext).

## Scope of the Study

There are several basic assumptions underlying the present study, several of which cluster around the overall notion I held that, by and large, most institutions operated in a manner similar to my own, the University of Manitoba, and under structures not unlike my own, that other institutions, too, had, among other elements, programs, courses, curriculum departments, and department chairs. This study was conducted under the assumption that language arts was a key component of a preservice teacher's required knowledge, that language arts curriculum and instruction courses were mandatory in teacher education institutions certifying elementary-level teachers. Another assumption was that the instructors of these courses created course syllabi. It was further assumed that these syllabi incorporated key elements of instructors' intentions for their work with preservice teachers for the given academic term, and that the content of their syllabi was a valid representation of their intentions. In terms of methodology, it was assumed that a content analysis of an instructor's syllabus would yield valid information about many aspects of that instructor's work within the course, and that such analyses of syllabi from a representative portion of Canada's preservice teacher sites would yield valid information about such work across the nation.

One problem with this study, as with any study of materials, is that there is no guarantee whatsoever that the instructors represented fully, honestly, or accurately what they intended to do, nor that the intentions were ultimately fulfilled. This study affords an analysis of intentions as provided via the vehicle of course syllabi. As such, the study is an analysis of different instructors' stated possibilities. It is understood that no instructor

does only what is in a syllabus, nor necessarily exactly what is in a syllabus as described. However, it is further understood that, by the nature of a syllabus as a contractual document, most of the intentions set forth therein do, in fact, play out ultimately in a manner resembling the initial intentions. The present study was undertaken based upon this understanding.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the present study was to describe current practice in mandatory, language arts curriculum and instruction courses in preservice teacher education in Canada. By means of a coding instrument developed specifically for this study and applied to instructors' syllabi and to brief surveys that they completed, information was sought concerning demographics, instructors' theoretical and practical orientations, textual materials, in-class instructional activities, topics covered, and assignments used for assessment. The data were then analyzed. The inter-rater reliability of the instrument and its application were also established.

Teacher educators of preservice language art/literacy courses work in complex contexts. Their courses have far reaching implications, initially for the preservice teachers who are their students, but eventually for the children of the nation. In spite of the importance of these courses, specific aspects of what occurs in them are rarely investigated. Such information could be useful to a variety of people interested in Canadian education. Primarily, it would be useful to preservice teacher educators because it could serve as an impetus and a foundation for national dialogue concerning practice. The information in this chapter will provide the overall contexts within which the study was conceptualized, and an overview of the relevant background knowledge with which the coding instrument was initially developed.

Because the focus of this study was on the Canadian context, I begin this chapter

with a section concerning “The Governance of Education in Canada.” Because the teaching occurred in universities, I then review relevant aspects of “Curriculum and Instruction in Higher Education.” Because the present study was based upon course syllabi, I discuss these in some depth, and end the section on higher education with coverage of some instructional practices specifically related to preservice teacher education. Because the present study concerned the preparation of teachers specifically for the teaching of language arts, I have included a major section entitled “The Evolution of Language Arts Teaching Methods” wherein I survey key developments in the field of language arts education. In my final section entitled “Research on Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction in Preservice Teacher Education,” I review the relevant research literature concerning specific courses and instructional practices in preservice teacher education, research on curriculum and instruction (C&I) courses, summaries of specific research studies concerning C&I courses in language arts, and, finally, a small subsection concerning research on instructors in language arts teacher education.

## **The Governance of Education in Canada**

### ***Early Roots of Education***

Canada’s first inhabitants, its various groups of Aboriginal people, considered the education of children and youth to be important, and they educated their young people without the institution of formal schooling (Kirkness, 1999). Canada’s first immigrants, too, educated their young people without schools. In our nation’s earliest days, First Nations people had a strong oral culture through which experiences and values were

shared, but no printed form of language, and thus no concept of literacy. European immigrants brought a concept of literacy, but in their struggle for subsistence, literacy was often disregarded.

The first immigrants came to Canada from Europe, establishing settlements early in the 1600s in what is now Atlantic Canada and Quebec. European religious institutions at this time considered formal schooling of the young to be a necessity, the life of the spirit being infinite and thus more important than material subsistence. Literacy, especially the ability to read, was important as it provided individuals with access to the Word of God by means of the Holy Bible and to other religious texts. The first schools in Canada were run by missionaries from France and England (Johnson, 1968; Minister of Education for Ontario, 1915).

As immigration spread to other areas of the country, religious institutions spread with them and provided schooling so that “children might learn the 3 Rs of reading, writing and religion” (Johnson, 1968, p. 8). Schools in what is now Ontario were established as early as 1784. These “first common schools were started, without government assistance, by anyone who felt inclined to teach” (Johnson, 1968, p. 23). The first school in the west was opened in 1815 to educate the children of the settlers who came to Canada from Scotland with Lord Selkirk. Missionaries of all denominations established churches and schools throughout western Canada. Ultimately, Protestant schooling became the norm, with the Catholic minority struggling—everywhere but in Quebec—to obtain schooling (Brault, 1966). Currently, in addition to schools representing these two major religious groups, there are private schools or small systems for schooling

in other religions, too, including Jewish, Muslim, and fundamentalist Christian.

### *Language Differences*

The issue of religious differences played a key role in the establishment of different kinds of schools in early Canada, and religious affiliation continues to play a key role today. Also important, and sometimes concomitant with religious issues, are issues about language. When the religious orders from France started their first schools on Canadian soil, they had no doubt that they would be conducted largely in French, “with, in some cases, the elements of Latin for boys” (Minister of Education for Ontario, 1915, p. 228). When Ryerson later established Ontario’s school system, he envisioned that schooling would be conducted largely in English, with courses in Greek and Latin being optional (Minister of Education for Ontario, 1915; Wilson, 1970). Wherever a population exhibited strong linguistic homogeneity, the question of which language would be used in the school did not exist. However, certain locations were forced to recognize linguistic heterogeneity. Locations like Quebec City and Montreal, large centres that attracted large populations, also attracted mixed populations of both French- and English-speaking people.

Canada is now officially a bilingual country, with French and English recognized as official languages. While the majority of Canada’s schools operate in English, schooling in the French language is provided in every province, with a few isolated francophone schools established, too, across the northern territories. In Quebec, where French is the mother tongue of the majority (82%) and English, of the minority (9%; (Neuvel, 2002), francophone schooling thrives. Elsewhere, pockets of francophone

Canadians across the nation strive to establish schools to keep their minority language alive (Théberge & Lentz, 1990), often in parallel with religious struggles (Brault, 1966). According to Brown, in a work published in 1969, just before Quebec's *révolution tranquille* of 1970, "the most difficult and complex continuous problem in Canadian history [is] the relationship between the French-speaking minority and the English-speaking majority" (p. vii). This problem continues to be a serious one, with several repercussions within the realm of education.

First-language programs compete with one another and they compete, too, with second language programs such as English-as-a-second-language, French-as-a-second-language, aboriginal-language, and heritage-language programs. School boards and provincial governments across the country have much work to do in meeting the language education needs of their populations. The present study addresses language arts instruction in the mother tongue, with instruction in second languages being beyond the scope of this study. Besides providing teacher education in English and/or French, some faculties of education also provide programs specifically focussed toward the teaching of Aboriginal students (Brandon University, 1998a, 1998b; Hesch, 1999; McAlpine, 1990; Queen's University Faculty of Education Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, 2001; Yukon College, 2002); these programs give some attention to instruction in the language of the targeted population, albeit the bulk of the programs is delivered in English or French. In both languages there are language differences resulting from regional and cultural differences (Heit & Blair, 1993; Léon, 1994; Rochet, 1994; Rodriguez, 1985; Waddell, 1994), and there are English influences on the French language (Heller, 1989),

all of which often lead to concerns about language standards (Christensen, 1996; Harel, 1996; Lefebvre, 1982; Tapia, 1999).

### *Political Aspects*

Because language is so closely tied to personal and cultural identity, issues related to language have had a political dimension throughout Canada's history. Education is paramount among the nation's political issues, and the language of instruction is an ever-present element in educational discussions, as is the quality of language instruction. In spite of Canada's official linguistic duality, in practice English is the dominant language. This dominance threatens the French language and, by extension, the status of Quebec as a distinct province or, potentially, as a separate nation. Though threats to the French language are felt in other francophone communities, they are most highly visible in Quebec, to the point where the government has enacted laws to protect the language. Chevrier (1997), a government minister in Quebec, provided background regarding the situation:

The main reason Québec governments have taken steps to protect the French language in Québec is their observation that the French language . . . is too precarious to develop without state support. Although francophones are the majority in Québec, their language's power of attraction is weak. English, the continent's usual and predominant language, the language of both commerce and culture, vies constantly with French to be the language of business and communications. The French fact in North America is precarious for several reasons: (1) the Conquest of 1760, which put an end to French colonization in

North America; (2) the progressive assimilation of francophones outside Québec and the inadequacy of language rights; and (3) the delicate balance of the French fact in Québec because of the lower birthrate and the contribution that immigration continues to make to Québec's demography. (p. 5)

In the present study about the preparation of teachers to teach children language arts, it is important to keep in mind that to many people within an educational community, the teaching of that community's language and literature are key vehicles for the transmission of cultural values and for insuring the continuation of those values, whereas for others, the teaching of a different language and literature can similarly serve an opposing agenda.

### *Provincial Governance of Education*

Though Canada's first governing bodies were the churches and states of other countries, its independence was ultimately established in 1867. (Aboriginal governing structures had no recognized status outside themselves.) By means of Section 93 of the British North America Act of 1867, the exclusive right to be in charge of education was given to provincial governments, at that time New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Upper Canada (Ontario), and Lower Canada (Quebec) (Gregor, 1992; Johnson, 1968), with each additional province being given the same right as it attained provincial status. The federal government of Canada supplies funding to its provinces and territories toward the cost of educating its citizens. However, each province itself is responsible for the regulation of education. Currently, each province has a ministry of education as one of its key portfolios, and this ministry has jurisdiction over education within that province from the

earliest grades through to the ultimate postsecondary programs. The provinces are also responsible for teacher certification. Changes proposed by provincial governments, largely directed toward elementary and secondary schooling, almost always include implications for teacher education.

### ***Provincial Curricula***

One of the main tasks of a provincial department of education is to set curricular expectations and to help teachers fulfill them. Every provincial government publishes documents (and now online material as well, e.g., Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, 1996, 1997; British Columbia Minister of Education, 1996) in which specific expectations and implementation guidelines are set out, often along with expected standards of achievement, for every subject and grade level in the province. In Manitoba three overall age/grade level streams were designated: Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years. Now each stream has one or more frameworks documents as well as implementation documents. The Manitoba government has to date created nine documents of curricular frameworks for English language arts (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996a, 1996b, 1996f, 1997b, 1997c, 1998e, 1999b, 2000b; Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2001), plus several support documents (e.g., Manitoba Education and Training, 1993, 1996g, 1996h, 1996i, 1998c). Hundreds, if not thousands, of hours have been devoted to curriculum implementation via inservice teacher workshops (e.g., Manitoba Education and Training, 1996c, 1996d, 1996e, 1997a). In addition, seven detailed documents have been published to help teachers implement these new curricula (Manitoba Education and Training, 1997d, 1998a, 1998b, 1998d, 1999a, 2000a;

Manitoba Education, Training & Youth, 2001). The latter are large and complex entities. The document entitled *A Foundation for Implementation* for the Early Years Stream (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b) is, in its entirety, 2216 pages long (8½" x 11", three-hole punched), and, when purchased, comes in a box. The document is five inches thick, weighs 10 pounds, and costs \$68.95 (Manitoba Text Book Bureau, 2002). The Middle Years stream has a parallel document about the same size, costing the same price. Each grade level in the Senior Years, from Senior 1 to Senior 4, also has one, albeit these are each smaller (Manitoba Text Book Bureau, 2002). Because these are documents that teachers are expected to use, teacher educators must become knowledgeable about them, and, of course, those teaching LA C&I courses are, by implication, expected to understand them in depth.

Of course, parallel government initiatives have occurred and continue to occur in provinces besides Manitoba. In various degrees of accordance with the work of the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (1996, 1998), the other western provinces also generated copious amounts of new curricular material, among them British Columbia's *English Language Arts: K to 7: Integrated Resource Package* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996), Alberta's *Program of Studies for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 9: Optional Implementation* (Alberta Education, 1998), and Saskatchewan's *English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Elementary Level* (Saskatchewan Education, 1997a) and *English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Middle Level* (Saskatchewan Education, 1997b).

On the other side of the country the organization called the Atlantic Consortium in

English Language Arts (Iveson, 2000), also known as the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF), encompassing representatives from New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, has also produced overview material. Its document, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* (APEF, 1996), has guided each province in creating parallel curriculum documents (e.g., Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1997, 1998; Prince Edward Island Department of Education, 1998), not unlike the Western Canadian situation. While Ontario and Quebec are not part of these provincial groups, they nonetheless have invested considerable time in curricular reform in language arts within the past decade (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1994, 1995; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1995a, 1995b, 1997).

Iveson (2000), in her comparison of the eastern and western documents, found several variations. Nonetheless, she maintained that “[a]lthough the shape of the outcomes in the two documents differs, the intent for learning and development is similar” (p. 2). She then added:

While each is unique in its approach, together they reveal an underlying approach to language use and language arts teaching. The emphasis is on the learner’s construction of language through engagement with language and directed attention through instruction and activity, with understanding of personal, social, and cultural dimensions of language. (p. 4)

### ***Provincial Assessments***

Besides having familiarity with the new curricular documents, teacher educators must also be aware of assessment programs. In Manitoba, programs of provincial testing

to assess curriculum implementation have been underway for several years, though as governments change their assessment agendas, the nature and purpose of assessments change (see Clifton, 2004; Martin, 1998, 2004; Maunder, 1998). In Manitoba, assessment in the form of standards tests in language arts has fairly recently involved four levels, grades, 3, 6, 9 (Senior 3) and 12 (Senior 4); however, current assessment in language arts is available via the provincial government at grades 3, 6, and 12 (Senior 4). In grade 3, assessment materials are available but are not standards tests per se and are not mandatory. Grade 6 has an annual standards test but the use of it is optional, with decisions about its use being made by individual school divisions. Standards tests are mandatory for students in Senior 4 (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004).

Although the grade levels and the mandatory nature of the testing vary from province to province, all have been involved in some ways. There has also been a great deal of national-level activity (e.g., Council of Ministers of Education, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1991d, 1994, 1999) concerning the achievement of students, and, in relation, the accountability of teachers, schools, school divisions, and teacher educators.

### *Conceptualizations of Curriculum in Canada*

What do Canadians mean by the term “curriculum?” There is no singular definition or set of attributes heralded by any subset of Canadians, let alone the population as a whole. Curriculum is a complex notion in which are imbricated varying epistemologies, sociopolitical purposes, contexts, and teaching methods.

Conceptualizations of curriculum change across time and place, changing in the wake of

changing conceptualizations of knowledge, changing societal needs, and changing technological possibilities.

The field of Canadian curriculum theory, though growing, is still relatively small (see Chambers, 1999). Canadian curriculum theory has been highly influenced by American perspectives. Many of the major theories about curriculum that are studied in Canada come from Americans, notably Ralph Tyler, John Dewey, Joseph Schwab, and William Pinar. Although theorists outside of the United States are also studied in Canada, such as Paulo Freire, Ted Aoki and Max van Manen, it is arguably American conceptualizations that underlie most of the work in Canadian curriculum development. Nonetheless, there are aspects of curriculum theory in Canada that warrant examination.

In terms of the present study, Chambers' (1999) work on regional differences in Canadian curricula is a major area of interest. In the conclusion to her article she claimed that in order to demarcate a specifically Canadian curriculum theory, "Canadian curriculum theorists must come to understand that the topos from which they write is the physical, imaginary, and sociopolitical landscape they share with the communities and children on behalf of whom they work and write" (p. 12). Perhaps the most distinct differences are the sociopolitical differences underlying curriculum as conceptualized in Quebec. Because the populations of all the other provinces are primarily anglophone (Statistics Canada, 2003), people responsible for curricular ideas, be they ordinary citizens, educators, policy makers, or politicians, study English-language materials.

The most available source of English-language materials about education (and arguably any other general area of interest) is the United States of America. The vast

output of American materials coupled with the physical closeness of the United States to Canada makes it inevitable that Canadians will have access to these materials more easily than to those of any other country. Furthermore, due to the volume of American output of materials such as textbooks, popular monographs, professional monographs, professional journals, government reports, and web sites, Canadians can often access American materials more easily and cheaply than our own. Only in Quebec does that tendency differ: because Quebec is primarily francophone, many people cannot, will not, or do not read English-language materials. Few French-language materials are produced in the United States; surely very few of these concern education, and very few of these concern curricular theory. The major sources of francophone educational material are France, other parts of francophone Europe, the province of Quebec itself, and a few sites scattered across the rest of Canada.

It is not exclusively true, though, that language *is* ideology: people writing in French do so from various perspectives and to various ends. Some are bilingual and do access English-language sources, some willingly, others begrudgingly, when French sources do not exist or are inaccessible. Some bilingual writers include American, English-language ideas into their own French-language materials. Others create translations of important texts. Still others hold American views, of which there are several, and share these views via the French language. Like other Canadians, Quebecers, too, live close to their American neighbours—much closer than to their European relations—and yield often to American influences.

Two Quebec professors, Geoffroy and Lenoir (2000), recently presented to the

Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies their examination of the differing general theoretical ideologies that underlie Quebec's current curricular conceptualizations. They characterized Quebec's ideologies as rooted in the tensions between the conceptualizations of the republic of France versus those of North America (or, interchangeably, the United States of America). Whereas the former places the focus on knowledge learned, knowledge structured by disciplines, the latter places it on the learner, knowledge shaped by learners' needs. France has historically attempted to achieve a public education "restricted to instruction" (Condorcet, 1989a, p. 56, in Geoffroy & Lenoir, 2000, p. 6) as opposed to inculcation. The French view purports that people should be taught how to think, not what to think, the latter too long having characterized education under monarchist, religious, or aristocratic regimes. On the other hand, North America's attempts at education are toward a utilitarian vocationalism, cultural allegiance for assimilation, and "economic benefit" (Kliebard, 1992, p. 198, in Geoffroy & Lenoir, 2000, p. 9).

In short, one might characterize the condition of Quebec's curricular conceptualizations as attempts to balance European ideals with American pragmatism, reflection with action, to which can be added the valorization and promotion (on the part of some) of a distinct *québécois* heritage. Quebeckers may want allegiance, but is it an allegiance to France, to Canada (largely anglophone Canada), to European French values, to American values, or to Quebec's distinctiveness in all its manifestations? Furthermore, the province struggles with these issues at the same time as it moves toward humanism in a society long under the influence of Roman Catholic values. There is no singular

response to the nature of curricula that would reflect the values of a majority of Quebeckers, especially if language curricula are under consideration.

### **Curriculum and Instruction in Higher Education**

Besides looking at the context of this study through the historical, geographical, and political lenses of national and provincial jurisdictions, it is important, too, to examine herein the context of higher education, one of the fields within which the present study is embedded. I largely restrict the discussion, however, to curriculum and instruction at this level, looking first at what was taught and how it was taught in the earliest days of higher education in North America, and then at some relatively current influences on curriculum and instruction at this level. I examine instructional practices in higher education with specific attention to course syllabi.

#### ***Early Higher Education in North America***

In North America the earliest institutions of higher education were colleges, established in colonial times, “primarily to train ministers and secondarily to make higher education available to the sons of the elite” (Fuhrmann & Grasha, 1991/1994, p. 6). A major agenda of these colleges was to perpetuate an elite society via discipline, a training in “diligence and responsibility” (p. 7). Teaching was highly prescriptive and highly teacher-directed. Eventually these institutions were criticized as being overly costly and overly elitist. In their place, “new colleges were founded, with a wider appeal, and colleges began to be ‘recognized as a means of getting ahead, not just as a means of

registering that one's father had'" (Rudolph, 1965, p. 36 cited in Fuhrmann & Grasha, 1991/1994, p. 7). Traces of the elements of these first American colleges, elements which echo the practices of ancient Greece and Rome, are evident today in the teaching practices of some university-level instructors. Higher education throughout the nineteenth century increasingly became characterized by intellectual scholarship as a route to the fulfillment of democratic ideals.

Additionally, and perhaps more directly, the roots of current Canadian practice can be traced to the Germany research university model designed "for academic specialization and for the generating of new knowledge through research" (Gregor, [1996], p. 29). The emphasis in German universities on a deep respect for science was acknowledged in North America, and the pursuit of science was thereby legitimized.

### *Current Influences on Curriculum and Instruction*

With the twentieth century came a move toward more practical curricula and the emergence of a vocational agenda as well as a general, liberal education agenda to compete with the intellectual scientific agenda. The three agendas coexist, though often competitively, to this day (Fuhrmann & Grasha, 1991/1994, p. 11). The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed remarkable change politically and socially. The rise of various social rights movements has had an undeniable influence on several aspects of teaching and learning in higher education. With increasing media globalization we are, collectively, sociopolitically aware of a variety of crucial issues such as those surrounding environmental management and sustainable development, bioethics, human rights,

poverty, and peace initiatives in war-torn countries.

The social rights movement perhaps most directly relevant to the present study is the students' rights movement. In some ways this is a movement of its own and in other ways, an agenda that is tangential to all human rights movements. In the 1960s, postsecondary students' voices demanded increased accessibility, curricular relevance, and instructional and institutional accountability (Ross, 1976). As more and more student groups have worked toward having their subjective realities represented in higher education, the more institutions have been strained in terms of resources, even if they perceive the groups' agendas as valid. Such challenges create pressure and sometimes conflict. Leaders are rarely keen to disrupt established programs, thus "change has been more additive than revolutionary . . ." (Fuhrmann, 1997, p. 87).

Today, as a result, many varieties of programs and courses are available at most medium- to large-sized institutions. Students are given detailed syllabi at the start of a course so that they might have some prior knowledge about the content to be covered and the expectations regarding evaluation. Students have the opportunity to evaluate courses and instructors via official means, with the results available to the instructors, to instructors' superiors, and in some cases, to the student body via official channels (Classen, 2004; Cook, 2003; University of Manitoba, 2004); unofficial evaluations are also available via the Internet, at sites such as [MyProfessorSucks.com](http://MyProfessorSucks.com) or [RateMyProfessors.ca](http://RateMyProfessors.ca). Students have recourse to the office of an ombudsman, a student advocate, and a sexual harassment officer, as well as to elaborate appeals procedures. There are several specific supports in place for students including learning assistance,

language learning, disability services, counselling services, and financial aid, as well as student unions to ensure ongoing rights.

The entire spectrum of human diversity that is manifest on today's North American campuses makes these campuses sites of ideological complexity: as groups work toward having their realities represented at the postsecondary level, the many and varying "cultural world views bring complex theoretical challenges to the epistemological foundations of Western tradition" (Olguin & Schmitz, 1997, p. 440). For example, some North American institutions are attempting to view knowledge from Aboriginal viewpoints (Chambers, 1992; Ermine, 1995; Hewett, 1996), Oriental viewpoints (Shen, 1992), or Afrocentric viewpoints (Schiele, 1994).

New ways of conceptualizing knowledge are also related to gender (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982), race (hooks, 1981, 1989), class (Freire, 1971; hooks, 2000), and sexual orientation (Sedgwick, 1990). Such influences compete with other related attributes of difference, including power, servitude, and marginality, sometimes articulated under the umbrella of postmodernism (Slattery, 1995; Usher & Edwards, 1994).

### *Instructional Practices in Higher Education*

There are several attributes of postsecondary students and institutions that have a direct—though unpredictable—impact on planning and implementation of instruction. Students come from a vast variety of backgrounds. Whatever the course might be, some come with virtually no background knowledge, while others come with considerable

knowledge, sometimes rivalling that of the instructors. Some students are very young adults, while a few are likely older than several of their instructors. Adult learners are expected to be responsible for their own learning, and while some are, others are not. Class sizes in institutions of higher education can be large, with enrollments sometimes in the hundreds. Timetables and other aspects of scheduling are usually predetermined by administrators and inflexible. Students are mandated to complete prescribed courses within a program of study, paying for the opportunity to attend classes to earn a certificate or degree, but sharing the costs with taxpayers.

The general nature of postsecondary courses is established by the institution and described in the institution's annual calendar. The specific nature of them is established most often by the specific individuals hired to teach them, individuals who range in academic rank from full professors to sessional instructors, and who also range from full to part time and from experienced to inexperienced.

The established notion of university instruction is presented in the following description:

In the stereotypical college class, the instructor lectures and occasionally asks questions of students; students take notes and occasionally might answer the instructor's questions. Student involvement is primarily limited to the reproduction (on midterm and final exams) of information the instructor gives in class. Innovative classes may include a project or a paper. (Floden, McDairmid, & Wiemers, 1989, p. 15)

Many university instructors follow such practices, while others work actively

toward different models of instruction. In an attempt to concretize the content and process of courses, many institutions have established the requirement that instructors provide students with course syllabi. Because the present study is founded on an analysis of course syllabi, I provide a detailed discussion here concerning their nature and purposes.

### *Definitions and Contents of Course Syllabi*

The Oxford English Dictionary (2004) defines the term “syllabus” thus:

1. a. A concise statement or table of the heads of a discourse, the contents of a treatise, the subjects of a series of lectures, etc.; a compendium, abstract, summary, epitome.
- b. *spec.* [specifically] a statement of the subjects covered by a course of instruction or by an examination, in a school, college, etc.; a programme of study.

At the University of Manitoba, one definition of “syllabus” provided to students was “An outline or framework of a degree program” (University of Manitoba Student Affairs, [1998], p. 41); however, it is definitions such as the first dictionary definition provided above that generally prevail. In fact, current syllabi, also known commonly as course outlines, often go beyond the dictionary definition. The expectations of academic staff are established via the policy entitled *The Responsibilities of Academic Staff to Students* (ROASS) which states:

In each course section, within the first week of classes, the academic staff member responsible for that section shall provide in writing to every member of the class: his/her name, office number and telephone number; a list of the textbooks, materials and readings that the student is required to obtain including the

appropriate referencing style guide(s) acceptable to the instructor and/or discipline in courses where it is relevant; a reference to the statements on academic dishonesty including 'plagiarism and cheating' and 'examination impersonation' found in the University General Calendar; an outline of the topics to be covered; a description of the evaluation procedure to be used, including the weighting of components that will contribute to the final grade and whether evaluative feedback will be given to the student prior to the voluntary withdrawal deadline . . . ; an indication of instructor availability for individual student consultation; a tentative schedule of term assignments and tests; and a statement of the practice followed regarding submission of assignments. (University of Manitoba Student Affairs, [1996], p. 8)

Other possible details in a course outline could include "a brief course description and any course prerequisites . . . . List of course goals and objectives . . . . An explanation of unique or nontraditional methods you plan to use . . . . Mention of policies for missed tests, late and missed assignments, and late papers" (Cameron & Lawall, 1997, p. 24).

The detail required within syllabi as well as other aspects of the ROASS document are an important part of the result of students' efforts toward establishing rights. Many Canadian institutions have similar documents to protect those rights (e.g., Bishop's University, 2001; *Université de Montréal*, 1997).

### ***Multiple Purposes of Course Syllabi***

A syllabus functions as a contract between an instructor or an instructional team and each student in the class. As a genre the syllabus has a relatively standard format

comprising standard elements that are overtly intended to work for a specific overall purpose: an instructor makes a course outline to guide students through the purposes, content, and processes of the course. However, in reality, there are often secondary audiences. In addition to current students, a syllabus may well be read by an instructor's superiors, in cases, for example, where an appeal of a grade has been launched. A student may appeal a grade if under the perception that the instructor was unfair, and in such cases the syllabus is among the first sources consulted by department chairs and deans as well as an individual student's ombudsman or lawyer. It should, therefore, be as thorough and accurate as possible.

When the instructor is seeking tenure, promotion, or another meritorious consideration, syllabi may well be examined by superiors and colleagues alike as one of the data sources for evaluation of teaching performance (Seldin, 1984, reported in Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). In some institutions an instructor is expected to make a syllabus in a particular way, to communicate specific information to students in specific ways, and the syllabus can be scrutinized to check whether or not an instructor is doing his or her job adequately. In some situations, a collection of one's syllabi may be provided in a professional portfolio as evidence of one's previous teaching practices.

Another audience is oneself: the syllabus encodes the decisions an instructor has made concerning intentions for *this* course, for *this* term (or year), with *this* incoming group of students. Though it serves as an inventory of expectations for students, the instructor, too, must refer to it often, especially when teaching a course for the first time or after making major changes.

A syllabus may also serve as a sales pitch for future students, advertising the beliefs and practices of the instructor, naming textual materials, and outlining the nature of the evaluation used by that instructor. Students might compare different instructors' syllabi before or during a course, all the more so in instances where multiple sections of a course are taught by different instructors.

This multiplicity of audiences and purposes makes the writing of a course syllabus a complex rhetorical task embedded in many ways into the cultural context of the institution. In consideration of the variety of audiences, instructors might well attend to the way a syllabus will be received by various groups. Will students find the syllabus clear and helpful? Will it motivate students? Will its tone be welcoming or intimidating? If a syllabus is thorough enough to convince colleagues of one's scope of treatment of a set of content, will students perceive the course as thorough and interesting or as too much work, boring and bogged down with detail? Might an informal, chatty tone be perceived as flighty, unstructured and unprofessional? Such questions confront instructors as they attempt to meet the challenge of creating course syllabi.

One of the syllabi I received in the present study included as its first page an "Authorizing Statement," indicating the course had been vetted by the head of the instructor's department, signalling overtly that the institution was aware of the instructor's intentions. Such a statement may also signal that some aspects of a course syllabus are mandated within institutions, that they reflect official policies as well as or instead of individual idiosyncrasies. In some institutions, such authorization may be a common and comfortable practice. In others, any perception by instructors that their

rights to professional autonomy are being questioned may lead to resistance. Some individuals may also resist being forced to follow a department template for a course or being forced or expected to work within the philosophy or guidelines of a particular program, department, or subgroup.

One syllabus used in the pilot phase of the present study had, at the end of it, the history of the course delineating all the instances in which the course had been offered (going back four years), who had taught it, and the enrollment per section. Such a practice indicates, at some level at least, that the course “belongs” to the institution in that it is a part of the institution’s history. The entire issue of ownership of a course outline is one that to some degree coloured the present study, particularly in the establishing of the ways in which syllabi might be secured. Although the pursuit of this issue was not within the scope of the present study, I was concerned about who, in fact, did own an individual syllabus. Certainly some instructors would clearly perceive their own syllabi as their personal intellectual property, and certainly some institutions would claim ownership thereof, in the sense of corporate ownership. While I briefly considered asking department heads to forward syllabi to me, I ultimately chose to request them directly from the individuals who had created them. The details of this will be discussed in Chapter Three.

In their acknowledgements on the page providing copyright information and cataloguing-in-publication data, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), a team of researchers who extensively studied syllabi, thanked several professors “for their permission to reproduce their syllabi material . . . .” They added that “[t]he syllabi are the sole property

of the respective authors . . . .” (p. [iv]). While they made this claim to distinguish that neither they, as authors of the study about these syllabi, nor their publisher had any claim to ownership of the syllabi, it is clear that they considered the owners of the syllabi to be the professors themselves, and not the institutions with which the professors were affiliated. A further complication in terms of intellectual property would arise in instances where syllabi were created by the instructor *and* the students working together to negotiate course content, methods, and/or assessments (e.g., Berner & Emery, 1999; Emery & Berner, 1999).

### **Preservice Teacher Education in Canada**

The current education of preservice teachers in Canada sits at the intersection of university faculties of education and older models of teacher training. In this section I discuss normal schools and their transformation into teachers’ colleges and faculties of education. I follow this historical discussion with a discussion entitled “Current Reform in Teacher Education.” Finally, I look specifically at “Instructional Practice in Preservice Teacher Education.”

#### ***Normal Schools***

For many years in the area that is now known as Canada, teachers were trained informally or not at all. However, as Canada’s provinces gained the right to educate their children, along with that right came the responsibility to provide competent teachers. To meet that responsibility, provinces established schools in which to train teachers. Schools

exclusively for the training of teachers were called normal schools, after the French *écoles normales*, because in them the teachers in training were informed about the societal norms or standards of expectation for children, were taught rudimentarily how to assess children's achievement of those norms, and how to help students achieve them. Though teachers had been trained previously in various ways within religious institutions, the training of teachers at normal schools began across the provinces, primarily in the mid 1800s (Minister of Education for Ontario, 1915).

### *Teachers' Colleges and Faculties of Education*

Sheffield (1970) described the transition away from the normal schools which had been in place in some areas for over a century. At the end of the Second World War, Elementary-school teachers were, for the most part, given a one-year course following high school graduation, in what was called a normal school. Following the lead of the United States, the name teachers' college replaced that of normal school, beginning in the fifties. Also following the lead of the United States, in one province after another, responsibility for the training of elementary-school teachers was assumed by the universities--in Alberta in 1945, in Newfoundland in 1946, in British Columbia in 1956, in Manitoba in 1965 . . . . In Prince Edward Island . . . . [i]n that year . . . all elementary school training [became] the responsibility of universities . . . . By 1969 the universities were involved in the training of elementary school teachers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick . . . . Quebec was in the process of making the transfer, chiefly through the new

Université du Québec, and Ontario had similar plans. Most elementary-school teachers were by then receiving at least two years of preparation and the goal of a B.A. for all teachers was within sight. (p. 432)

This move increased the knowledge and status of teachers and augmented the power of universities. They could now claim one more professional faculty among their mandates.

Across Canada (see Gregor, 1995), the United States (see Haberman, 1986) and in Britain (see Judge, 1986), one important reason, perhaps the most important, for moving to a university setting was to replace teacher training with teacher education. Shutes (1984) explained the difference:

Teacher education has been defined by contrasting it to teacher training. Teacher training, it is argued, prepares specialists in the practical details of the occupation, people who follow procedures and instructions specified by others without exercising much judgement about them. Teacher education, on the other hand, is said to prepare professionals to exercise independent judgement and make decisions appropriate to particular situations they encounter. (p. 26)

At universities, teacher candidates could benefit directly from research and from the theoretical investigations in which their professors were directly involved. The related move to a full degree program afforded prospective teachers a liberal arts component that was intended to enhance their intellectual ability while strengthening their content knowledge in subjects they were to teach, along with developing their practical and theoretical pedagogical knowledge (Haberman, 1986). The overall intent, it might be argued, was to raise teaching to the status of a profession, and thereby improve the image

of teachers and the subsequent education of children.

The education of Canada's teachers has been an evolving entity. In the past two decades there have been reform efforts across Canada (e.g., Anderson, 1987; Bailey, Neil, Novak, Smith, & McQuarrie, 1998; Berkowitz, 1996; Cherland, 1985; Education Review Team, 1994; Hughes, Irvine, Jansson, Long, & Stapleton, 1991, 1993; Newton, 1994; Russell, 1999, 2001; Sadinsky, 1997; Van Fossen, 1990). American influences have likely had the greatest impact on Canadian directions, among these being the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986), the Holmes Group (1986), and individuals such as Shulman (1987) and Goodlad (1990, 1994).

### ***Instructional Practice in Preservice Teacher Education***

Teacher education is a dynamic field, and work in preservice education can be rich and rewarding. Most novice teachers bring with them a great deal of infectious energy, enthusiasm, and idealism. They bring varied experience as students, as parents, and as adults who have worked with children in many different contexts. They bring a wide spectrum of values about all aspects of human endeavour. In spite of the joy of the work, instructors of preservice teacher education courses face some problems exclusive to their particular work. As well, they encounter a variety of advice from outside of their field as well as from within it.

### ***Difficulties in Instructional Practice***

Among these difficulties are teacher candidates' expectations of what a course is and what learning is, as experienced in their own prior schooling, including

undergraduate courses they encountered if they completed a first degree. Compared to novices in other professions, some teacher candidates have a perception of being knowledgeable about teaching merely because of having experienced schooling for over a decade. Crucial, too, is the pull of the field, where the practice-versus-theory issue thrives, a situation faced by all professional faculties. Relatedly, while most educators would hold that teachers need to ground practice in theory, we might long debate the difference between giving a theory to teacher candidates versus helping each of them to develop their own.

Another specific problem is the expectation that instructors need to model strategies useful in teaching. The strategies are ultimately intended for children, but are modelled with teacher candidates, who are adult learners. While some strategies lend themselves to the content of teacher education, others are very much focussed toward children; however, adults who misunderstand instructors' intentions may feel that they are being treated like children during the enactment of such strategies. Furthermore, the strategies are often presented in short, isolated class sessions even though the intention is that when used with children, the strategies would be used over much longer periods of time. Instructors are often caught in a web of contradictions. Some are caught in trying to model inquiry approaches yet feel responsible for "covering" several aspects of curriculum, touting the benefits of a negotiated curriculum while mandating expectations. As well, there is an apparent contradiction presented when instructors use exams, yet teach their preservice students to use authentic assessment. Institutional accountability—ultimately reified in provincial certification—leads to inflexible attendance policies, tight

assignment deadlines, detailed grading rubrics, and other pressures not always advocated for teaching children. The existence in some jurisdictions of external assessments for teacher certification and for institutional accreditation add further pressures.

In the United States there are national initiatives for guidelines about teacher education, notably those of the National Council of Teachers of English (Small, 1996; Wolfe, 1986) in the United States and the parallel (though much less prominent) “Statement on the Preparation of Teachers in the Area of English and Language Arts” of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (1985). The development of similar guidelines was suggested recently, as part of a panel presentation by Chapman, Gambell, Kniskern and Coles (2000) in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the Language Arts Researchers of Canada (LARC), a subgroup of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education; this work is ongoing.

Whereas all of these efforts are propelled by the concerns of teachers and teacher educators, other national initiatives are thrust upon those groups by governments. In the United States, “[t]he specter of NCATE follows every teacher education program with its seemingly ubiquitous program reviews” (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p.1). NCATE, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2002), is the organization responsible for the professional accreditation of institutions in the United States that certify teachers. Some institutions want to reserve that autonomy for themselves, as do some states. In Canada there has been talk about external accreditation of faculties of education, and in Ontario such accreditation was a reality, undertaken briefly by the Ontario College of Teachers (2002a; also see, for example, Lakehead University, 2000).

Closely related to accreditation are the mechanisms by which teacher certification takes place. Currently under the jurisdiction of provincial government boards, the right to certify teachers nationally has likely been discussed, along with mechanisms such as standardized tests, of which the most popular may well be the Praxis series (see Bowen, 2002; Zigo & Moore, 2002). According to the Educational Testing Service, which develops and administers these instruments:

The Praxis Series: Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers® is a set of rigorous and carefully validated assessments that provides accurate, reliable information for use by state education agencies in making licensing decisions. Colleges and universities may also use the basic academic skills assessments to qualify individuals for entry into teacher education programs. (Educational Testing Service, 2002)

In July of 2000 the Ontario Ministry of Education (2000), following a trend established in some American states (e.g., Massachusetts Department of Education, 2002), announced its intentions to mandate the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test. This test, “designed for the Ministry of Education by a partnership of the Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2002b, p. 2), was required to be passed by teachers seeking Ontario certification, teacher candidates graduating from Ontario universities as well as certified teachers from other provinces. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2002) also mandated the language testing of teachers.

In spite of the government’s claims that testing would ensure that teachers have

the skills “to prepare students to take their place in the global economy” (Ontario Ministry of Education., 2002, p. 2) and that the program initiatives would set “new standards and practices for teacher quality and excellence” (p. 10), teachers and teacher educators have been apprehensive and often opposed to it (see, for example, Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association, 2002; Ontario Teachers’ Federation, 2002). The Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test was discontinued in the fall of 2004 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004).

### *Other Influences on Instructional Practice*

There are, as well, many other ideas that to varying degrees have an impact on how teachers, including teachers of language arts, are taught. Teacher education in general is currently experiencing a plethora of popular influences, both theoretical and practical. Any one of these might be interpreted positively as a whole new way to perceive a field of study, as a way to enliven a course, or at least as another lens for viewing some aspect therein. Less generously, any one might be interpreted as yet another annoying aspect to incorporate into an already overextended agenda.

The theoretical influences include: (a) social learning (Barnes, 1976, 1995; Forman & Cazden, 1994); (b) inquiry (Copenhaver, 1993; Harste, 1993, 1994; Short & Burke, 1989; Tom, 1985); (c) knowledge and knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Herrmann, 1989, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989); (d) reflection (Grimmett, 1988; Grimmett & Erickson, 1988; Schön, 1983, 1987; Valli, 1992; Zeichner, 1986); (e) narrative (Carter, 1993; Casey, 1995; Paley & Jipson, 1997; Witherell & Noddings, 1991); and (f) philosophical

dimensions (Fenstermacher, 1994; Patterson, 1987).

As well, the field is currently benefitting from a plethora of popular practical influences; these include: (a) action research (Patterson, Santa, Short, & Smith, 1993); (b) case analysis (Libby, 1994); (c) case writing (Richards & Gipe, 1997); (d) cooperative learning (Brubacher, Payne, & Rickett, 1990; Short, Harste, & Burke, 1995; Slavin, Sharan, Kagan, Lazarowitz, Webb, & Schmuck, 1985); (e) field-based programs (Mosenthal, 1995), including professional development schools (DeWitt, Birrell, Egan, Cook, Ostlund, & Young, 1998; Duquette & Cook, 1994, 1999); (f) journalling (Bean & Zulich, 1990, 1992, 1993; Evans, 1994; Ewart, 1994); (g) personal literacy histories (Brown, 1999; Kooy, 1999; Stansell, 1994); (h) portfolio assessments (Cavanaugh & Linek, 1995; Wilcox, 1996; Wiles, 1994) and other alternative assignments and activities (Florio-Ruane, 1994; Fox, 1990; Macrorie, 1988); and (i) technology (Reinking, 1994, 1995, 1997; Reinking & Bridwell-Bowles, 1991).

### ***Pedagogical Approaches to Teacher Education***

Instructors grapple with an array of influences in their field as they decide what to teach and how best to teach it. Answering those questions involves the instructors' values, perceptions of the purposes of the specific course or program under consideration, and specific methods, strategies, or activities within the course or program, over and above other contextual attributes. For over twenty years, teachers at various levels have compared their work to the conceptual orientations of curriculum as outlined by Eisner (1979) and supported by Dukacz and Babin (1980). More recently, Carter and Anders (1996) created a similar framework for pedagogy in teacher education. They outlined five

“prevailing frameworks and emerging conceptions that have shaped and are shaping development” (p. 558) in teacher education. They stated:

[w]e can identify five major orientations to teacher education that have substantial implications for the design and/or selection of teacher education pedagogies.

These include (1) a practical/craft orientation, (2) a technological orientation, (3) a personal orientation, (4) an academic orientation, and (5) a critical/social orientation. (p. 559)

A brief description of each designation they provide is cited below.

***Practical/Craft.*** Carter and Anders (1997) characterized the practical/craft orientation thus:

From a practical/craft perspective, emphasis in teacher education is on preparing teachers to deal effectively with the “real world” of schooling—the management of classes, the conduct of lessons, and the performance of the many other tasks a teacher faces throughout the school day and year. (p. 559)

***Technological.*** In characterizing the technological orientation Carter and Anders (1997) stated:

The technological perspective in teacher education has its roots in behavioral psychology and the associated procedures of task analysis and instructional design . . . . From this perspective, teaching competence is a composite of discrete skills, especially skills that have been shown to be associated with high student achievement, and teacher education is a process of skill training . . . . The most renowned version of this approach went under the name of Performance (or

Competence) Based Teacher Education . . . . (p. 560)

**Personal.** “Perhaps the most vigorous line of work in teacher education today,” according to Carter and Anders (1997), “is that focussed on teachers’ personal knowledge and stories” (p. 560). They characterized the personal orientation in this way:

. . . the focus often ranges beyond the immediate technical issues of curriculum and classroom lessons to encompass teachers’ biographies. Thus, teaching events are framed within a context of a teacher’s life history or narrative. As a result, the central themes are often moral and philosophical, having to do more with feelings, purposes, images, aspirations, and personal meanings than with teaching skills or methods in isolation from personal experience or biography. (p. 560)

**Academic.** Scholarship is a core value of the academic orientation to teacher education, an orientation that was vital to teacher education taking its place at the university. Carter and Anders described this orientation in the following manner:

An emphasis on solid preparation in the core academic disciplines of the university curriculum has always been strong, especially among faculty in the liberal arts and sciences . . . . Proponents of this position are particularly wary of the substance and rigor of pedagogical courses offered in education departments. They prefer rather that teachers be educated through a rigorous program of academic preparation followed by an apprenticeship with a skilled and academically prepared teacher. (p. 561)

**Critical/Social.** Carter and Anders (1997) described the final orientation in their typology by stating that:

The political stance inherent in the recent discussions of teachers' voice receives its full elaboration among scholars who see power as the pivotal issue in teacher preparation . . . . Central to this work is the notion of teacher empowerment; that is, the essential role of teachers as the owners of their knowledge and their destinies . . . . there is an emphasis on teachers' personal understanding of a situation and their own purposes, values, and associations. Practitioner knowledge . . . is highly tentative, situational, idiosyncratic, intuitive, and embedded in the particulars of practice. (pp. 561-2)

Eisner (1979) provided the following rationale for the importance of such orientations:

[W]hat we find is that the dominant framework for viewing curriculum has consequences for the practical operation of schools; each orientation harbors an implicit conceptualization of educational virtue. Furthermore, each orientation serves to legitimize certain educational practices and to negatively sanction others. It also functions as an ideological center around which political support can be gathered. (p. 70)

Whether a school is for educating preschool children or preservice teachers, the instructors' ideological views of their work are fundamental to an overall understanding of their teaching practice.

### **The Evolution of Language Arts Teaching Methods**

In this section I turn from discussing teacher education in general to focus on the

field of language arts, to briefly examine some of the historical roots of the methodologies that have been inherited by today's language arts educators. This is followed by an in-depth examination of current conceptualizations of and within the field, followed by a synthesis of language arts instructional methods.

### *Historical Roots of Language Arts Teaching Methods*

Language arts is considered by many as the most important school subject. The very first schools concentrated on language skills and that focus remains today; the Government of Manitoba, for example, expects that teachers of children in grades 1 to 6 devote 35 percent of the school day to language arts compared to 15 percent for mathematics and 10 percent each for science and social studies. For grades 7 and 8, the language arts allotment is 27 percent, mathematics 17 percent, and science and social studies each 13 percent (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002). It is not surprising that this important subject has had long-lasting importance, nor that the history of teaching methods is, for the most part, a history of language arts education. Connell (1987), writing in *The International Encyclopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education*, asserted that "the most long-lived and widespread set of teaching methods are those associated with the study of language and literature" (p. 201). He recounted the development of European teaching methods, those that, for the most part, form the foundation of Canada's methods to date.

From ancient Greek and Roman times when grammar, style, and eloquence formed the basis of what was to be taught to the complex array of expectations in place

today, language arts has remained at the forefront of children's learning. From a classical education was derived the basis "of what was eventually developed in France during the twentieth century as *l'explication des textes*" (Connell, 1987, p. 202). This methodology arose in France late in the nineteenth century when methodologies long used for the teaching of classic Greek and Roman literature were applied to the teaching of vernacular literature. Here was a strong political agenda: Studying in depth and detail the literature of one's own country served as a solid basis for understanding and appreciating one's general culture. Learned students thus knew thoroughly the language, the literature and the culture of their time, and, not unlike the movement toward the German universities model discussed earlier, many felt that such studying would serve as the best sort of education for the firm establishment of a liberal democratic agenda.

There was, however, another school of thought, known generally as the movement for Progressive Education, championed by John Dewey, that ultimately challenged *l'explication des textes*. As Connell explained:

The essential element in the methods of all progressive educators was activity . . . . The heart of the matter was, in Dewey's phrase, the continuing reconstruction of the pupil's experience. Education was a process of living by developing one's needs, purposes, interests, ideas, and actions. Activity methods of teaching therefore tended to emphasize (a) the importance of pupils' needs and interests, (b) the acquisition of functional knowledge through purposive work and problem solving, (c) appropriate opportunity for expression, and (d) involvement in cooperative experiences. (Connell, 1987, p. 208)

Earlier educational movements, even those going back to classical times, served a small, elite student body of older students. The progressive movement concerned itself with mass education and with the education also of younger children, as did related early childhood movements such as the Montessori method (Montessori, 1965; Wentworth, 1999) and the Reggio Emilia school (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993). Sociopolitical concerns have continued to influence the field of education and contribute to developments in language and literacy education as well as teacher education.

### *Changing Conceptualizations of Language Arts*

The field of language arts is dynamic. Change is constant, and teacher educators must work hard to keep in touch with all that is current in their fields. What are the up-and-coming practices and materials? Which past practices and materials have fallen by the wayside? What are the new theories that support teachers' actions? In this section of this chapter, I examine some of the ways that language arts has been evolving throughout the past several decades.

It is important to look at these changes for many reasons. Previous conceptualizations about language arts instruction remain part of the lore of the field. Many teacher candidates bring with them to their teacher education courses numerous outdated notions about what to teach and how to teach it. They bring with them the controversial views that society and the field itself have had, and continue to have, about phonics, whole language, spelling and grammar instruction, to name but a few specific aspects. Not unlike many teacher candidates, instructors, too, carry with them the baggage

of their own language learning, sometimes useful but often burdensome. Some instructors may well bring outdated methodologies to their teacher education classrooms, or focus on the “tried-and-true,” sometimes at the expense of cutting-edge notions.

The emphasis on classroom teaching in elementary language arts throughout the greater part of Canadian history has been on learning to read. In Manitoba, for example, language arts was not designated as a subject until the 1960s. Before the 1970s, school children were taught several separate subjects: reading, spelling, printing or handwriting (also called penmanship), language (also called grammar, or designated by the language whose grammar was being taught, that is, English or *français*), and occasionally, creative writing. In the late 1960s the subject of language arts emerged as an entity. Although it contained much the same elements, it presented the various facets of language learning as inter-related, integrated into a single subject called language arts that comprised four separate but reciprocal modes: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Sometimes drama was considered as a fifth component; now it is considered as an aspect of viewing and representing. Recently the scope of language arts has broadened to include these modes of viewing and representing (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996a, 1996b; Tompkins, 1998) as full and legitimate modes along with the traditional four, with ever-increasing emphasis on the reciprocity of modes (Hansen, 1987; Hansen & Graves, 1991).

Furthermore, many educators and educational theorists are no longer content with the narrowness of the label “language arts” for the language learning that children do. Language learning goes beyond the confines of a school subject, and, of course, beyond

the confines of a school, and might better be conceptualized more widely as “literacy.” Though some see the terms as interchangeable, others claim that the entire definition of literacy has been widened (Blachowicz & Wimett, 1995; Pailliotet, 1995; Willinsky, 1990) to make room for social, political, and cultural agendas beyond the acquisition of rudimentary language arts abilities. Issues of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, intellectual ability, and learning style are coming to the fore as part of the entire movement that sees literacy as front and centre in the establishing of a critical pedagogy (Brady, 1995; Britzman, 1991, 1993, 1995; Chambers, 1992; Gardner, 1983, 1993; Goebel, 1996; Hewett, 1996; Kanpol, 1997; Malinowitz, 1995). Postmodern thought has also been increasingly influential (Amsler & Stotko, 1996; Butler-Kisber, Dillon, & Mitchell, 1997; Usher & Edwards, 1994).

The exact path by which these major changes have come about has been and would be the subject of considerable controversy, the nature of which is beyond the scope of this discussion. Nonetheless, it is useful to understand some of the major influences that provided impetus for changing practices in Canadian classrooms during the past half a century because these influences form and inform content and practice in teacher education classrooms. These influences are discussed in terms of: (a) influences of educational psychology, (b) influences of educational research, (c) influences of language arts reformers, and (d) general influences of school cultures and practices.

### ***Influences of Educational Psychology***

Educational psychology has profoundly influenced many aspects of human learning and teaching throughout the twentieth century. Most salient in terms of the

present study has been the work of educational psychologists in providing theoretical explanations for how language is learned, and, by extension, how it should best be taught. In the area of language acquisition there are currently several major theoretical approaches that can be used to account for various phenomena evidenced by children and to direct instructional efforts purposefully. Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985), in an extensive chapter published in Berko-Gleason's edited collection, *The Development of Language* (1985), identified four major language acquisition approaches as: (a) behaviouristic, (b) linguistic, (c) cognitive interactionist, and (d) social interactionist.

***Behaviouristic.*** According to Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985):

. . . behaviorists focus on simple learning of stimulus-response associations.

Language development is considered to be a problem of linking various stimuli in the environment to internal responses and these internal responses to overt verbal behavior. Language development is viewed as a progression from random verbalizations to mature communication through the simultaneous application of classical and operant conditioning and imitation. (p. 183)

Recently, Alexander & Fox (2004) echoed the above understanding: "In this theoretical orientation, learning resulted from the repeated and controlled stimulation from the environment that came to elicit a predictable response from the individual" (p. 35). From the field of behavioural psychology the field of education inherited several foundational concepts: the notion of explicitly stated behavioural objectives, the delineation of a set of fixed procedures, known as a lesson plan, by which to help students achieve objectives, the notion of stages of development and of readiness to move from

one stage to the next, the measuring of intelligence, evidenced in the Intelligence Quotient or IQ and measured by the IQ test, and the standardizing of measurement for a variety of tests to measure achievement and to diagnose students' difficulties. Students were grouped within the school and within the classroom by ability, often sitting by rank. Teachers displayed charts of individual performance and awarded stickers or prizes as concrete reinforcement for good work.

Language arts teachers made use of all of these materials and activities, and in addition used graded books (for reading, spelling and grammar study), related workbooks and supplementary workbooks, as well as flash cards for additional drill and practice and for assessment, tachistoscopes<sup>2</sup> to increase reading speed and fluency, reading kits (such as the SRA kits published by the firm Scientific Research Associates), programmed reading materials (such as the Sullivan<sup>3</sup> materials), and some of the earliest computer-assisted instruction (CAI) programs. Many of these materials and methodologies are, in various modifications, still in use today.

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<sup>2</sup> A tachistoscope is "any mechanical device for the controlled and usually very brief exposure of visual materials, as pictures, letters, numbers, words, phrases, and sentences" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 252). These visuals were printed on strips of film which were fed individually into the tachistoscope and projected on a wall for the student to read. A type of controlled reader, it was popular in the 1960s and early 1970s as a way to drill items and to measure accurately the number of items read correctly in a fixed time limit.

<sup>3</sup> The Sullivan Reading Program consists of readers, workbooks, tests, and teacher's guides forming "a complete diagnostic and prescriptive program to optimize individual progress in beginning and remedial reading. [It] presents a logical, systematic, linguistic progression of decoding and word-attack skills . . . [and] provides immediate feedback so students only practice correct responses" (Phoenix Learning Group, 2004, p. 1). The materials were developed by Sullivan Associates and originally published in the 1960s and early 1970s.

*Linguistic.* Of the second approach Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985)

stated:

[T]he linguistic approach assumes an independent language structure or grammar and relies heavily on innate mechanisms for its explanation of language acquisition. Children are thought to have an inborn language acquisition device, which enables them to derive grammatical structures from the complex speech of adults. They are by nature able to recognize linguistic universals and ultimately to comprehend and produce sentences they have never heard before. (p. 187)

This linguistic orientation is part of a wider naturalistic or nativist learning theory in which a teacher's primary role was to nurture children's inborn abilities and not interfere with them through contrived means such as the behaviourists were using. Naturalistic psychology reached beyond language acquisition. It provided the foundation for the free schools movement such as the Summerhill program of A. S. Neill (1960, 1968, 1969) and for the entire whole language movement (Goodman 1986; Goodman, Smith, Meredith, Goodman, 1987) that influenced many schools in the world from the late 1970s to the present day, beginning with those that were English-speaking schools, but eventually reaching those of other languages as well. Child-centredness and increased freedom for individuals were key tenets, giving rise to free choice, or, at least, wider choice, of reading materials, and of what a student might write during the writing portion of a language arts program. This movement honoured individual motivation above the notion of preconceived stages attached to age levels. It valued attempts and approximations as well as exact replications, and as such recognized and celebrated

practices such as journal writing, miscue analysis (Goodman, 1969, [1973a], [1973b]) and, ideologically if not practically, invented spelling (Read, 1971, 1975), (which would benefit practically from cognitive psychology).

*Cognitive interactionist.* Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985) identified a set of approaches that was “a moderate compromise” (p. 188) between the behaviouristic and the linguistic: Approaches of this type they identified collectively as “interactionist approaches” (p. 187). Within this set, they delineated two types of interactionist approaches, “the cognitive-interactionist approach” (p. 188) and “the social interaction approach” (p. 191). The former they characterized thus:

[T]he cognitive-interactionist approach suggests that language is only an expression of a more general set of human activities. Proper development of the cognitive system is considered a necessary precursor of linguistic expression. The major task facing the cognitive interactionist, then, is to identify the sequence of cognitive maturation and to explain how these cognitive developments result in language acquisition. (p. 191)

Cognitive psychology, though linked in many ways with behaviourism, moved education into the era of “process versus product,” into acknowledging as crucial the ways individuals achieve various academic ends as well as those ends in themselves. The notion of thought being stored as schema (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977) was key to understanding how learners processed information. The entire field of information processing, and, in relation, the explanation of processes via models of behaviour, exploded in this era, “. . . sparked by advances in neurology and artificial

intelligence” (Ericsson & Smith, 1991, in Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 37).

Building on earlier work (see Gray, 1984), emerging understandings about reading were explained by several theorists. In 1972, in an article he entitled “One Second of Reading,” Gough (1985a, 1985b) suggested an information processing model of reading. Laberge and Samuels followed this with their 1974 theory of the role of automaticity in information processing (see Laberge & Samuels, 1985; Samuels, 1985). In 1980, Just and Carpenter (1985) presented a theory of reading highlighting visual perception. Rumelhart (1985) contributed the conceptualization of reading as an interactive process in which readers use their knowledge of letter-sound relationships but also their lexical, semantic, and syntactic knowledge systems to identify and make meaning of words. Alongside these theories and those of many other reading theorists, Goodman (1970) offered his powerful notion of reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” involving readers’ use of all the language systems. These ideas were further advanced by Smith (1971a, 1971b, 1973, 1978c). The work of Pearson and Johnson (1978) began the intense interest in reading comprehension instruction, moving theoretical models into the arenas of practice.

In writing, models such as that proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981) regarding cognitive processing and the comprehensive research into writing conducted by Graves (1978, 1981) supported the simplified elementary school versions of “the writing process” popularized by Graves (1983, 1994), Calkins (1986, 1994) and Atwell (1987, 1998), ideas that helped a generation of teachers who had not taught writing at all to begin to do so, and that have continued to support new generations of teachers. The reciprocity of language modes was recognized by many (see, for example, Hansen, 1987;

Hansen & Graves, 1991; Tierney & Pearson, 1983) and applied in many different ways. One early evidence of this reciprocity was in the development of the concept of invented spelling (Clay, 1975; Read, 1971, 1975).

Ultimately, the field's interest in and growing understanding of cognitive processing gave rise to the metacognitive movement (Baker & Brown, 1984a, 1984b; Brown & Palincsar, 1985; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Flavell, 1976, 1979, 1981) and related strategic teaching (e.g., Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991; Roehler & Duffy, 1984) as basic research was applied to instructional settings.

Many strategies popular today date back to this heyday of cognitive processing research. Among them are: (a) the use of graphic organizers such as concept maps (also called mind maps, semantic webs, or bubble diagrams) for noting relationships when brainstorming ideas, story maps for identifying basic story elements, herringbone diagrams for distinguishing main ideas from supporting details, and Venn diagrams (overlapping circles) for comparing and contrasting concepts or events; (b) the use of idea records such as "think sheets"<sup>4</sup> from the Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing program (Englert & Raphael, 1989; Raphael & Englert, 1990); literature circle role sheets (Daniels, 1994); and various reading response prompts; and (c) the use of general

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<sup>4</sup> Think sheets are a series of papers which cue students to ask questions of themselves while writing. They also serve a social function in that they are intended to take the place of a teacher or more knowledgeable other who would dialogue similarly with the novice writer. Think sheets are based on the stages of the writing process (e.g., planning, organizing, revising) and vary for different genres.

instructional processes such as the directed listening-thinking activity (DLTA; Stauffer, 1969, 1975) and guided writing (Smith & Bean, 1980).

***Social interactionist.*** The final set of approaches, and the second type of interactionist approach, is the one which Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985) called social interactionist. Of this approach they stated:

[T]he social interaction approach assumes that language development is the result of acquiring grammatical rules. Children are also assumed to bring to the language learning situation a number of innate predispositions that constrain them in their search for linguistically relevant distinctions. On the other hand, the environment is believed to be almost as constrained as the children, in order to supply children with the types of language experience necessary for development. Language development is viewed as an orderly, although complex, interactive process in which social interaction assists language acquisition and the acquisition of language allows more mature social interaction. (pp. 195-196)

Cognitive psychology blended with social psychology. General methodologies around cooperative and collaborative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986; Slavin, 1983; Slavin, Sharan, Kagan, Lazarowitz, Webb, & Schmuck, 1985) and around the facilitation of group processing began to flourish to open routes for social learning. Reader-response theories, with their roots in naturalistic ideologies, did not deny the social nature of language processes. Moving beyond a singular conceptualization of comprehension as understanding *the* meaning inherent in a text, Rosenblatt (1938/1968, 1978) offered a conceptualization of reading in which readers created their own meanings

in response to the texts they encountered. She thereby opened the route to a text's having a multiplicity of meanings. Rosenblatt's ideas about individuals' transactional processes of meaning making with text were actualized via methodologies such as Dias' *Making Sense of Poetry* (1987) and literature circles (Daniels, 1994, 2002; McMahon, Raphael, Goatley, & Pardo, 1997). Writing instruction evidenced the move toward writer's workshop models wherein the writing process was taught within an interactive structure involving dyads, small-groups, and whole-class sessions (Atwell, 1987, 1998).

Currently, the influence of social interactionism is providing the field of language arts with new theoretical notions of learning (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). Epistemological considerations about the social construction of knowledge (Hirtle, 1996), and about constructivism in general are supported by practical ideas about scaffolding learners within their zones of proximal development (e.g., Edwards & Malicky, 1996), as evidenced, for example, in the use of Elkonin boxes<sup>5</sup>. The contributions of Bakhtin (1981) have provided the field with attention to dialogism, which has influenced

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<sup>5</sup> Elkonin boxes, named after the Russian psychologist who developed them, are teaching devices consisting of sets of small boxes used by teachers of novice readers to develop and strengthen their understanding of the concept of phonemes, the smallest units of sound in speech. Novice readers can use Elkonin boxes to demonstrate their awareness of phonemes (their knowledge about how an oral word is segmented into sounds) by counting the sounds. Looking at a set of boxes (□□□) and hearing a word said or read orally by a teacher, a reader puts a small counter (such as a button or a bean) into a separate box upon hearing a discrete phoneme. For "house" one counter would be placed in the first box (on the left) for /h/, one in the second box for /ou/, and one in the final box for /s/. This visual and manipulative act, which relies on gradually reduced involvement with a teacher, concretizes the discriminating of discrete sounds to reinforce it for the reader and to help the teacher assess its accuracy and provide feedback.

instruction in writing as well as response to literature (Chapman, 1999; Tremmel, 2002). The field is responding by recognizing the “situated” nature of learning, how learning differs in relation to the historical and geographic communities (Alexander & Fox, 2004; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000), including classroom communities, to which a learner belongs or in which a learner is forced to work.

### ***Influences of Educational Research***

Throughout the twentieth century, the field of language arts education has seen a tumult of research activity, much of it applying the theoretical work of educational psychologists and refining practical strategies toward the establishment of best practices. Individuals and groups, largely from universities and government educational institutions, have created, funded, implemented, and disseminated the results of large-scale research programs. Some individuals, too, published pivotal works that have been extremely influential within the field. While descriptions of these are not within the scope of this paper, it is important to recognize that the ideas advocated in preservice language arts methods classes, while often attributable to sweeps of theory from outside the field itself, owe much, too, to the cumulative results of high-impact educational research. These studies were, of course, created in the historical context of their times, and cannot be separated from the influences of psychology, philosophy, and pedagogy.

Among the many key studies that have influenced teaching practice in Canadian language arts are: the First Grade Studies of early reading instruction (Bond & Dykstra, 1967), Loban’s longitudinal studies of children’s language development (1976), Clay’s studies of early reading in New Zealand (1982), the Goodmans’ work on miscue

analysis (Goodman, 1969, [1973a], [1973b]; Goodman & Burke, 1972), the British work concerning functions of language (Halliday, 1973; Tough, 1977) and that concerning writing and writing across the curriculum (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, & Parker, 1976), the emergent literacy research conducted by Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984), Hillocks' meta-analysis of writing instruction (1986), and Langer and Applebee's monograph on *How Writing Shapes Thinking* (1987). From Canada the work most strongly influencing classroom practice might be that of Dias (1979, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987) on classroom procedures regarding response to poetry, and that of Crowhurst (1993, 1994) on persuasive writing and language and literacy across the curriculum.

Provincial and national assessments, though often more controversial than other types, have also been an impetus for change within the field. Canadian educators are influenced by Canadian assessments such as the School Achievement Indicators Project (SAIP) conducted by the Council of Ministers of Education (1991a, 1991b, 1994, 1999), but also by various American projects such as *The Reading Report Card* (National Assessment of Educational Progress, [1985]) and *The Writing Report Card* (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986). While teachers and teacher educators might argue long and hard over which studies have ultimately been most effectual, few, if any, would argue that educational research has profoundly altered the terrain of language arts teaching. Delineating aspects of the specific studies is beyond the intent of the present study. Let it suffice to say that we owe a collective debt of gratitude to those whose research has inestimably enabled or enriched our practice.

### *Influences of Language Arts Reformers*

Language arts has known several reformers, working both individually and in groups, whose influence on the field has been immense. Many educators could quickly call to mind many of these including the National Council of Teachers of English, the International Reading Association, the Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, as well as regional, provincial, and local groups. Through the day-to-day advocacy of such groups, their publications, and their conferences, teachers change their practice.

These groups often take their cues from sociopolitical movements wherein specific events have occurred that marked the change to the face of the field. Current reform in language and literacy teaching can be traced to several historical markers, largely American or British, among them the 1966 Anglo-American Seminar at Dartmouth College which “called for a growth model of learning stressing creativity, expressive writing, and response to literature” (Squire, 1991, p. 10), the 1968 publication of Moffett’s *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968/1983), the 1976 publication of Barnes’ *From Communication to Curriculum*, and the 1978 publication of Pearson and Johnson’s *Teaching Reading Comprehension*, among many others.

For example, in terms of the teaching and learning of language arts, proponents of progressive education (mentioned earlier) saw their intentions reified in the document entitled *A Language for Life* (Great Britain, Department of Education and Science, 1975), popularly known as the Bullock Report on the teaching of English. This was a report commissioned by the government of Great Britain. While many were perhaps hoping for

a decision about what *exactly* constituted each specific area of reading, literature, grammar, dictation, and composition, as well as the *exact* amount of time that ought to be allocated to each area, the report concluded otherwise:

It was decided that knowledge of the grammatical structure of language should not be taught as a separate unrelated exercise but should arise as the pupils needed it in the course of their own speech and writing or observed it by studying how it worked in various literary situations. Pupils, it was suggested, learned language by using the four modes of talking, listening, writing, and reading in close relationship with one another. The teacher should maintain these relationships in such a way that the whole business of language learning was constantly enriched by the interplay of the various modes, and that each mode, too, was duly benefitted by the interactive process. (Connell, 1987, p. 210)

While many of today's teachers might recognize the contributions of this document and others to the ways in which their classrooms currently operate, in Canada and the United States as well as in Great Britain, most teachers might well cite the change as occurring with the emergence of whole language (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991; Goodman, 1986; Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Goodman, 1987; Smith, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1988) which countered the traditional skills-based, hierarchical models of teaching and learning the language arts (see Adams, 1990; Chall, 1967/1983; Liberman & Liberman, 1992; Stahl, 1992). Today, such events as the mandating of new curriculum expectations or the initiation of provincial standards tests might serve as the markers heralding visible changes in direction at a personal, school district, or provincial level.

Future markers might be the instigating of mandatory teacher testing or retesting, or some kind of measurement directed at designating master teachers.

### ***General Influences of School Cultures and Practices***

Many other influences besides theory, research, and the specific work of language arts educators have changed the face of language arts. The earlier establishment of school libraries changed the accessibility of reading materials for children and teachers, as now the establishment of media centres ensures increasing student exposure to wider varieties of media. The inclusion in schools of computers in classrooms and computer laboratories in schools is changing the way students write and represent. Changing assessment and reporting practices, such as opportunities for e-mailing parents and meeting them regularly at student-led conferences changes the nature of day-to-day classroom activity. As well, the overall political climate in which teachers work, with increasing social issues and various labour-related conflicts at the forefront of schooling, all occurring under the perpetual pressures of the news media, also influence teachers' daily work. These issues are important because they form the backdrop of the daily work of teacher candidates and teacher educators.

### ***Synthesis of Language Arts Instructional Methods***

To make sense of the myriad influences on the field of language arts/literacy learning and teaching is a complex task. Many people have discussed the evolution of instruction within this discipline (e.g., Hoffman, Duffy, Pearson, & Smith-Burke, 1999; Langer & Allington, 1992; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Pearson & Stephens, 1994). One

simple (though by no means simplistic) typology was offered by three professors from McGill University, Lynn Butler-Kisber, David Dillon, and Claudia Mitchell, in the book *Language Across the Curriculum* (Froese, 1997). They described three major periods in the story of the development of language arts/literacy instruction: (a) product, (b) process, and (c) postmodernist. Across these periods the focus of interest to educators has shifted from children's output, what they create as evidence of learning, to children's processing, how they go about their learning, and, more currently, to the social contexts and purposes in which and for which children learn. The characterizations provided by Butler-Kisber et al. (1997) will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

### **Research on Curriculum and Instruction Courses in Language Arts**

Throughout this chapter I have presented several conceptual and practical changes that have occurred in language arts education. How have all of these influences affected preservice teacher education, particularly language arts curriculum and instruction? To specifically contextualize the present study I sought specific related research.

### ***Overview of Research on Preservice Teacher Education in Language Arts***

Determining the state of the art of language arts curriculum and instruction in Canadian preservice teacher education is something that has not been done before, according to the investigations I have made of ERIC, ERIC International and ProQuest databases, as well as the electronic library catalogues of several universities. Several educational researchers have examined one or two specific practices in language

arts/literacy methods courses, for example: assignments (Fox, 1990); attitudes and perceptions about literacy learning (Gerla, 1994); case studies (Libby, 1994); multicultural awareness (Florio-Ruane, 1994; Young & Graham, 1998); portfolio assessment (Cavanaugh & Linek, 1995; Wiles, 1994); reflection (Libby, 1994; Stansell, 1994); teaching about student evaluation (Shulha, 1999); and themes (Richards & Gipe, 1997). Furthermore, a few researchers have examined overall practice or wider conceptualizations of practice concerning language arts/literacy methods (e.g., Greene, 1995; Herrmann & Sarracine, 1993; Mosenthal, 1995; Meyers, 1996; Serebrin, 1995; Shwery, 1995). Very few of the reports concerned Canadian practice per se.

While a few studies have examined course syllabi in preservice teacher education (Cochrane, 1985; Floden, McDairmid, & Wiemers, 1989; Garcelon, 2000; Kusch, 1995; Lather, 1984; Messner, 1993; Morris, 1996; Shepherd, 1996; Shirley & Bencloski, 1990; Stolarski & Erwin, 1991), only one of these (Floden, McDairmid, & Wiemers, 1989) has examined course syllabi specifically in language arts/literacy methods courses, (or the specific course studied was not made explicit), and these investigations all involved relatively small numbers of syllabi examined for relatively few, specific purposes.

In her recent doctoral study, undertaken in 86 Schools of Education in California, Garcelon (2000) collected data from 70 teacher educators' surveys (57, or 47%, from one source and 13, or 16%, from another source) and a content analysis of 42 course syllabi (at a return rate of 60%). The overall intent of the Garcelon study was to gauge the constructivism in the practice of teacher educators. Though methodologically of interest in relation to my study, the focus here was on mathematics methods and not language arts

methods.

Three studies involving the syllabi of language arts courses were found. The first was a relatively small study by Floden, McDairmid, and Wiemers (1989). Only two wide-range systematic studies of a large number of preservice courses in language arts have been published to date. The larger of these was the study by Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995). The smaller was a study conducted by Craig and Frerichs (1999). All three studies are discussed regarding purpose, methodology, and major findings.

### ***The Floden, McDairmid and Wiemers Study***

***Purpose.*** The study by Floden et al. (1989), one of a series of studies conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education at Michigan State University, was indeed a small one. The report of it, entitled *What Are They Trying to Do?: Perspectives on Teacher Educators' Purposes*, is only 20 pages long and was published as an ERIC document. It is in many ways a preliminary study, and as such it provided important background for the study I conducted. These researchers set the context of their work by discussing purposes, and the tension between conflicting purposes. Among these they listed: "course purposes and program purposes . . . the purposes of those who initially developed the course and the purposes subsequent faculty had for the course when they taught it . . . the group's purposes . . . as distinct from the purposes of any individual faculty member" (p. 1). Of program documents they claimed that "[t]eacher education programs are not likely to have well defined purposes, consistently represented in program documents and endorsed by all program staff" (p. 2).

***Methodology.*** Reporting on an earlier study of preservice teacher education

programs (Joyce, Yarger, Howey, Harbeck, & Kluwin, 1977), Floden et al. (1989) maintained that, in relation to questions about ideology and goals, “the survey responses were puzzling. Most faculty respondents endorsed every purpose they were asked about” (p. 2). Because of this perception of “multiple–possibly conflicting–purposes” (p. 4), Floden and his colleagues decided that they would interview teacher educators, to enable probing of responses. However, in order to avoid the generalities that they assumed they would receive with open-ended interview questions, they “developed an interview schedule constructed around individual course syllabi” (p. 5). During the interviews, in order to “approximate the chunks of instruction that typify teacher educators’ thinking” (p. 5), they discussed the following aspects of the teacher educators’ courses, as cued by their syllabi: “Class time and course summary; Texts and/or readings; Objectives; Schedule of topics; Course requirements and assignments; Evaluation and grading; Instructional context” (p. 5).

In the first part of the study, eight preservice teacher educators from four different institutions were interviewed. At each institution an instructor of language arts methods was selected, as well as an instructor of mathematics methods. All worked in elementary or early childhood programs.

*Findings.* According to Floden et al., “[a]ll of the respondents gave most attention to purposes that were linked to pupils’ academic learning” (p. 7). Purposes were “either subject matter-specific or related to learning a (typically unspecified) range of subject matter” (p. 8). The researchers stated that responses concerning purpose were difficult to characterize: “[Teacher educators] refer to specific subject matter but in a general way.

They leave unclear whether what they want students to learn is unique to the subject area of interest or whether the subject matter is merely the context for teaching some general pedagogical methods” (p. 9). While there were some responses that indicated “that teacher educators want students to learn a particular way of teaching a particular subject or topic” (p. 10), others seemed more directed toward “changing students’ beliefs rather than their actions” (p. 10).

In order to account for what might seem like a lack of specificity or even uncertainty among teacher educators of these methods courses, Floden et al. made an obvious but important statement about contexts of teacher educators’ work, contexts as applicable in Canada as in the United States:

Elementary teachers typically teach the full range of academic subjects and prospective teachers can rarely predict accurately the grade at which they will teach. Thus teacher educators recognize that their students may teach reading, other language arts, math, science, social studies, and sometimes art, music, and physical education at any level from kindergarten to eighth grade . . . . Teacher educators seldom have much more than one year . . . of full-time study in which to provide this preparation, and a large block of time must be reserved for student teaching. This combination of limited time and uncertainty about the knowledge and skills that graduates will require clearly precludes acquisition of detailed pedagogical content across the full range of subject matters. (Floden et al., 1989, p. 12)

The researchers felt that their method of interviews guided by syllabi yielded

responses that they considered to be “more specific and more differentiated” (p. 13) and which they felt revealed, as they expected, “the multidimensionality of purpose” (p. 13). Their method fell short, however, in indicating reasons behind purposes as well as influences on decision making. They summed up the discussion of the results of their syllabus-guided interviews by stating: “Given [all the] constraints, the curriculum of a teacher education course is likely to look more like a series of potentially worthwhile activities than like a clearly defined strategy” (p. 15).

Floden et al. allocated much of their discussion to assignments and evaluation. They found that teacher candidates were “busy with a variety of assignments” (p. 15). Within 17 interviews conducted in the second phase of their study, they found that “38 different types of written work or projects were described as requirements for courses” (p. 16). In addition to midterm and final tests, (which they claimed were given by most instructors, and which were never the exclusive assessment activities in any course), and in addition to required readings and ongoing class preparations,

[p]reservice teachers do lesson plans, bulletin boards, critical analyses of journal articles, and concept maps, among other things . . . . Teacher educators justify their assignments by citing what they think preservice teachers need to know, but they don't agree on what that is; hence, the somewhat bewildering variety of assignments. (p. 15)

One type of assignment that was common across different courses and institutions was journal writing, to the point of some students feeling ““overjournalled”” (p. 17). The researchers felt that journals served to help students make sense of their practicum

experiences, and respond to ideas in readings. As well, the researchers believed that the journals seemed “to symbolize, for students, faculty concern or engagement” (p. 18) wherein instructors could gain insight into individuals; as such, journal assignments “may be as important for what they represent to students as for their pedagogical purposes” (p. 18).

Floden et al. also investigated the criteria by which assignments were judged: [T]he criteria . . . appear diverse . . . . Some stress neatness and mechanics in written work, because they think those are criteria by which teachers will be judged, while others concern themselves with how well students synthesize information. Students’ written work is often evaluated on skills they are expected to have gained from prior experience; such things as organization of material, structure of argument or clarity of writing. (p. 15)

All in all, the researchers evidenced “no single standard for assessment within an institution or within a discipline” (p. 19). In terms of weightings, Floden et al. found that although teacher candidates completed many projects and written assignments, their results on tests or exams were often weighted the most heavily.

### ***The Smagorinsky and Whiting Study***

The research which I found most relevant in conceptualizing my own work was a study conducted by Peter Smagorinsky and Melissa E. Whiting, then both of the University of Oklahoma. Their study was published in 1995 by the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) as part of the CEE Monographs series; the monograph was entitled *How English Teachers Get*

*Taught: Methods of Teaching the Methods Class.* The very existence of this work legitimized for me the notion I had long held of researching curriculum and instruction in preservice teacher education. Their results in attempting to locate research in this area confirmed my own lack of findings. At the beginning of their book they stated:

We have surprisingly little knowledge about the manner in which students in methods classes are taught. An ERIC search that combined such terms as “syllabus,” “language arts,” and “methods class” turned up no research on the ways in which “the methods class” is taught to preservice teachers . . . . [A] review of Spring Conference catalogues [of the National Council of Teachers of English] revealed that even though many presentations have focused on the teaching of the methods class, no one has yet investigated on a wide scale how such courses are taught. (p. 1)

Whereas Smagorinsky and Whiting’s study investigated the preparation of high school teachers in the United States of America, my interest was primarily in the preparation of elementary teachers in Canada. Nonetheless, the common element we all held was our focus on the preparation of future teachers of language arts/literacy. To my knowledge, the Smagorinsky and Whiting monograph is to this day the only published, in-depth study of methodology in a specific discipline in preservice teacher education.

**Purpose.** Smagorinsky and Whiting described the purposes of their study as follows:

With little formal knowledge of how preservice teachers are educated, all we have left to fall back on is our own experience in teaching the course and our shared

conversations with peers about how we go about our business. While this approach is serviceable to some extent, it does not provide much help for those who do not have travel allowances and therefore rarely engage in such conversations, those whose conversations are conducted among colleagues whose practices are similar to begin with, those who are designing methods courses for the first time, or those who simply want to know what is available to them in teaching a methods class. (p. 2)

**Methodology.** Smagorinsky and Whiting elicited syllabi from instructors involved in preservice secondary methods courses at over 300 universities across the United States; the institutions represented a cross section of the nation's public universities. They received syllabi from 81 universities, less than a third of the institutions. They nonetheless received over 100 syllabi in all, with a few from the same institution wherein multiple sections of a course were taught by different instructors.

As reasons for their low rate of return they explained that (a) some institutions did not teach such programs or such a specific course; (b) some professors did not trust the researchers' intentions or did not agree with them; and (c) "some people just never seem to respond to surveys, publishers' sweepstakes, or other solicitations they find in their mailboxes" (p. 5).

The method of analysis used by these researchers was "collaborative readings of the syllabi [which] took place in focused two- to three-hour sessions" (p. 7). As well, they read the textbooks listed and various existing guidelines such as those of NCTE (Wolfe, 1986), NCATE (2002), and the work of the Holmes Group (1986). The researchers read

the set of syllabi five times, first to get an overall impression and to count the frequency of specific textbooks listed in the syllabi. This latter task enabled the investigators to access the texts, which they later read and analyzed as part of their decision making about the syllabi themselves. In the second reading they developed a set of preliminary categories by which to classify the syllabi. This was refined and used to classify syllabi in the third reading, with a focus on instructional approaches. The relationship of course work to practicum experience and the degree of student collaboration were the foci of the fourth reading. The final reading was to assess the influences of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) guidelines on preservice instruction, as evidenced in the syllabi.

*Findings.* Of the over 100 syllabi received, Smagorinsky and Whiting considered 79, those which they identified as being syllabi for methods courses, although three of those were ultimately “too skeletal to classify” (p. 8). They identified five major categories of instructional approaches, represented as: Survey, 27 syllabi; Workshop, 23 syllabi; Experience-based, 8; Theoretical, 4; and Reflective, 2. They also had some syllabi in two categories simultaneously: Reflective/Workshop, 5; Reflective/Experience-based, 3; Workshop with practicum, 2; and a final category of Other practica included, 4 (p. 10).

A Survey approach was described as one that “attempts to cover a great many issues and topics . . . . class sessions can be taught in almost any order; the knowledge from one session to another does not build toward a synthesis, but tends to move from topic to topic” (p. 9). A Workshop approach “devotes class sessions to students’ participation in the activities they are being taught to teach . . . . [including] lesson plans,

assessments, prereading activities, and other practical teaching activities” (p. 12).

Smagorinsky and Whiting characterized their Experience-based approach as one that “deliberately links theory and practice, usually through extensive observations of secondary English classrooms and often by requiring preservice teachers to both plan instruction with and teach in the classes of secondary school teachers” (p. 15). Their Theoretical approach “attempts to involve students in the consideration of theoretical positions that drive classroom practice. The emphasis is on the theory rather than the practice” (p. 17). A Reflective approach “tends to involve students in consistent, formal reflection about the course readings, their own experiences as learners, and their own experiences in the course itself” (p. 18-19).

Smagorinsky and Whiting also examined methods of assessment and evaluation.

They reported:

Evaluations of student performance fell into twelve general categories, in the following order of frequency: situated tasks, reflective/personal expression, short planning/teaching assignments, comprehensive projects, reports/critiques of outside reading, medium-length projects, unspecified-length units, literature-related assignments, short tests, long-term planning, analysis of the methods class itself, and classroom management. (p. 31)

Specific counts of the frequency of these methods, as well as full descriptions of each were also provided.

An analysis of the texts assigned led to the researchers positing “the range of theories available in the texts most often used on methods course syllabi” (p. 52). These

theoretical categories by which texts were classified included: (a) Piagetian Approaches Based on the Assumption of Natural Development, (b) Approaches Involving the Concept of Instructional Scaffolding, (c) Transactional Theories of Literary Response, (d) Language as Process, and (e) Sociocultural Perspectives on Learning (pp. 52-53). Each of these positions was described. Under each were listed required or recommended textbooks from the syllabi, along with the frequencies with which each was mentioned. The authors provide detailed discussions of each of these categories and of the sub-categories within them, as well as considerable analysis of specific textual materials.

The final analysis undertaken by Smagorinsky and Whiting concerned the influences of the NCTE guidelines. At the national level in the United States, every 10 years the NCTE issues a document entitled *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts*. The two most current ones were authored by the NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification, chaired by Wolfe (1986) and by Small (1996). The Smagorinsky and Whiting study was conducted in 1992. Concerning the NCTE guidelines the researchers claimed:

The recommendations of the NCTE guidelines of 1986 (Wolfe, 1986) appear to have permeated, in one way or another, most of the syllabi we examined. But because only a few of the syllabi made specific reference to the NCTE guidelines, we have no way of knowing the extent to which the professors designing the courses consciously attended to the guidelines or simply shared the same values as the NCTE committee and planned their courses accordingly. (p. 101)

Other major American initiatives, such as the 1987 English Coalition Conference (Lloyd-

Jones & Lunsford, 1989), have also proposed recommendations that continue to be used as guidelines across the United States, particularly for secondary education. In parallel, the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (1985) has issued similar guidelines. More recently, the Language Arts Researchers of Canada (LARC), a subgroup of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, has undertaken initiatives related in intent (Chapman, Gambell, Kniskern, & Coles, 2000); however, this work is as yet incomplete.

In the appendices of their book, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) included five complete syllabi from secondary methods courses in their study. While their detailed findings and their discussions of theoretical positions are of interest to me, I did not choose to pattern my study on theirs. This was in part because their study involved American institutions and examined courses preparing teachers to teach at the high school level. I relied to some degree on its general areas of concern, but wanted a somewhat more objective description of the Canadian elementary context than a methodology parallel to theirs would offer. Furthermore, their specific procedures involved team decision making which was not the procedure I wanted to use. Nonetheless, I reiterate my indebtedness to them for the legitimacy that their study afforded to my present pursuit.

### ***The Craig and Frerichs Study***

The only other study that I found which to some degree matched the intent of my present study was one conducted by Craig and Frerichs (1999) and published in the *Journal of Reading Education*, a publication of the Organization of Teacher Educators in Reading, a special interest group of the International Reading Association.

***Purpose.*** This study was a survey undertaken to determine details of the

preparation of preservice teachers of reading/language arts, “to investigate the extent to which reading/language arts programs have incorporated recommendations considered critical to teacher preparation in reading/language arts” (p. 28) as articulated by the English Coalition Conference (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989) and others, including Craig and Frerichs’ own unpublished survey of appropriate practice as evidenced in current teacher education textbooks.

**Methodology.** The subjects who took part in the study were preservice teacher candidates in 36 “teacher preparation institutions in one south-west state” (p. 27). Institutions were selected by size via stratified sampling. Within institutions, classes in reading/language arts were selected via simple random sampling. Questionnaires were sent to deans requesting that they involve instructors of the classes in administering the questionnaires to students during class time near the end of the term. Students returned the questionnaires directly to the researchers.

The questionnaire they developed included “Likert-type scale items and open response items that probed the nature of teacher preparation in introductory reading and/or reading/language arts courses” (p. 28).

**Findings.** Craig and Frerichs described their return rate for questionnaires as “60% for schools, 50% for classes and 34% for students” (p. 28). Their specific findings were reported in relation to the major categories on their survey instrument. On the organization of courses they reported that reading and language arts were most often not delivered as an integrated course. Of instructional practices they reported that:

[m]any of the practices identified by the literature and textbooks as appropriate

and encouraged for future teachers occurred on no more than an occasional basis. Few classes surveyed experienced aspects of literature-based instruction such as: read-alouds; Undisturbed Silent Reading; cooperative learning; reading, writing, drama workshops; journals and learning logs . . . . most course sessions utilized the lecture approach as the primary mode of instruction. (pp. 28-9)

In terms of assessment and evaluation, teacher evaluation was heavily favoured, with “little evidence of self or peer evaluation” (p. 29). A range of assessment alternatives was evidenced, with individual projects being most prevalent. In nearly half of the classes group projects were not used at all to determine grades. Similarly, in over one-third of the classes, presentations were not used to determine grades. Last, “only one class [of 23] did not require major tests for determining grades,” (p. 29) with the weighting of the tests ranging from 41 to 80 percent. In their final area of concern, the relationship of course work to field experience, 10 of the 23 classes did not require a field component whereas eleven did, (and two did not report).

Craig and Frerichs’ overall finding was that “[d]ata analysis reveals a continuing tendency in preservice literacy teacher preparation to ‘do as I say, not as I do’” (p. 28). Furthermore, their results for the ways in which criteria were implemented “showed considerable variation among small, medium and large universities and no pattern emerged” (p. 29).

I did not pattern my study on this research as it was published after I had begun mine. Although I was interested in the methods and the findings, I would not have used their design even if I had found it earlier, as it was not my intent to survey students. I was

interested in the evidence that syllabi could offer. Nonetheless, their study offers potential for future considerations (see Chapter Five of the present study).

### ***Research on Instructors in Language Arts***

Only one study was located that investigated Canadian teacher educators of language arts. Walker (1990) researched “the 1985 population of full-time members of Canadian faculties of education with primary responsibilities in English language arts teaching and research” (p. 118). He received 53 of 170 (31%) questionnaires sent out to that target population, and he then added information from other available sources. He determined that of 110 individuals, 77 (70%) had Ph.D. degrees, 25 (23%) had Ed.D.s, and 8 (7%) did not have doctorates. Of the 102 doctorates, 38 (37%) were from Canadian universities, 61 (60%) from universities in the United States, and 3 (3%) from British universities. He further determined that four universities were responsible for nearly half of Canada’s English language arts professoriate at the time: University of Alberta (22 doctorates), University of Minnesota (11 doctorates), University of British Columbia (7 doctorates), and University of Georgia (7 doctorates). The professors averaged 8.7 years of school teaching (with a standard deviation of 5.2) before completing a doctorate and had taught at the university level an average of 11.7 years (with a standard deviation of 7.2). In terms of the earned rank of the 53 survey respondents, 16 (30%) were full professors, 18 (34%) were associate professors, 15 (28%) were assistant professors and 2 (4%) were lecturers.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Language arts preservice teacher education is a complex, multifaceted enterprise which is constantly changing as it responds to new research findings about ways to educate teachers, about how best to define language arts, and about how best to teach this subject to children, and as it responds to changes in schools and general schooling practices. Preservice teacher education has evolved from a year at normal school to, in many cases, two degrees at a university. The field of language arts has evolved from the acquisition of discrete skills to the acquisition of a complex array of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and their applications in various social settings. The ways in which Canadian teacher educators made sense of this field for the teacher candidates in their charge, as evidenced through syllabi that they prepared, were the subject of the present study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DESIGN AND PROCEDURES**

The present study was conducted in order to provide a description of current practice in mandatory, language arts curriculum and instruction courses in preservice teacher education in Canada. The study sought to determine information about specific aspects of instruction including demographics, instructors' orientations (to language acquisition, to language arts teaching, and to university teaching), instructional materials, in-class instructional activities, topics covered, and assignments used for assessment. The information gained has the potential to motivate a national professional dialogue among teacher educators, primarily those in the field of language arts/literacy. As well, it can serve to buttress future follow-up studies and other, related studies.

The first chapter introduced the purpose of the study as well as its scope and significance. The second chapter examined briefly the history of the governance of Canadian elementary school education as well as the history of North American higher education. General instructional practices in postsecondary education were then discussed, and an overview concerning the training and education of preservice teachers in Canada was provided. A survey of developments within the field of language arts was also included. All of the aforementioned discussions served as the contextual backdrop for the present study. Chapter Two concluded with a summary of relevant research already conducted in the area of this study's primary concern.

The current chapter describes the methods by which answers to the research

questions were sought as well as the rationale for methodological decisions. The questions that propelled this study are stated below, and all refer to a set of information provided for one academic year by instructors of mandatory, elementary language arts curriculum and instruction courses in accredited Canadian preservice teacher education sites. The research questions were:

1. What are the *demographic characteristics* of the sample studied, both in terms of the individual instructors and in terms of the specific courses represented?
2. What *theoretical orientations* underlie the work of the instructors? What are their orientations to how language is initially learned, to how language arts/literacy might best be taught at school, and to how a course for preservice teachers should best be taught?
3. What are instructors' expectations (requirements and recommendations) concerning *textual materials* for use in their courses?
4. What *instructional activities* are included in the entire set of activities that comprise regular class time? What activities are used most and least frequently?
5. What *topics* are covered in these courses? Across the sample, which topics are allocated the most and the least attention?
6. What *assessment activities* are used by instructors? Across the sample, with what frequency are the various assessment activities used and to what degree are they represented as portions of students' final grades? To what degree do the assignments provide for *student choice*? By what *criteria* are assignments graded?

This chapter opens with a discussion of the general methodology of content analysis, which was the main methodology used in the study, and the rationale for its use. Next, in the section entitled “Preliminary Procedures,” sampling procedures are discussed and specific decisions that were made are articulated and supported. As well, the procedures for requesting the completion of surveys and for eliciting the syllabi are described in detail, along with a description of the procedures followed once requested materials had been received. This section is followed by a section called “Substance of the Research Instruments” that describes in detail the ultimate contents of the two major instruments created for use in the present study. This section ends with a brief mention of the secondary coding instruments. The fourth section of this chapter outlines the process by which the Main Coding Instrument was developed and applied. The chapter ends with a brief section outlining the process by which the data were prepared and analyzed.

### **Content Analysis**

The overall research methodology that I used is called content analysis. Simply stated, I collected completed surveys and course syllabi and analyzed their content. In the following subsections, I present a discussion of the definition and nature of content analysis, followed by a rationale for its use in the present study.

#### ***Definition of Content Analysis***

Holsti provided a clear and often quoted definition of the technique; he stated: “Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and

systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14 cited in Chadwick, Bahr, & Albrecht, 1984, p. 239).

This definition was supported by Neuman (1991), who explained:

Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text.

The *content* refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The *text* is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication. It includes books, newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or videotapes, musical lyrics, photographs, articles of clothing, or works of art . . . . (p. 266)

In my study the content was words, sentences, paragraphs and other word organizations within course syllabi, and the meanings implied by those words. The text was the course syllabi themselves, syllabi being official institutional documents that serve as communication vehicles in that they are written by instructors to provide specific messages to the students enrolled in specific courses.

Carney (1972), among the earliest writers to describe content analysis and its procedures, used several metaphors to clarify the general intentions of the method. He called the introductory chapter of his book “Weighing Opinions: Have *You* Any Scales?” (p. 1). He contrasted the precision of content analysis against a general impression that one might make about any set of content: “Impressionistic reading and inferring produces slipshod results. Content analysis gets infinitely better results, but at the cost of infinitely more painstaking labor . . . . [However,] the benefits to be gained have to be offset against

labor costs involved” (p. 6).

Carney used two other metaphors that he developed more fully. After discussing the disciplined nature of content analysis, Carney stated:

Content analysis is a way of asking a fixed set of questions unfalteringly of all of a predetermined body of writings, in such a way as to produce countable results. In a way content analysis is like a rake which has a range of heads with various arrangements of teeth. We use it to rake in all of the objects which a particular set of teeth is designed to catch, from all of the area we are raking. The teeth are chosen to suit the objects we want to rake in and the terrain from which we have to rake them. (p. 6)

Carney also provided a metaphor for the multivariate analysis possible in content analysis:

Imagine that someone gives you a huge bag of marbles. Some are large, some are small. Some are glossy, some are mat [*sic*]. All are green, but some have blue marks on them, whereas others have yellow marks. In some cases the marks are in the form of streaks, in other cases they are in the form of blotches. You have to work out how many different types of marbles there are (i.e. large, glossy, blue streaked ones; small, mat, yellow blotched ones, etc.) and how many there are of each type. (p. 7)

Parts of what I assessed were relatively concrete, such as counts of specific textbooks or provincial curriculum documents. Other parts were certainly much more abstract, such as categorizations of various theoretical orientations and, not unlike Carney’s marbles, the

ways in which the various attributes of these categorizations are distinguishable from others in some ways, yet are comparable in other ways. Conceptualizing what I was doing in terms of Carney's metaphors served especially well to help me understand and explain the more abstract aspects of my overall investigations.

Content analysis can be qualitative or quantitative. The type of content analysis undertaken in this study was quantitative descriptive research, which has as its goal "to provide a numerical or statistical description of how one or more variables are distributed among members of a population" (Crowl, 1993, p. 121). As Neuman clarified:

In content analysis, a researcher uses objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic content in a text. In fact, Markoff et al. (1974) suggest that "textual coding" might be a better name than content analysis. There are qualitative or interpretive versions of content analysis, but the emphasis here [in Neuman's textbook and in my study] is on quantitative data about a text's content. (Neuman, 1991, p. 266)

Neuman continued by providing a discussion of what is required in the content analysis technique. I offer this explanation here as I feel an understanding of the process involved helps to define the technique. Neuman (1991) offered the following description:

Content analysis involves random sampling, precise measurement, and operational definitions for abstract constructs. Coding is used to turn aspects of content that represent variables into numbers. After a content analysis researcher gathers the data, he [*sic*] enters them into computers and analyzes them with statistics in the same way an experimental or survey researcher would. (p. 266)

### *Rationale for Content Analysis*

I selected content analysis for a number of reasons as my preferred method for answering my research questions. I wanted to know about the state of the art of language and literacy teacher education across Canada. While I recognized that this was indeed a vast enterprise, nonetheless the scope of my interests was national; I did not want to look at only a small subset of the country because I felt that the field had more to learn from a nation-wide perspective. I therefore needed a method that could distill large amounts of diverse information into useful, manageable formats, a method that would help me discern definitive features of a field about which I myself had only partial, fragmented knowledge. At the same time, of course, I needed a method that was feasible to undertake. Neuman (1991) made some assertions that can be used to support my use of content analysis to answer my questions:

With content analysis a researcher can compare content across many texts and analyze it with quantitative techniques (e.g., charts, tables). In addition, he [*sic*] can use it to reveal aspects of the texts' content that are difficult to see . . . .

Content analysis can document, in objective, quantitative terms, whether your vague feelings based on unsystematic observation are true. It yields repeatable, precise results about the text. (p. 266)

One important advantage of content analysis over other forms of data collection and analysis is that content analysis is "nonreactive." As Neuman (1991) illustrated, "Content analysis is nonreactive because the process of placing words, messages, or symbols in a text to communicate to a reader or receiver occurs without influence from

the researcher who analyzes its content . . . .” (p. 266). Instructors did not write their syllabi *for* me, whereas if I had interviewed them, they might have tried to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear.

A second advantage is the relative feasibility of the method. Chadwick, Bahr, & Albrecht (1984) maintained: “Another important advantage of content analysis is that it can be used when the researcher is prevented from surveying or observing the population being studied” (p. 244). While I was, in fact, prepared to survey my target population, observations would have been logistically impossible. My survey was largely intended to access information available only through the instructors, such as their academic backgrounds and teaching experience. I did not survey them specifically concerning any aspects of their curriculum and instruction practices. While I could have prepared a much more comprehensive survey for instructors, and while such an exercise might well be a worthy one to pursue in the future, I felt that the unobtrusive nature of a content analysis of the course syllabi would provide a more naturalistic view of instructors’ activities (albeit the view is incomplete), a view not coloured in any way by the instructors’ knowing that their ideas were to be analyzed, as they would know in comprehensive survey research. All in all, real documents may be more authentic than self-reports, especially in terms of questions such as my questions concerning pedagogical orientation. Furthermore, I felt that it was less demanding to request course outlines from instructors than it would have been to request the completion of a long and detailed survey.

Of course, resources of time and money mitigate against the possibility of interviewing all the appropriate instructors in Canada or of visiting their classrooms.

However, even compared to the richness inherent in such possibilities, the analysis of course syllabi provided a different set of data, one which I felt would better answer the questions that concerned me. I am at an introductory stage in assessing the undertakings within my field and am establishing, by my research, some focal areas for future research investigations. I initiated the present study secure in the belief that content analysis was an appropriate method to apply for my intentions, "a useful strategy in exploratory research" (Chadwick et al., 1984, p. 245).

### **Preliminary Procedures**

In this section of my discussion of methodology, I discuss sampling, procedures for collection of the communications, and procedures for preparing those materials as data.

### ***Sampling***

The target population for this study was a subset of the entire existing population of teacher educators within accredited teacher education institutions in Canada. The subset comprised those teacher educators who taught courses in curriculum and instruction involving any or all modes of language arts and/or language and literacy education. The courses (or course components) had to be mandatory (as identified by the head of the department in which the course resided). Furthermore, the courses had to be designed for preservice teachers preparing to teach students from nursery level up to and including grade eight. Last, the courses had to be offered in the academic year 1998-1999.

Thus, those educators teaching a course that offered curriculum and instruction *integrating* language arts and social studies would be included, as would those teaching the language arts component only of a course that offered curriculum and instruction in both language arts and social studies. However, those teaching a course that offered curriculum and instruction in only one mode of language arts (e.g., a course on reading processes, or a course on writing across the curriculum) would only be included if that course were a mandatory curriculum and instruction course. Teacher educators of courses designated for Early Years, Primary-Junior, Middle Years, or Elementary and other appropriate grade designations (inclusive of nursery to grade 8) were included; courses including grade 9 as Middle Years (if any) were also included. My attempted sampling ratio was 100 percent.

In order to determine the sample for this study, it was necessary to develop a “sampling frame” (Neuman, 1991, p. 201). As Neuman explained, “[a] researcher operationalizes a population by developing a specific list that closely approximates all the elements in the population. The list is her [*sic*] *sampling frame*” (p. 201). In developing a sampling frame for the present study, I began with the knowledge that there were 49 sites of teacher education in Canada, as listed in the section entitled “Teacher Education Institutions” in *The CEA Handbook/Le Ki-es-ki 1998* from the Canadian Education Association/*Association canadienne d’éducation* (see Appendix A). I assumed that all of these were sites of preservice teacher education. I also assumed that my own institution, the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, was among the largest institutions. I knew that for the past several years my institution had offered eight sections

(of 30 to 40 students per section) of language arts C&I per year to preservice teachers intending to work with students up to and including grade 8. I therefore used eight sections per year as an approximate maximum number of sections per institution. Thus the maximum number of course syllabi that could be submitted for this study was approximately 400 ( $49 \times 8 = 392$ ). In fact, I expected there would be considerably fewer, as I knew some institutions were quite a bit smaller than mine.

Although my intent to attempt a “sample” size of 100 percent may seem naive or optimistic, there were several reasons why I considered it appropriate. Neuman (1991) claimed that “one principle of sample sizes is, the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be for an accurate sample (i.e., one with a high probability of yielding the same results as the entire population)” (p. 221). He considered that “for small populations (under 1,000) a researcher needs a large sampling ratio (about 30 percent)” (p. 221). If, in terms of content analysis, a sample of 1,000 is small, then a sample of 400 (or considerably fewer) is certainly small enough to warrant a high sampling ratio. Neuman’s claim about relative gains is also important. He stated: “A related principle is that for small samples, small increases in sample size produce big gains in accuracy. Equal increases in sample size produce more of an increase for small than for large samples . . . .” (p. 221).

Neuman offered more guidance concerning decisions about sampling. According to him:

A researcher’s decision about the best sample size depends on three things: (1) the degree of accuracy required, (2) the degree of variability or diversity in the

population, and (3) the number of different variables examined simultaneously in the data. Everything else being equal, larger samples are needed if the population has a great deal of variability or heterogeneity, or if one wants to examine many variables in the data analysis simultaneously . . . . (p. 221)

In the present study I wanted my results to be as accurate as possible, optimally reflecting the real population. The population was likely to be extremely diverse.

Although I did not know this for sure, I did know that extreme diversity was certainly possible given the many variables I was considering and the many ways of implementing them in the many different contexts which existed. It was likely that no two institutions had configured their teacher education programs the same way. It was also likely that no two instructors had configured their language arts methods courses the same way (unless, of course, they had purposefully chosen to do so, if, perhaps, they taught at the same level within a program or were involved in cross-institutional research).

Neuman's last piece of advice concerning sampling concerned subgroups. According to him, "the analysis of data on subgroups also affects a researcher's decision about sample size. If he [*sic*] wants to analyze subgroups in the population, he needs a larger sample" (p. 221). I was interested in seeing how instructors across various subgroups planned their courses; among these subgroups were language groupings, regional groupings, and groupings by size of institution. Because of my interest and Neuman's advice, I believe my sampling plan was sound.

## *Procedures for Data Acquisition*

### *Request for Materials*

My request for materials involved two stages. The first stage involved contacting heads of departments (or parallel administrators in parallel positions) to access the names of appropriate instructors, and the second stage involved the direct contacting of the instructors thus named. I believed that by contacting department heads I would have accurate, complete, up-to-date information about who the instructors were, and, as well, I would have their names so I could contact them personally, a factor that I believed would increase my rate of return. Though I had considered discerning instructors through published university timetables and web sites, I knew from my own institution's experience that such documents were often printed months in advance, and that by the time a course was actually taught published information was often incomplete and/or inaccurate, with different instructors listed than those who ultimately taught a course.

*Contacting department heads.* I found the names and addresses of the department heads in the 51 current Canadian teacher education institutions (see Appendix A) through *The CEA Handbook/Le Ki-es-ki 1998* (Canadian Education Association/Association canadienne d'éducation, 1998), the web site of the Association of Universities and Community Colleges (AUCC; 1998), and individual university web sites. I developed a database of department heads contact information and used it to send out letters explaining the nature of my study. I included a form on which department heads could record appropriate courses and the names of the instructors (see Appendix B). I wrote the materials in English and received help with the French translations from colleagues at the

*Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface*. I sent the requests to department heads of the respective institutions in the main language of instruction. In those cases where institutions clearly had separate teacher education programs for each language and had separate department heads, I sent two requests.

In late September, 1998, I sent 51 requests (including self-addressed stamped envelopes) to department heads (36 English and 15 French) requesting the names of their language arts/literacy instructors. Several weeks later I sent reminder letters to those department heads who had not responded to my initial request. In late spring I again contacted by letter and later by e-mail all the department heads from whom I still had not heard. Ultimately, these pursuits resulted in my receiving additional names.

*Contacting instructors.* As information from the department heads arrived, I developed a database of instructors. It included names, departments, department heads, addresses, and the names and numbers of the relevant mandatory courses for which they were responsible. This listing served me as the total set of materials that I could ultimately expect to receive. In early December, I sent 91 letters (81 English and 10 French), including permission forms, instructor surveys, and large self-addressed envelopes, to all the instructors whose names I had so far received. (See Appendices C and D for the contents of the letter and permission form, and the contents of the survey, respectively). Whenever I received an additional instructor's name from a department head, I followed up by adding the name to my instructor database. In early March, I sent 36 request packages (14 English and 22 French) to instructors whose names I had not yet had in the first mailout. Later in the spring I sent out reminder letters to instructors not yet

heard from. As I processed incoming material, I sent several e-mail messages to instructors requesting clarifications on a variety of details.

Teacher educators of preservice language arts curriculum and instruction courses for levels from nursery to grade 8 in Canadian institutions offering teacher education programs were asked to provide me with a copy of their course syllabi and complementary support materials for the 1998-99 academic year, or, where such courses were taught within a single term or semester, for the term or semester within or immediately preceding the 1998-99 academic year (i.e., intersession, summer session, or May to August semester in 1998). In instances where a teacher educator taught multiple sections of the same course, only one copy was requested, and in instances where a team of instructors taught one course, only one copy was requested; the intent of the study was to assess instructors' decision making via information provided about courses, not specifically to gauge the number of students or instructors involved in any particular type of course(s).

I made this request of instructors only if the curriculum course(s) they taught involved first-language language arts. I certainly expected courses concerning English or French, but anticipated, too, the existence of Aboriginal-language teacher preparation programs. I was not seeking courses in basic/core, immersion, heritage or other second-language preparation programs. Furthermore, I requested materials from instructors only in instances where the courses were in fact curriculum and instruction courses and only in instances where they were mandatory, requisite for graduation, as opposed to courses which were elective or optional, even if such courses were in fact elected by the majority

of students.

### ***Receipt and Processing of Materials***

As I received a package (completed permission form, completed survey, and course syllabus and complementary materials), I carried out the following set of actions: (a) I provided the material with a number to indicate the order of receipt; (b) I entered the instructor's name, the institution's name, and the course number on a numbered receiving list; (c) I entered this receiving number directly on the survey, the syllabus (and complementary material, considering these as one set of materials) and the permission letter; (d) I filed the permission letter (in order by number); (e) I perused the entire survey to see if any information was missing, and, if it was, contacted the instructor and asked that the missing information be supplied. If the information was offered, it was then added to the survey. Explanatory letters or notes accompanying the syllabi were considered as parts of the surveys or as parts of the syllabi's supplementary materials; (f) I photocopied the survey and the syllabus, during which I masked all possible identifying information (removing names of instructors and institutions, all addresses, phone numbers, names of libraries, and names of bookstores, but retaining specific names of government publications); and (g) I filed both sets of syllabus and survey documents (in order by number), the originals in one file for safekeeping, the anonymous working copies in another.

Later, when I was certain that I would no longer be receiving new materials, I randomly selected a subset for coding by a second coder whose decisions I would compare with my own for inter-rater reliability. I photocopied masked versions of the

materials in the subset. This copying was to ensure that the coder received a clean copy of each syllabus, without any markings I might make on the copies I coded.

### ***Procedures for Data Preparation***

When the materials were thus processed, they were ready to be coded by means of the coding instruments that I developed to analyze their content. This coding process involved two stages, the coding of identification and location information, and the coding of the substantive information from the surveys and syllabi.

### **Substance of the Research Instruments**

In this part of Chapter Three, I present the substance of the major instruments for data gathering in this study. I first discuss the content of the survey of instructors, and second, the content of the coding instruments.

### ***Substance of the Survey***

Although the major intent of this study was to describe aspects of courses as evident in syllabi, I was interested, too, in the instructors of those courses. Primarily, I was curious about them in relation to the courses they taught. I expected that perhaps some relationship existed between aspects concerning instructors and aspects of courses taught. I wanted to look at objective and publicly-available aspects of the instructors as opposed to self-reported attitudes, values, or intentions. While the syllabi provided course information, I relied on the instructors themselves to provide additional information via a

two-page survey.

The survey, found in Appendix D, started with identification and location information as well as gender. Participants were then asked to list the courses that they taught in language arts/literacy curriculum and instruction. This listing served to ascertain that the syllabi received matched those that their department heads claimed were being taught. As well, the listing clarified the number of separate class sections taught; this was important because the syllabus (and supplementary materials) for each separate section, or class group, was considered a unit of analysis (discussed later).

Instructors were asked questions to determine whether or not they co-taught or team-taught the course. This question was intended to avoid duplication and to tap the incidence of such dual teaching assignments. A question about instructor workload (full-time versus part-time) tapped the frequency of types of workload but also helped determine (or verify) an instructor's academic rank. With part-time instructors it was felt that inaccurate categorization of rank might occur.

The actual question concerning rank provided six categories for response in English: "Lecturer," "Instructor," "Assistant Professor," "Associate Professor," "Full Professor," and "Other." It also provided for the six relatively parallel academic ranks in French: "*Chargé de cours*," "*Assistant(e)*," "*Adjoint(e)*," "*Agrégé(e)*," "*Titulaire*," and "*Autre(s)*." The question concerning academic degrees provided 10 categories for response: "BA" for Bachelor of Arts, "BSc" for Bachelor of Science, "BEd" for Bachelor of Education, "BPaed" for Bachelor of Pedagogy, "MA" for Master of Arts, "MSc" for Master of Science, "MEd" for Master of Education, "EdD" for Doctor of Education,

“PhD” for Doctor of Philosophy, and “Other(s).” These categories were the same on both the French and the English forms, though the French form included French spellings. Subsequent questions about academic degrees probed when and from where the instructor had earned his or her degrees.

The last set of information requested on the survey of instructors concerned various aspects of the instructor’s teaching experience, including level of school which had been taught and the number of years a particular level had been taught, with the years of experience including teaching children as well as teaching adults at the university level.

### *Substance of the Coding Instruments*

In order to perform the content analysis, I needed to turn ideas into numbers. For this purpose I developed and refined a coding system involving a coding instrument (also called a coding form, sheet, or template) and instructional guidelines for its use. As Neuman (1991) explained, “constructs in content analysis are operationalized with a *coding system*, a set of instructions or rules on how to systematically observe and record content from text” (p. 268). The instrument contained spaces in which to account for every aspect of the course syllabi in which I was interested; every research question (see research questions listed previously) corresponded to a specific space or spaces on the coding form. The determining of these specific spaces was important, because, as Dyer (1979) suggested: “The heart of content analysis is the *categories* into which the raw data, the communication itself, are coded” (p. 183). Some spaces required that an item be

checked off as “Yes” or “No,” some required a count of instances or items, while others required the writing in of specific information. The variation resulted from the nature of the questions and the information. Each method of annotation, however, ultimately resulted in a specific numerical notation. According to Dyer (1979), “In most content analysis, every occurrence of a given category is tallied . . . . Simple appearance/ non-appearance of the category within some definite unit of the material may also be used, ignoring repetition of the category within the unit” (p. 184). Repetition was counted only in one section of the instrument, the section involving orientations; herein, a term could be counted as often as it occurred in each of the orientations. In cases where material was to be coded with a particular code number but where no corresponding number was available on the coding list, (such as in the sections involving Readings or Topics), and in any instances where a category of “Other” was available, an ongoing master sheet of numerical codes was kept, to be provided eventually to the alternate coder and to be incorporated into the final analyses. (See Appendix E for a copy of the final version of the Main Coding Instrument.)

To supplement the Main Coding Instrument (MCI), specific, detailed instructions were developed for every item included in the coding instrument to guide me and any other coder in decision making, so that decisions could be made consistently. This set of instructions was called Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding (see Appendix F). Where necessary, rationale for a decision and an example were provided. While some of this procedural detail may appear highly and overly meticulous, a high degree of accuracy is, in fact, central to the main intent of the process. Neuman’s point

supported this degree of detail: “Careful measurement is crucial in content analysis because a researcher takes diffuse and murky symbolic communication and turns it into precise, objective, quantitative data. He [*sic*] carefully designs and documents procedures for coding to make replication possible . . . .” (Neuman, 1991, p. 267). To this point he later added, “Written rules make replication possible and improve reliability” (p. 269).

### ***Specific Sections of the Main Coding Instrument***

In this part of Chapter Three I discuss details concerning the development of each section of the analysis instrument.

***Demographic information.*** I began creating the coding instrument by developing two sections that would determine whose syllabus was being analyzed and from which institution the syllabus had come. However, I did not want to have this information available while the actual analysis was being conducted, so judgements could not be based on any biases I (or a second coder) might have about a particular individual or institution. Therefore, in my first section, “Identification and Location Information,” I could not supply any information. What I did was to create an extra coding sheet that I called the Identification and Location Coding Sheet (ILCS); this sheet is described later in this chapter (also see Appendix G). In Section 1 I merely made reference to the existence of the ILCS.

In “Section 2 Instructor Information,” I provided spaces for an instructor number (IN#) and syllabus number (S#). The ability to identify each syllabus (and its related instructor survey) uniquely and numerically was crucial, and Section 2 allowed me to connect the information on the MCI to a specific syllabus and survey, and later to cross-

reference with the ILCS information when I was keying in data. Otherwise, the section allowed for anonymity of instructor. The remainder of this section was used for coding the content of the survey. Areas of information included: Gender (FEMALE, MALE, or N/A to signify Not Available); Workload (FULLTIME, PARTTIME or N/A to signify Not Available); Academic Level (LECT, INST, ASSIST-English, ASSOC, and FULLPROF, or the parallel French designations (CHARGÉ, ASSIST-French, ADJOINT, AGRÉGÉ, and TITULAIRE). The remaining designations of Seconded Teacher (SECTCHR), Teaching Assistant (TCHGASST), Other (OTHER) and Not Available (N/A) were used for both French and English.

In the area called "Earliest Academic Degree Marked," codes for nine specific degrees were available (BA, BSC, BED, BPED, MA, MSC, MED, EDD and PHD) as well as codes for two possible Others (OTHER1 and OTHER2) which could be written in, or Not Available (N/A). The same choices were available for "Second Academic Degree Marked" as well as for the third, fourth, and fifth. Provision was made to state if there were "More than Five Academic Degrees Marked" (YES and NO).

There was an item to designate which of the degrees was the instructor's "Highest Degree" and following that, the "Source of Highest Degree." The latter had codes to specify "Continent," "Country," (and, if the degree were Canadian, "Province"), as well as the year in which the highest degree was granted, based on the assumption that one's highest degree is generally also one's most recent. "Year" was provided as part of an interval of five years, and was also to be written in ("Actual Year") along with the written-in "Institution."

The next area of inquiry in Section 2 of the instrument concerned instructors' teaching experience. Number of years was coded in intervals of two years; a coding of "1" indicated 1 to 2 years, "2" indicated 3 to 4 years, and so on up to "18" which indicated 35 or more years. Codes for no experience or experience being unavailable were also provided. This set of codes was used five times to mark experience: "Teaching -13" (Nursery to grade 13); "Teaching at College/University Level;" "Teaching in Education," referring to teaching within a faculty of education, which would be a subset of the college/university teaching; and "Teaching Language Arts/Literacy," referring to teaching teachers to teach within the discipline of language arts/literacy, which would be a subset of teaching in education; and also "Teaching Other Subject Domains," wherein an instructor could account for teaching experience in a faculty of education outside of language arts/literacy. If an instructor had served in other educational capacities, this was to be noted in the area called "Other Relevant Teaching Experience." The presence or absence of such work was noted (via YES or NO), and the nature of the work was to be written in.

Last, in an area entitled "Identified Area of Expertise of Instructor," expertise could be coded in terms of academic discipline. Choices available were: Language Arts (LA), Mathematics (MATH), Social Studies (SS), Science (SCI), a mixture of disciplines (MIX), the coder's uncertainty about expertise (UNCLEAR), or other (OTHER). Similarly, one could code for "Second Identified Area of Expertise of Instructor."

***Contextual information.*** Following the first two sections of the MCI, information was coded in two sections each called "Course Context." Section 3, entitled "Course

Context–Part A,” was largely logistical, included for the coders’ benefit. It addressed “Team Teaching of Course,” designed in part as a method of cross-checking. It tapped the notion of whether an instructor taught with a person who was a professor (YES–PROF), or with a person who was a teaching assistant, such as a graduate student (YES–TCHGASST), on one’s own (NO), or whether the presence of another instructor was not detectable by the coder (UNCLEAR) or was not available (N/A). The number of “Instructors Teaching This Specific Section” was also noted, as a cross-check, and to ensure that instructor data (Section 2 above) were coded. Similarly, coding the “Number of Additional Parallel Sections of This Course” was for cross-checking purposes, and to avoid making new sets of decisions for syllabi that were essentially identical though taught to different sections. In such instances, only a short form was completed (see Appendix G), and relevant sections of coding were copied from the initial longer form. A space on the form labelled “Notes Concerning Parallel Syllabi and Syllabi of Multiple Instructors” was made available to record relevant details and discrepancies.

The following section concerning course context, labelled as “Section 4 Course Context–Part B,” was more substantive than Part A. Here was coded information about each course, gathered from the instructor survey or the syllabus, that did not concern language arts per se but which I felt was of interest. Here I considered “Student Enrollment in Section,” coded in intervals of 10 (i.e., 1 to 10 students; 11 to 20 students, up to 200 or more students), and including a code for information that was not available (N/A).

Next, “Total Contact Hours” could be recorded, also in intervals of ten, up to

courses of 71 or more hours in duration, and also including a code for information that was not available (N/A). An annotation was made here as to whether the contact hours had been explicitly provided (EXACT) or had been extrapolated in various ways such as reading a course calendar (DERIVED).

“Length of Term” was coded as to whether the course was a full course, generally 6 credit hours (FULL YEAR) or a half course, generally three credit hours (PART YEAR), or whether it represented some other time configuration (OTHER).

The next area on my coding form was “Language of Instruction.” Here one could select English (ENGLISH), French (FRENCH), or another language in which teachers are prepared to teach overall language arts (OTHER). The decision was to be based on the predominant language in which the syllabus was written. A space was provided to name the other languages if, in fact, there were any others.

In the area representing “Level,” a coder could circle one of several options: Early Years (EY); Middle Years (MY); Junior-Intermediate (JRINT); Elementary/Primary-Junior (ELEM/P-J); a category which includes all levels (ALL) in sites where, potentially, all students, both elementary and secondary, were taught in one course; or the category of Other (OTHER). The option in which the information was not available (N/A) could also be selected. It was expected that some syllabi might include multiple levels. Unlike the level designation Elementary/Primary-Junior above, intended to indicate parallel levels, it was anticipated that a course might simultaneously target two levels. Thus, identical items in this area of inquiry were labelled as “Level-First” and “Level-Second,” though the order in which levels were coded was not relevant.

Following the items concerning “Level” were items concerning “Major Mode(s) of Course.” Here coding options provided were: all six language modes (6/ALL, referring to the modes of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, and representing); the four basic modes (4/SLRW, referring to speaking, listening, reading, writing, but not including the somewhat “newer” modes of viewing and representing); some combinations of them (ORAL/SL, which included only the oral modes of speaking and listening, and LIT/RW, which included only the print literacy modes of reading and writing); individual modes (READ for reading and WRIT for writing); the category of Other (OTHER), to represent other possible combinations; and the inability of the coder to discern mode (UNCLEAR).

I believed most C&I courses would be those that covered all language modes (also known as language strands or language processes) simultaneously, hence the categories of 6/ALL and 4/SLRW. Some institutions would have individual modes represented, most likely reading C&I or writing C&I, hence READ and WRIT, or they would have combinations, hence ORAL/SL and LIT/RW, as I anticipated the most likely combinations would be grouped along an oracy/literacy distinction. I did not anticipate that any institution offered a mandatory C&I course in viewing, representing, or any combination thereof, nor courses in the isolated modes of speaking or listening; however, if they did, the category OTHER was available.

As well as inquiring about language modes, I was also curious about the placement of the mandatory C&I course within an entire program of study. I attempted to probe this status via an item called “Integration of This Course in Program.” I anticipated holistic programs not broken down at all into isolated courses (WHOLEPROG), or

programs in which at least the curriculum and instruction portions were holistic, integrated methodology courses not separated into artificial, isolated, discipline-based courses (ALLC&I). Most courses, I felt, would be stand-alone language arts/literacy courses (ONEC&I), or one of several required language arts/literacy courses that was not *the* curriculum and instruction course per se (OTHERL&L), but which was mandatory and which was considered to be a C&I course. Of course, a course might have no programmatic affiliation whatsoever (NONE), or its relationship to other elements of a program might be indiscernible (UNCLEAR).

Another item of general interest which I included was one entitled “Negotiation–Overall Choice of Topics/Assignments/Activities” which was intended to gauge the overall availability of students’ opportunities to negotiate aspects of a course. Students might negotiate all three areas of topics, assignments and in-class activities (ALL); any two of those three (MOST), any one area (SOME), no areas whatsoever (NONE) or there might be lack of clarity concerning student negotiation (UNCLEAR).

Regarding the syllabus itself, I attempted to gauge if it were a “Standard Syllabus” or not, designating YES for a syllabus of a few pages providing standard information like instructor’s name, office, phone, course description, schedule of topics, assignments and due dates, and NO if it were especially long or short, with unusual amounts of information, unusual format, or unusual information beyond what students might tend to be expecting. Also gauged were the “Pages in Syllabus” and “Pages of Support Materials.”

The MCI had a set of questions dealing with official, institutional concerns. I

probed whether or not an official “Course Description” was provided (YES or NO), such as one might find in a university calendar or on a web site. I also probed for various policy statements in terms of whether the syllabus cited official policy, emanating from the institution itself (YES-OFFICIAL), unofficial policy emanating only from the instructor (YES-UNOFFICIAL), or no policy (NO). These designations were to be coded for the presence or absence of: an “Ethics Statement,” concerning research with children; a “Confidentiality Statement,” concerning the confidentiality of information about children, as potentially evidenced when using samples of their work; an “Academic Integrity Statement,” concerning plagiarism, cheating on tests or exams, and other manifestations of academic dishonesty; a “Lateness and/or Absence Statement” concerning attendance and punctuality at classes; a “Department Statement,” concerning rude or violent behaviour or other instances of unprofessional behaviour; and any kind of “Other Policy Statement.” In the area concerning policy, I also probed to find whether or not “Reference is Made to External/Overriding Policy.” Herein, codes indicated reference to external policy at the university level (YES-UNIVERSITY), at the faculty level (YES-FACULTY), or elsewhere (YES-OTHER), or to the absence of reference to policy (NO).

Last, I probed via the Main Coding Instrument whether or not the course (or any aspect of it) was being researched formally, whether by the instructor or instructional team (YES-BY INSTRUCTOR/TEAM), by external researchers, such as researchers in another institution or discipline, or graduate students (YES-BY OTHER(S)), or not at all (NO).

***Orientations.*** In the Main Coding Instrument (MCI), I then moved from

information about demographics and course contexts to a section about the theoretical orientations or belief systems of instructors which caused them to behave in particular ways in the fulfillment of their professional responsibilities. Theoretical understandings about learning underlie all teaching. Sometimes the understandings are weak and unarticulated, while sometimes they are strong and clearly articulated. Some instructors can overtly identify a theory to support their teaching, while others might have trouble recognizing any theoretical aspect of their work, even when it is pointed out to them. In the present study I sought to identify the beliefs which were held by the instructors, beliefs which motivated their own teaching and which, intentionally or not, they passed on to the preservice teachers who were their students.

To determine instructors' orientations, three different aspects of theoretical orientation were examined within the syllabi. The first considered instructors' theoretical approaches to language acquisition (TALA), their beliefs about how people, especially children, learn language. The second considered their language arts/literacy orientations (LALO), their beliefs about how language arts or literacy is best taught to children. The third considered their pedagogical orientations (PEDO), their beliefs about how postsecondary courses in teacher education should best be taught.

In order to gauge these orientations within the present study, three typologies, reified as sets of lists, were created, one for each different orientation. These typologies eventually became the bulk of "Section 5 Orientations" of the MCI. For each area of investigation, a published description was found that delineated specific stances within the area under consideration and that offered detail about each stance, detail which was

subsequently compared to the detail within each syllabus.

For the first two areas of orientation, TALA and LALO, I identified specific terms to look for within the syllabi. I felt that identifying words was a valid activity related to my analysis because organizing for instruction, activities (including assessments) within instruction, and all other instructional planning decisions that an instructor makes all depend on theory, and it is largely through communicating instructional decisions by means of specific words that an instructor make his or her personal, theoretical stance known to others. A coder would look for these terms (in their favoured uses; see Appendix F, Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding, p. 13). The highest representation within a particular orientation would be indicative of the orientation accentuated within that instructor's teaching. The third orientation, PEDO, was assessed in a similar manner. Each of the three orientations is discussed more fully below.

*Theoretical approaches to language acquisition.* Although variations of the typology concerning language acquisition exist, most theorists recognize four general language acquisition approaches; these are: (a) behaviouristic, (b) linguistic, (c) cognitive interactionist, and (d) social interactionist. Although these approaches can be found in most survey textbooks concerning language arts instruction, I chose to use the descriptions offered by Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985, pp. 178-196) in their 1985 article, "Theoretical Approaches to Language Acquisition." I used their categories because I felt theirs was an authoritative and comprehensive source. Furthermore, it was original, and not derivative, as were the versions in survey textbooks. I also relied, though to a lesser extent, on another of their articles, "Language in Society: Variation and

Adaptation” (Warren-Leubecker & Bohannon, 1985), from the same Berko Gleason (1985) book.

In order to make coding decisions, I identified a set of 15 key terms (salient key words and phrases, including names of theorists) for each of the four approaches, yielding 60 terms in all. I felt it was important to have the same number of terms for each so that no one approach was over- or under-represented. I selected the terms from Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985), also considering Warren-Leubecker and Bohannon (1985), choosing terms that they offered as characteristic of the four approaches they described. I attempted to select terms that were at once most salient to the approach and also potentially available within the syllabi which I intended to analyze. The four lists, together forming the “Terms for Consideration in Coding of Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition,” constitute the first part of the section on “Orientations,” on page 7 in Section 5 of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E).

By means of the presence of these terms, I attempted to figure out, based on an instructor’s syllabus, the underlying view that he or she held about how language was acquired. After becoming very familiar with the lists, I sought these specific terms when reading closely through each syllabus during analysis. As terms were located, they were each marked on page 7 of an MCI, as many times as each appeared. When the entire syllabus had been read repeatedly, the number of markings within each category of Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition was added up. Totals were entered on page 11 of the MCI under “Overall Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition.” As well, percentages were determined. For example, if in a particular syllabus I found three

(3) words from the Behaviourist column, no (0) words from the Linguistic column, six (6) words from the Cognitive Interactionist column and one (1) word from the Social Interactionist, column, I would write those numerals in the available spaces on the right hand side of the page, then total the words found to determined percentages. In this case, with a total of 10 words found, the Behaviourist orientation (BEH) is 30 percent (3 words out of 10), the Linguistic orientation (LING) is 0 percent (no words), the Cognitive Interactionist (COG) is 60 percent (6 words out of 10), and the Social Interactionist (SOC) is 10 percent (1 word out of 10). Percentages were recorded in the space available on the right hand side of the page. Subsequently, the dominant orientation, as evidenced by percentage, was also coded. Choices included each of the four orientations (BEH, LING, COG, and SOC) as well as a choice called TIE for instances when two or more top percentages were equal, and a choice of NONE for instances when no words whatsoever were found. In the above example, Cognitive Interactionist (COG) at 60 percent predominates and so would be coded as the last item in "Overall Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition." The use of percentages was essential because the syllabi varied considerably in length.

*Language arts/Literacy orientations.* In addition to investigating how instructors believed language was acquired by children, I investigated how they believed language arts or literacy was best taught to children. As discussed in Chapter Two, conceptualizations about the teaching of language arts are dynamic entities. The field and the individuals within it continue to modify their beliefs about ultimate purposes and best practices. Nonetheless, I assumed that instructors did hold a core belief system about the

teaching of language arts, and I sought a way to find evidence of this in their syllabi. In order to determine the overall orientations of individual instructors concerning the learning and teaching of language arts, the foci of the learning/teaching act were delineated as: “Product” (PROD); “Process” (PROC); and “Postmodern” (POMO), based on the 1997 descriptions offered by Butler-Kisber, Dillon, and Mitchell in their article, “Recent Trends in Literacy Education,” a chapter of the book, *Language Across the Curriculum*, edited by Victor Froese (1997). The authors set forth three historical eras within the teaching of language arts, a “product” period (pp. 163-167), a “process” period (pp. 167-173) and a “postmodernist” period (pp. 173-177). I used this article because it was current. As importantly, it was written and edited by teacher educators of language arts/literacy who worked at Canadian institutions, the three authors at McGill University, and the editor at the University of British Columbia, at the time the book appeared. I felt their perspective would be an especially viable starting point. Also, I recognized, as they did, that each succeeding period owed much to the one preceding it, and that different teachers taught in ways that were representative of these different periods.

Butler-Kisber et al. stated their chapter to be “a critical historical survey of the major approaches to literacy over the past several decades, highlighting the major changes in thinking that have influenced current trends in practice today” (p. 162). Of the product period they wrote:

The essence of the approach used during this period was helping children learn to create a “correct” result, or product, when they read or wrote . . . . If we shift our attention from the outcomes of this approach to the instructional means used to

achieve these goals, this period could also be called “the age of skills.” (p. 163)

In introducing their process period, Butler-Kisber et al. affirmed that “in the late 1950s and early 1960s . . . researchers turned their focus from the content of language to the processes of language acquisition and development as it occurs and functions in natural and everyday settings” (p. 167). In terms of classroom practice, they claimed that “[t]his emphasis on literacy processes . . . has been manifested in four parallel approaches to literacy teaching and learning . . . [w]hole language, the writing workshop, reader response to literature, and language across the curriculum” (p. 168). In this process period, central notions were that “[t]he child is an active, creative learner, constantly trying to make sense of the world” and “[l]anguage learning is personal, holistic, social, and ongoing, and requires a meaningful context” (p. 168).

The postmodernist period, as described by Butler-Kisber et al., was founded on “a growing recognition that literacy is laced with political and social dimensions that go well beyond teaching a set of skills, and also well beyond just freeing children up to get on with reading and writing” (p. 174). These dimensions concern “debates and issues that are informed by feminist and gender studies, cultural studies, multiculturalism, and cultural production” (p. 174).

As an illustration of their interpretation of the postmodernist period, Butler-Kisber and her associates offered the following:

For example, if an important issue in the “process” period was the use of authentic texts (often referring to “real books” as opposed to basal readers, and non-translated texts), issues such as “whose texts?,” accounts of “whose

experiences?,” the valuing or devaluing of “which texts?,” and even “what is a text?” have become more central to the work of elementary teachers and curriculum consultants. (p. 174)

These periods are somewhat analogous to time periods in that the theories that support them developed chronologically, in resistance to or as an extension of another period. However, there is more than mere chronology at play, otherwise all teachers born in a given year would teach in identical ways. It is possible to retain the values of one period in ignorance of or in conscious resistance to emerging trends. In the expression of academic freedom on which Western university education is founded, it is possible, and, I would suggest, desirable, to teach one’s students the theoretical orientations one values. It is also possible that we, as instructors, might misunderstand and/or unknowingly misrepresent theoretical orientations, or believe ourselves to be doing things to a particular end when, in fact, we are not. Too often we, like our students, may be guilty of teaching as we ourselves were taught, of defaulting to comfortable, secure habits instead of taking the risks necessary for the change we might envision and which we might even espouse, albeit we do not act to realize it. While it was recognized that within a typology an instructor could very likely value aspects of many or all of the periods delineated, an attempt was made to discern whether or not a favoured period was evident in the syllabus of their curriculum and instruction course, a course centred specifically on the learning and teaching of language.

From the description of each of the three representative orientations to language arts teaching, I selected key terms, words and phrases (including names of influential

individuals) that the authors offered as characteristic of the three periods they outlined. I selected terms that I felt most clearly aligned with the orientation and which, as well, would be present in the syllabi of instructors of language arts C&I courses. I then read some other current language arts/literacy C&I textbooks (Bromley, 1998; Cooper, 1997; Hennings, 1997; Edwards & Malicky, 1996; Tompkins, 1998). I paid particular attention to the introductory chapters in which the textbook authors outlined major theories and traced theoretical developments, (much as Butler-Kisber et al., 1997, had done), and to the introductions or prefaces in which current contexts and emerging practices were described. From these sections of these textbooks I gathered additional characterizing terms that I added to those I had garnered from the McGill team.

I further supported the concept of theoretical orientation to language arts teaching and the development of the list by consulting DeFord (1985) and Lenski, Wham, and Griffey (1997, 1998). These sources referred to instruments by which an educator might assess his or her orientation to instruction. The instrument created by DeFord assesses orientation to reading, while that by Lenski et al. assesses general literacy orientation. Both instruments have been used with preservice teachers. In all I was able to list 50 terms for each period. As with the other area of decision making based on theories, I felt it was important to have an exact number so that no one period was over- or under-represented. The three lists, together forming the "Terms for Consideration in Coding of LA/Literacy Orientation," constitute the second part of the section on "Orientations," on page 8 of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E).

To conduct the analyses, I first became familiar with the three lists. As I then read

each syllabus, I highlighted on page 8 of an MCI any terms which were exactly evidenced in that syllabus. After I had found and marked all the terms available, I added up the number of terms marked (including duplicates), and recorded the total for each of the three under “Overall LA/Literacy Orientations” in the spaces provided, as I had done for “Overall Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition.” Similarly, too, I computed percentages and recorded them on the MCI form, then selected either the predominant one or the choice of TIE (when percentages were equal). NONE was used if no terms from the listings were been located.

*Pedagogical orientations.* What do instructors in teacher education see as the main purpose of their work? To what ends do they plan their courses? Just as LA C&I instructors have views about how best to teach language to children, and just as they align with specific views of what should occur in children’s classrooms and why, so too do they have views about what should occur in their own institutions, including, of course, their own classrooms. To gauge the views of the instructors in this study concerning the latter area, I used the typology offered by Carter and Anders (1996) in their article entitled “Program Pedagogy” in *The Teacher Educator’s Handbook: Building a Knowledge Base for the Preparation of Teachers* (Murray, 1996), a comprehensive resource for teacher educators. I applied it to my study because it was current, focussed on teacher education, specifically preservice teacher education, and was highly applicable to language arts C&I, as its scope was “restricted to pedagogy for the professional sequence, those experiences that are directed primarily to the exercise of teaching responsibilities, rather than for courses in general education, foundations, or specialized subject matter preparation”

(Carter & Anders, 1996, p. 557).

Carter and Anders outlined five orientations as their “Frameworks for Teacher Education Pedagogy” (pp. 559-562). Their typology included: (a) practical/craft, (b) technological, (c) personal, (d) academic, and (e) critical/social. (For a description of each see Chapter Two under the heading “Pedagogical Approaches to Teacher Education.”) I used their typology to form the basis of the section of the coding instrument to gauge pedagogical orientation. In the MCI, the designations were parallel to those of Carter and Anders: “Practical/Craft Orientation” (PRAC), “Technological Orientation” (TECH), “Personal Orientation” (PERS), “Academic Orientation” (ACAD), and “Critical/Social Orientation” (CRIT). Their article was not specifically concerned with language art/literacy teaching, but because my study was so concerned, I read their descriptions and created corresponding assignments, instructor activities, and student activities within the field of language arts C&I that I thought were representative of the five orientations they described. I then added other activities that I thought about after reading two older articles concerning curricular orientations (Dukacz & Babin, 1980; Eisner, 1979) that I felt paralleled the framework that Carter and Anders (1996) described.

Ultimately, for each of these five designations, a list of thirteen specific descriptors was identified. The descriptors were worded as specific behaviours which could potentially be evidenced in a syllabus, either behaviours engaged in by an instructor or expected of students. The five lists together constitute “Activities for Consideration in Coding of Pedagogical Orientation,” the third part of the section on “Orientations,” and

can be found on pages 9 to 11 of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E).

When coding for this orientation, it was necessary to become familiar with the five lists and attempt to find a correspondence between the assignments and class activities discussed in a course syllabus and the descriptions provided in the lists. While exact activities might not be present, the coder could judge similarities in wording or perceived intent. Behaviours that were thus evidenced would be noted by making a small check mark on a list item. After all behaviours in all five categories had been sought and marked, the total number of specific behaviours evidenced in each category was written in the appropriate space on page 11 of the MCI. If no activities or assignments were mentioned (i.e., if all of these were open to negotiation or were to be made available only after the course was underway), the scoring for each designation would be zero. As in the other two sets of orientations, TALA and LALO, totals and percentages were computed for “Pedagogical Orientations” (PEDO) and the predominant orientation was marked (unless TIE or NONE was applicable instead).

**Readings.** In attempting to gauge the nature of the assigned reading materials, I conceptualized the decisions in two separate categories. In the first category, I was interested in finding the types of materials included on course syllabi and the intended use of them, that is, whether they were required or recommended. In the second category, I was interested in finding out specifically which books and other materials were included. The entire set of items by which I probed the syllabi constitutes “Section 6 Readings,” from pages 12 to 15 of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E).

*Classification of materials and their uses.* The first classification in which I was interested was “Language of Readings.” Here a coding decision would be made as to whether materials included in the syllabus were exclusively in English (ENGLISH), exclusively in French (FRENCH), or in both English and French (BOTH). Provision was also made to code other possible languages (OTHER), the situation in which no readings were required (NO RDGS), or situations in which such classification was Not Applicable (N/A).

Next were two items that surveyed an instructor’s entire inclusion of materials. The first was “Overall Textual Items Required (Mandatory)” and the second was “Overall Textual Items Recommended (Suggested).” I used the term “textual items” to mean all print materials, such as books, articles, scholarly journals, and government documents, but also all non-print materials, such as audiotapes, videotapes, compact disks, and web sites. I used the term “textual” in its most general sense as any vehicle of communication.

I wanted a clear distinction between materials that were expected to be read and those that were optional, so I emphasized each choice: the word “Required” was underlined and followed by the term “Mandatory,” and similarly, the word “Recommended” was underlined, followed by the word “Suggested.” This redundancy was intended as a support for a coder’s decision making, to force the coder to double check. For materials that were required, coding involved a simple counting of items: choices from 1 (ONE) to 10 or more ( $\geq$  TEN) were available, as well as None (NONE), when no materials were required, or Unclear (UNCLEAR), when it was impossible to

ascertain the intention of the instructor concerning the use of some materials.

I expected many more materials would be recommended than required, because of the cost of materials to preservice teachers, and because of time limitations associated with course durations. Again, coding involved counting items. Categories existed to indicate specific counts of material up to more than 100 (>100); as well, a space was provided to record the actual count. A category of Several (SEV) was available for situations in which the idea of wide reading was put forth in a general way, as well as categories for None (NONE) and Unclear (UNCLEAR). Further explanations of all of the above coding categories are provided in Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding (see Appendix F).

In the items that followed, the total number of textual materials was again divided, this time by the nature of the materials. First, the MCI guided the coder to look at “Major L.A. Survey Textbook Assigned as Required” and “Major L.A. Survey Textbook Assigned as Recommended.” For both, simple counts were required. The designation “textbook” here referred to text in its narrowest sense, as a book that provided a survey of the field of study and which all students in a class were expected to study, the type of text that has been common in university courses historically.

Six other items concerning books followed the “Major L.A. Textbook” items. These, too, involved counting of required and recommended materials, and included two of each of the following: “Major L.A. Monograph/Edited Volume,” which I included on the assumption that some instructors might use a monograph or edited volume as one would use a text, albeit the material would not survey the field; “Major Textbook in

Subject other than L.A.," which I included because I anticipated that some courses might simultaneously cover curriculum and instruction in more than one discipline, and to which I added a space for specifying the subject; and "Major Monograph/Edited Volume in Subject other than L.A.," included for the same reason.

The next set of items included materials that were not books. Here, too, both required and recommended items were to be differentiated. The first items here concerned a "Package of Reading Material," whether required or recommended. Here I was anticipating an instructor having a set of readings for purchase or for access from a library reserve collection. Responses available were Yes (YES), No (NO), and Unclear (UNCLEAR). Next, items concerned "Articles/ Individual Chapters" to be counted and considered specific if titles and authors or any other location information were provided. Choices to code included: from one to five specific articles (1-5SPEC); from six to 10 specific articles (6-10SPEC); or 11 or more specific articles ( $\geq$  11SPEC), as well as the possibility of an indeterminate number of non-specific articles (SOMEUNSPEC), or instances where assignment of articles was Unclear (UNCLEAR), or non-existent (NONE).

To code required or recommended "Government Documents," largely provincial curriculum guides and support materials, a simple count was expected. Similarly, the numbers of books classified as required or recommended "Children's or Young Adult (YA) Literature" were to be counted. Following this literature counting, the coder was to determine the "Specific Focus of Children's/YA Literature," both required and

recommended. Choices included all the literature in the set whose focus was: Canadian (CND); Provincial (PROV), focussing on any one province; Canadian and Provincial (CND&PROV); Regional (REG), referring to a region such as the prairies or the north; Provincial and Regional (PROV&REG); Canadian and Regional (CND&REG); no specific focus in terms of location (NONE); or Not Applicable (NA) in instances where no literature was included at all.

Toward the end of the “Readings” section were items dealing with “Other Print Material,” whether required or recommended. Here a count was to be recorded for materials not already dealt with (i.e., not textbooks, monographs, edited volumes, articles, chapters, government documents, or children’s/YA literature) but that nonetheless represented print materials, including such items as the writing of peers (such as one might read in a writers’ workshop), children’s writing, and print material to be read on the Internet or on a compact disk. The final classification in this section, again divided into required and recommended, and again requiring a simple count, was “Non-Print Material,” including materials such as videos, films, computer programs, web sites, photographs, drawings, sculptures, and cultural artifacts, all of which could be used for teaching in the areas of viewing and representing. I supposed that such materials were relatively uncommon in teacher education, but recognized that they were increasingly common in schools. I believed it was not unlikely that such materials would become increasingly common in teacher education as well. For each of these last four items on the MCI, a space was provided on which to specify the nature of the materials included in the syllabus.

*Annotation of specific materials.* After (or sometimes during) the classification of types of materials, a coder was also required to annotate specific materials, that is, to keep track of author(s), title, publisher and year of publication whenever such specific information was included in a syllabus. Part of my intention in accounting for specific materials was to identify those materials most popular in LA C&I courses. Also, I was curious as to whether or not particular authors or publishers would emerge as highly popular across the nation. Third, I was interested in the amount of Canadian material that was represented overall in the materials included in the C&I syllabi.

To facilitate the annotation of specific materials, I classified the types of materials that I expected to be most common into five sets, and for each set developed a list of materials. These classifications were: English Books, French Books, English Articles, French Articles, and Government Publications; herein "Books" included textbooks, monographs, and edited volumes while "Articles" included articles in professional journals and individual chapters of books. I did not develop lists of specific materials that I expected would be much less common, such as compact disks, web sites, or audiotapes.

I began the development of the lists by keying in bibliographic entries for the LA C&I textbooks and several monographs that I owned. Many of these had been provided to me free of charge by various publishing companies, in the hope that I might select them as course material; I expected that other instructors might also have received these books and, like me, might have selected one or more as required or recommended readings. I then added in the materials listed in a set of relatively current syllabi I had collected from

colleagues and from the Internet that I planned to use in piloting my initial coding instrument. Later, as I received packages (surveys and syllabi) from instructors, I keyed in any large lists of materials that were included. I separated the items first by language, then by classification, and listed them alphabetically within each classification. When I felt I was not going to be receiving any more packages, I ended the listing by numbering all items.

Many instructors provided full, accurate bibliographic information for readings. A few even provided International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) for each book. The style expectation for French bibliographic entries included the size of the book, expressed in number of pages, as the end portion of each entry, which I consider a useful addition (albeit I ultimately used an English style). Some instructors provided incomplete information, including only one of two authors, wrong surnames, wrong dates, and wrong or incomplete titles. I therefore also modified any entries requiring correction or completion. Whenever an item listed in the list of textbooks and monographs had been published in more than one location, the Canadian entry was entered instead of the American, Australian, or British entry. When coding, I considered the two items as equal.

For some government documents, especially curriculum guides, only one date was provided, and all materials by that title were counted under that one date. Although, for example, a curriculum document may not officially have been published until 1999, a 1997 draft version or a portion may have been available to the instructor, who, in turn, may have made it available to students. Similarly, web versions may have been available, either before or after the print versions. Also, as in the case of the materials created by the

Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (1997), parallel versions were put out by each of the Atlantic provinces.

If an instructor included a copy of his or her own book or article as material supplementary to the syllabus, I assumed that it was an item that had been shared with students, so I included it in the list of monographs or articles. (Although instructors' names were removed from surveys and syllabi for coding, names were not removed from articles.) Sometimes I was unsure whether the selections were intended as samples of articles given to students or were included for my personal edification; nonetheless, I considered all as being for students.

The sets of lists I developed became the 39-page "Textual Materials Codes" portion of the Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding (see Appendix F), for use in conjunction with the Main Coding Instrument when coding "Section 6 Readings." This section of the guidelines containing codes for textual materials was intended to increase accuracy and to save time by eliminating the tedious transcribing of information (author, title, publisher, etc.) when coding. If only a few items were included in a syllabus, their code numbers could be easily entered on page 15 of the MCI using the list of code numbers provided in the guidelines. If, however, several items were included, a separate document, the 19-page Textual Materials Coding Sheets (TMCS) could be used. The TMCS included the same information as was included in the guidelines, but was abbreviated (usually to include code numbers and authors' names only) and included a box in front of each code number that could conveniently be checked off. (See Appendix G for a copy of the TMCS.) Also, I created Supplementary Codes Sheets (see

Appendix G) on which to record bibliographic entries of materials not included in the TMCS. As coding proceeded, a list would be kept, and as an item was listed, it would be assigned a unique code number within its classification.

*Classroom activities in university teaching.* The next section of the Main Coding Instrument was entitled "Section 7 Classroom Activities in University Teaching." The first part of this section involved "Locus of Instruction." It was designed to identify the actual, physical place where preservice teachers learned about the teaching and learning of language arts/literacy and whether or not direct instruction took place to effect learning. While I believed that most courses took place in regular classrooms in the respective faculties, I had heard that some courses were held in the field, in children's classrooms while school was in session. Also, while I believed that most courses were instructed directly (or with a mixture of direct instruction and, at times, other types of instruction), I had heard of courses with no overt, predetermined agendas, where content was identified by the preservice teachers. To ascertain the locus of instruction in each syllabus, I developed the following categories: a field-based course with direct instruction (FIELD/INST); a faculty-based course with direct instruction (FAC/INST); a course involving a combination of field- and faculty-based work with direct instruction (BOTH/INST); a field-based course with no direct instruction (FIELD/NOINST); a faculty-based course with no direct instruction (FAC/NOINST); a course involving a combination of field- and faculty-based work with no direct instruction (BOTH/NOINST); and a provision for lack of clarity concerning location or the provision of instruction (UNCLEAR).

The main part of Section 7 concerned “In-Class Activities in which Pre-Service Teachers Engage.” This part was designed in an attempt to identify what it was that instructors and the preservice teachers who were their students actually did during class time, (insofar as that was possible to determine via syllabi). This part of the coding did not concern independent assignments intended to be completed as homework, nor did it concern other assessment activities (such as final exams), presentations, or field trips if they were held outside of class time.

I designed this part of Section 7 by first brainstorming a list of every possible activity I could think of, including those that I myself had carried out as an instructor or as a student and those that I had heard about or conceptualized but had not done. I then gleaned activities from my set of pilot syllabi. Ultimately, I listed 38 activities; for example, I included such activities as: “Assessing Children’s Work,” “Demonstration (as Observer),” “Government Document Examination/Analysis,” “Group Project (graded),” “Lecture,” “Making Teaching Materials,” and “Roleplaying.” I also included spaces in which other activities could be added, and kept track of these on a master list called Supplementary Codes Sheets (see Appendix G), developed as a supplement to the MCI.

For ease during coding, I listed the activities in alphabetical order. I then appended to each the coding choices. If there was evidence that an activity was intended by the instructor, the coding choice was Yes (YES). If no evidence existed that an activity was intended, the choice was No (NO). If it was not possible to make a decision because of not understanding the intent, the choice was classified as Unclear (UNCLEAR). If a course included specified instruction (FIELD/INST, FAC/INST, or BOTH/INST) then

that course could be probed further, whereas a course that did *not* include instruction specifically could not be so probed (for example, a course in which the instructional activities were decided on the spot by a preservice teacher, a cooperating teacher, or the course instructor). In such instances where the delivery of instruction was not specific, all of the activities in this subsection would be coded as Not Applicable (N/A), and the coder would then move on to Section 8.

*Topics in university teaching.* The next section of the Main Coding Instrument was entitled "Section 8 Topics in University Teaching." This was a straightforward section involving lists of topics that preservice teachers might be expected to study in an LA C&I course. This section was designed to identify the main topics that were, in fact, stipulated for study, as well as to identify any area not overtly covered, as evidenced by course syllabi.

To develop the list I brainstormed as many topics as I could think of, then combed through my own course outlines and the set of outlines I had collected for my pilot study. To my evolving list I then added topics that I uncovered when combing through the tables of contents of various language arts survey textbooks. At times I would realize that a topic might be construed too narrowly or too widely, so would add to it for a more thorough description or break it into component topics. Ultimately, I identified 147 separate topics that can be found on pages 18 to 23 of the MCI (see Appendix E). Examples include: "Action Research," "Drama/Dramatic Activity," "Emergent Literacy," "Handwriting/Printing/Penmanship," "Inquiry Approach," "Language Functions," "Lesson Planning," "Media Literacy," "Response to Literature," "Spelling-Lexical/

Morphological,” “Technology/Computer in Language Arts,” “Word Identification/Recognition,” and “Writing to Learn.”

For ease during coding, I listed the activities in alphabetical order, as I had done for classroom activities. I then appended to each the coding choices. If there was clear evidence that a topic was included as a main topic, most often listed in a “Course Topics” or “Schedule of Topics” listing, then the coding choice was Listed (LISTED). If the topic was clearly included, but included as a subtopic, or otherwise referred to (for example, referred to in the title of a recommended book or article), it was coded as Mentioned (MENT). If no evidence existed that any degree of coverage of a topic was intended in the course, the choice was Not Mentioned (NOT MENT). As I had done for activities, I included spaces at the end of the list in which other topics could be added, and kept track of these on the Supplementary Codes Sheets (see Appendix G). In such instances where the delivery of instruction was not specific (FIELD/NOINST, FAC/NOINST, and BOTH/NOINST), all of the topics in this section would be coded as Not Applicable (N/A), and the coder would then move on to Section 9.

*Assignments/Assessments in university teaching.* The last section of the MCI was “Section 9 Assignments/Assessments.” It consisted of four main subsections. The first was made up of several general questions about the context of assignments. The second was a listing of specific assignments, while the third was a set of questions about criteria by which assignments were assessed. The last was a set of questions concerning who graded the assignments. Each subsection is discussed in detail below.

*The context of assignments.* The first three questions concerning context revolved around the question of whether or not children were involved in assignments; some assignments require only reading and writing and can be carried out in a library or in the privacy of one's home. Others, however, need to be conducted directly with children, at least in the first part, then followed by an analysis of the time spent with the child and/or of the child's work. I was curious to know whether instructors were requiring involvement with actual children. I also wanted to know how many children were involved and whether or not they were from the classrooms in which preservice teachers were completing their practica. The first item concerned "Assignments Involving Children—Number of Children, within Practicum." Response to this item required the coder to delineate within a syllabus first whether or not any assignments involved children. If any did, then within that subset, the coder had to distinguish whether or not the children would be from a practicum placement classroom, as opposed to being one's own children, siblings, nieces and nephews, other relatives, neighbours, or other children accessed only for the purpose of the assignment. Last, if the assignment did involve the practicum placement, the coder had to count the number of children involved. Choices involved direct counts, from one (ONE) to five or more ( $\geq$ FIVE), an entire class (CLASS), or a choice of the number of children (CHOICE). As well, provision was made for there being no children from the practicum (NONE), although children from other places, including the practicum as merely one possible source, could be involved. Provision was also made to code a lack of clarity as to which children could be selected and/or the number of children involved (UNCLEAR). With the same choices, the second

item concerned “Assignments Involving Children–Number of Children, Not within Practicum.” The last question concerned “Assignments Involving Children–Number of Assignments,” with similar choices for coding.

Two parallel items dealt with choice: “Choice of Assessment Activities” and “Choice within Assessment Activities.” These items probed whether or not preservice teachers had any degree of say in their assignment options, and if so, the nature of their say. Coders could classify the choices as involving all the assignments (ALL), half or more of the assignments (MOST), at least one but fewer than half the total (SOME), none of the assignments (NONE), not applicable (N/A) in cases where assignments were listed but not described in detail, or unclear (UNCLEAR), where the nature of the choice could not be clearly determined.

Following these, an item probed whether or not there was a “Penalty for Late Assignments,” with choices being Yes (YES), No (NO), Not Applicable (N/A), or Unclear (UNCLEAR). The penultimate item, with the same choices, concerned the type of grade given: “Final Grade is Pass/Fail,” in order to distinguish courses in which the only options were to award a “pass” or a “fail” from courses in which instructors determined a numerical or letter grade for each student. Last, also with the same options, the item labelled as “Grade is Independent of Other Courses/Components” probed whether the course was independent or part of a set of courses or course components graded as one.

*Specific assignments/assessment activities.* In some ways, this subsection was the most straightforward of all the subsections regarding assessment. To develop it, I

brainstormed all the assessment activities and products I had ever used or heard about in teacher education courses, anything that could be considered formally by an instructor in assessing and evaluating the performance of preservice teachers in the C&I courses, anything within a course for which a student might receive marks. To these I added a few items from my pilot syllabi. I ended up with 33 assignments or assessment activities, that I listed alphabetically. Some examples of these were: "Attendance/ Punctuality," "Group Project," "Journal/Logbook," "Lesson Plan," "Personal Writing," "Portfolio–Professional–in Program," "Presentation," "Teaching Kit," and "Test/Quiz." I also provided spaces for other activities to be recorded and listed on the Supplementary Codes Sheets (see Appendix G).

I wanted to know whether or not preservice teachers were involved in a particular assessment activity, but I also wanted to know the weighting of that activity in relation to the final course grade. For this reason, the coding choices were stated in terms of a range of percentage weightings. The first choice was 1-10. This is the choice that would be marked if a particular assignment were worth only five (5%) or 10 percent (10%) of an entire course (or anywhere from one to 10, though multiples of five were expected to be more likely), or if a specific part of an assignment were worth only eight percent (8%), for example. The next choice was 11-20, for use, for example, if an assignment were worth 15 percent or 20 percent. The intervals continued this way to 91-100. Other choices were: Some (SOME), wherein an assignment surely had some worth but the specific weighting of it was not given; None (NONE), wherein there was no such activity in the syllabus, or wherein a task, if expected, was not included in the accounting of a final mark;

Assignment Percentage Unclear (ASS%UNC), wherein there was such an activity included, possibly as a portion of a large assignment, but its weighting was unclear; and Not Applicable (N/A), for pass/fail circumstance or circumstances in which no weightings were provided.

*Criteria for assessment.* It is one thing to know which assignments or assessment activities preservice teachers are required to do, but another to know the bases on which such assignments are assessed. To probe this aspect of assessment in the LA C&I courses, I developed several items under the heading of “Assessment of Preservice Teachers’ Knowledge and Abilities.” I first created an item labelled “Assessment Criteria/Rubric” to indicate whether or not any type of assessment or evaluation criteria or rubric had been included within the syllabus. Did the preservice teachers know, as evidenced within the syllabus, the bases on which their assignments would be graded? Coding choices were: Yes, specific criteria (as checklists or rubrics) were provided (YES–PROV SPEC), referring to criteria specific to the assignment; Yes, general criteria were provided (YES–PROV GEN), referring to criteria which would cover all assignments; Yes, criteria items were mentioned (YES–MENT), referring to a vague reference to what was valued overall; No (NO), referring to no mention of criteria whatsoever.

In deciding whether assessment criteria or rubrics had, in fact, been provided, it was important that the coder differentiate between criteria, (that is, the factors of an assignment which indicate its quality), and simply the assignment components. Some instructors may be quite specific about which components of an assignment ought to be

included yet provide no information concerning the bases by which those components will be assessed.

The next part of this subsection dealt with specific criteria included by instructors. Here I developed a list of 18 criteria, brainstormed from my own teaching and from the pilot syllabi, alphabetized it, and added the following coding choices: Yes (YES), No (NO), to be used if criteria were provided but this particular item was not among them, Unclear (UNCLEAR), and Not Applicable (N/A), to be used if no criteria or rubrics were provided at all. Examples of criteria items included: "Subject Matter Knowledge," "Insight/Critical Thinking," "Creativity/Originality," "Expression/Clarity," and "Skills–Mechanics." Again, I provided spaces for other criteria to be recorded and included on a master list called Supplementary Codes Sheets (see Appendix G).

*Evaluation of preservice teachers' assignments.* Last, I was curious as to whether anyone besides the instructor had any responsibility for evaluation. In a climate in which peer-evaluation and self-evaluation are suggested often as useful strategies for children, I wondered if such suggestions might not also be applicable to the preservice teachers who would work with children. I designated four items, "By Instructor(s)," "By Peer(s)," "By Self," and "By Other(s)," the latter designating other program personnel, teaching assistants, or external markers. To each of these I added choices accounting for percentages of the entire set of assignments/assessment activities. The first choice included all the assignments (100%). Next was the range from half up to 99 percent (50-99%), followed by ranges accounting for less than half: 25 to 49 percent (25-49%) and one to 24 percent (1-24%). Other choices available were: No (NO) for no evidence of

marking by the person(s) designated; Unclear (UNCLEAR), for unclear evidence of who was marking, or for unclear evidence of whether or not the marking counted officially or merely informed the instructor; and Not Applicable (N/A) for use in pass/fail courses or courses where weightings were not stipulated. At the end of the section on assignments, I probed what percentage of a preservice teacher's assignments was "Individual Work," "Group Work," and "Other Work," anticipating some category of work with which I was not familiar. For coding, percentage ranges matched the ones for evaluation responsibilities above, with the addition of an option called Choice (CHOICE) for use when preservice teachers were given choice about whether to work individually or in a group, and the option Some (SOME), when there was clearly some such work in the entire accounting but the percentage was not given. Space was provided for recording actual percentages.

I ended the Main Coding Instrument with an area to record any "Notes/Details/Items of Interest" and another area to account for who was coding a particular syllabus and the length of time required for coding it.

### ***Secondary Coding Instruments***

In addition to the regular coding instrument, (the 31-page MCI, which I called the Long Form), I also developed a Short Form (see Appendix G). There were a few instances in which one instructor taught two separate sections of a course, and I considered each of these as a separate course (and thus as a separate unit of analysis). I decided to do this because if two sections were each taught by a different instructor, they were considered different sections and if one instructor had taught two sections of the

same course but taught each differently, then those, too, would be considered separate sections. Thus it made sense that if one instructor taught two courses and taught them the same way, they would nonetheless be considered as two separate courses. When two separate sections used the same syllabus or parallel syllabi, I coded one on the long form and coded the other on the short form, by which all data were simply duplicated during data entry except for any noted differences, such as enrolment (indicated on the survey). Other secondary coding instruments were the Identification and Location Coding Sheet (ILCS), the Textual Materials Coding Sheets (TMCS), various Supplementary Codes Sheets, and the Computer Coding Transfer Sheets discussed in the “Data Collection Phase” near the end of the following section. All secondary coding instruments are available in Appendix G.

### **Sequence of Development and Use of the Coding Instrument**

There were five phases required for the development and application of the coding instrument in this study. I began with the “Draft Phase” in which I developed an initial coding instrument. This was tested out in a brief “Pilot Phase.” Results here led to a “Modification and Augmentation Phase” that ultimately resulted in the completion of the various coding materials for final use in the study. The major portion of the study took place in the “Data Collection Phase” wherein the entire set of surveys and syllabi were analyzed. The study ended with the “Inter-Rater Phase” wherein reliability was established. Each of these phases is described below.

### *Draft Phase*

In the months before the study was formally initiated, I began the development of the template that would eventually become the Main Coding Instrument of the study. Using Carney's (1972) metaphor of raking through data, I realized I would need different rake heads to pull up different kinds of information. As my different rake heads, I created separate sections of the instrument paralleling the research questions set forth in the study. I developed the demographics sections straightforwardly, based on the survey questions and various aspects of courses that I could easily foresee (e.g., language mode variations), and I developed the orientations section in full, but the other sections, such as readings, class activities, topics, and assessment activities I drafted based on brainstorming my own background knowledge and supplementing it by browsing through the tables of contents and bibliographies of several popular textbooks, and by scanning contents pages of miscellaneous professional language arts journals. I explored such sources until I was no longer finding new information. At that point I felt I was ready to pilot the 19-page instrument.

### *Pilot Phase*

I piloted the existing version of my coding instrument by coding a dozen appropriate course syllabi (English and French) that I had gathered from colleagues and from the Internet. All were for LA C&I courses and all were fairly recent (academic years 1995-1998). Although I knew ahead of time some of the categories I would require, I realized, too, as Chadwick et al. (1984) forecasted, that "[p]reliminary examinations of

the communications in small-scale pilot studies will suggest possible categories into which material can be coded” (p. 248). The pilot exercise helped me to identify over 150 necessary changes, some large and conceptual, others minor and typographical. The pilot activity also helped me to begin the draft of my coding guidelines. Importantly, too, the act of piloting helped me to gauge the approximate amount of time required to rake through the data using the various heads on the rake as reified in the various sections of the coding instrument.

Like Chadwick et al. above, Neuman (1991) also supported the inclusion of a pilot phase. He commented that: “Although researchers often begin with preliminary coding rules, they often conduct a pilot study and refine coding on the basis of it” (p. 269).

### ***Modification and Augmentation Phase***

After the pilot phase I refined the instrument: I clarified forced choices that were not functional, added choices where appropriate (especially to the “Readings” and “Topics” sections), and provided for write-in options wherever I felt they might be needed. I eventually developed a separate list of possible materials in the readings section and made the list considerably more thorough by keying in some of the bibliographical lists (notably the larger ones) from syllabi I was receiving for the study. I felt this was a useful step because it would be easier to identify items on a pre-numbered list than to add dozens of items as write-ins. One instructor had a seven-page bibliography for students, and several others were a full page long, with a few at two, three or four pages long. I

ultimately decided, too, that in such cases where relatively long lists of specific materials were suggested, I would use an extra set of coding sheets to complement the MCI. I called this set of pages the Textual Materials Coding Sheets or TMCS (see Appendix G).

When I stopped adding specific content to the Main Coding Instrument, it was 30 pages long. I then added one page as a comments section for use during the coding; here I would explain discrepancies or alert myself to interesting phenomena within a syllabus. As well, I would keep track of the coding time required per syllabus. With the long form completed, I then developed the MCI-Short Form. Last, I duplicated several copies of each version of the coding form so that there was one instrument for each of the sets of material (instructor survey and syllabus) that I had received.

### *Data Collection Phase*

Data were collected in two stages. In the first stage, I used the original copies to code the name of the institution and the location of it on a separate coding page which I called the Identification and Location Coding Sheet (ILCS; see Appendix G). This form provided a place to include the instructor number (IN#) and syllabus number (S#) that I had allocated upon receipt of the material. These numbers were identical to the numbers that would be entered on the MCI for cross-referencing, thereby allowing me later to input data concerning the specific institution *without* being aware of the institution when I did the bulk of the coding. This was a necessary step because I knew several of the instructors to varying degrees and had some prior knowledge (admittedly fragmented) of several of the institutions. I did all of the ILCS coding as a set well before I began any

analysis of the masked copies of the surveys and syllabi. The ILCS also included a space to note "Institution Number," so that a specific institution could be delineated. All accredited institutions were listed on this form and a number was provided for each. (For two of the institutions, Laurentian University/*Université Laurentienne* and the University of Ottawa/*Université d'Ottawa*, two numbers were allocated, one for the English program and one for the French.) Based on the institution, "Province" and "Region" were also determined. Regions included: Western Canada (WEST), comprising British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; Central Canada (CENT), comprising Ontario and Quebec; and Eastern Canada (EAST), comprising New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. Northern Canada was not included because, although there have been a few satellite programs in the north, no accredited institutions existed there.

The second stage, the main task of this entire study, was the analysis of the survey and syllabus material from each instructor. Any complementary materials (such as reading lists or assignment specifications) that an instructor provided to students were considered part of that course syllabus for the purposes of the present study. I used the Main Coding Instrument (MCI; Long or Short Forms; see Appendices E and G respectively), and, where needed, the Textual Materials Coding Sheet (TMCS; see Appendix G). In this stage I kept track of any supplementary code numbers required (when the numbers provided on the MCI itself were insufficient) using the Supplementary Codes Sheets (see Appendix G) and I recorded any instances of decision making in the draft version of the Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding (which

ultimately became Appendix F). This second stage of data collection was undoubtedly the longer one.

To facilitate data entry I developed a set of sheets that I called Computer Coding Transfer Sheets. These were, in essence, blank grids in which each box was numbered to correspond to a specific item in the coding instrument (see Appendix G). I duplicated a set of these transfer sheets for each MCI I had used. After the data collecting, I transferred the data to these sheets. This latter step allowed for more efficient data entry when developing the data spreadsheet. I felt this step was necessary because the MCI contained 30 pages of data to code, and the TMCS contained 19 pages, whereas the transfer sheets involved only nine pages per syllabus. Besides being shorter, the layout on the transfer sheets was uniform, whereas the layout of markings on a completed MCI form was not. Although this transfer step required additional time, I felt it was less straining visually, provided more accuracy, and also allowed for the detecting of missed information before data entry was initiated.

After data were thus collected and transferred, they were entered onto a computer spreadsheet to form a data set for analysis. Each case and each variable were labelled, as well as all the values within each variable, in correspondence with the choices on the coding forms. The entire data set was printed out to provide a hard copy as insurance in case of future computer malfunctioning. The printout also provided an opportunity to detect missing data and data entry errors. When the data were cleaned, a new printout aided the perceiving of patterns or trends in the data that might have been less obvious when viewing them screen by screen.

### *Inter-Rater Phase*

After the data were collected and before final analyses had been completed, I conducted the final phase of the study, the Inter-Rater Phase. I randomly selected 10 percent of the syllabi for analysis by a second rater enlisted to perform coding to duplicate as closely as possible the methods and decision making used in the initial analysis. In order to assure correspondence with the language division in the original sample, the syllabi were separated by language before random selections were made, then nine English syllabi and two French syllabi were selected. Later, I randomly selected one more French syllabus as I felt that merely two were insufficient for comparison. These 12 syllabi (and accompanying survey material and supplementary pages included by instructors) were copies of masked versions with no identification information available. I also prepared five other syllabi (not from the study) for training purposes.

The rater who assisted me was a bilingual professor who had considerable experience teaching LA C&I to preservice teachers and who had recently earned a Ph.D. in Language and Literacy. I provided her a copy of the "Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding" (Appendix F) and several blank copies of the "Inter-Rater Reliability Coding Instrument." This was essentially a copy of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E) with the first four sections and "Section 6 Readings" removed. The introductory sections concerned identification, location, and other demographic information. Because these areas were confidential or were largely counting exercises with little decision making needed, it was decided not to require the second rater to account for these details. Similarly, although I had initially anticipated some

aspects of the “Readings” section being unclear, most of the coding was straightforward counting and noting of specific titles used in the study. There were so few instances of uncertainty in the decision making that I decided it would not be necessary to have the second rater re-assess this section. The work she had was already great in scope (and decidedly tedious for someone without a specific investment in the study). The inter-rater reliability focussed on the four sections that required judgement: “Orientations,” “Classroom Activities,” “Topics,” and “Assessment.” Two practice sessions were held with syllabi not used in the study.

The second rater then coded the 12 sets of material (syllabi and any supplementary materials) unassisted, using the coding guidelines I had provided and the notes she had made during the training. The results from this coder’s work were later compared with my own to establish inter-rater reliability.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Units of Analysis***

The unit of analysis in content analysis research can range from a single word to the entire message (Chadwick et al., 1984). In this study, the unit of analysis was the instructor’s survey and the syllabus for each section of a course taught, including any supplementary materials the instructor provided. The words and/or the ideas represented were considered at two different levels: the first level of analysis was the various sections of an individual syllabus, while the second was the syllabus as a whole. The sections that served for the first-level analysis were: (a) identification and location information

(including course title, number, instructor, the university where the course was taught and its geographic location); (b) instructor information (including gender, academic degrees, and teaching experience); (c) contextual information about the course (such as enrolment, contact hours, language, and modes); (d) readings (including textbooks, articles, and government publications); (e) in-class activities; (f) topics; and (g) assessment (including assignments and grading criteria).

These sections were detected in each syllabus by the delineations provided by means of headings and subheadings, by spacing, and/or by content. A category was considered to represent only one section of a syllabus and each section was accounted for specifically on the coding sheet. This ensured that the first-level analysis was “mutually exclusive and exhaustive” (Neuman, 1991, p. 269), that everything was considered but that nothing was considered more than once in a given instance.

Whereas the first level of analysis was used to code a variety of specific details, largely practical, the second level was used to code three different types of theoretical orientations: (a) theoretical approaches to language acquisition (following Bohannon & Warren-Leubecker, 1985 and Warren-Leubecker & Bohannon, 1985); (b) language arts/literacy instruction orientations (following Butler-Kisber, Dillon, & Mitchell, 1997); and (c) pedagogical orientations (following Carter & Anders, 1996). The second level of analysis differed from the first in that it required a thorough reading (and often multiple readings) of the entire syllabus for each of the three theoretical orientations.

### *Data Preparation and Analysis*

Once I had received the surveys and course syllabi, I then determined their contents by applying the coding instruments to each one in turn. After these raw data had been collected and prepared for analysis (as previously described), several types of descriptive statistics were sought using the computer program *SPSS 9.0 for Windows*. Frequency distributions were the main statistics sought. For each of the research questions set forth earlier in this paper, I established frequency distributions for most of the itemized data within each of the nine major sections of the MCI (see Appendix E). To probe specific aspects of the results of these analyses, several cross-tabulations were also performed. I presented all major findings as tables and, where appropriate, as histograms, bar charts, or other graphic representations. The data analyses are presented and discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The present study was conducted to produce a description of current practice in mandatory, language arts curriculum and instruction courses in preservice teacher education in Canada. The study endeavoured to determine information about various features of instruction, among them: demographics, instructors' orientations (to language acquisition, to language arts teaching, and to university teaching), instructional materials, in-class instructional activities, course topics, and assignments. The information obtained holds the prospect of initiating a conversation among teacher educators across Canada, principally those in the field of language arts/literacy. After looking at the status of our work as evidenced in the results of the present study, those of us in the field might pursue such issues as where we wish to be and how we might arrive at such a place or places. The present study can function, too, as a starting point for follow-up studies and as an adjunct for other studies concerning related topics.

The first chapter of this dissertation established the purpose of the study and its scope and significance. The second chapter presented the contextual backdrop for the study. First, it surveyed the governance of Canadian elementary education and the history of North American higher education. Teaching practices in postsecondary education were briefly discussed, with some detail concerning the training and education of preservice teachers in Canada. The remainder of the chapter focussed on various developments within the field of language arts. The chapter ended with a summary of the few studies

already conducted concerning teacher education specifically in language arts curriculum and instruction. Chapter Three described content analysis, the overall method employed to answer the established research questions. It provided a detailed look at the research instruments created for the analysis and at the procedures for data collection and analysis, including the specific use of the instruments. Furthermore, it presented the rationale for all methodological decisions.

The questions that propelled this study are listed below. They refer to a set of information provided for one academic year by instructors of mandatory, elementary language arts curriculum and instruction courses in accredited Canadian preservice teacher education institutions. The research questions were:

1. What are the *demographic characteristics* of the sample studied, both in terms of the individual instructors and in terms of the specific courses represented?
2. What *theoretical orientations* underlie the work of the instructors? What are their orientations to how language is initially learned, to how language arts/literacy might best be taught at school, and to how a course for preservice teachers should best be taught?
3. What are instructors' expectations (requirements and recommendations) concerning *textual materials* for use in their courses?
4. What *instructional activities* are included in the entire set of activities that comprise regular class time? What activities are used most and least frequently?
5. What *topics* are covered in these courses? Across the sample, which topics are allocated the most and the least attention?

6. What *assessment activities* are used by instructors? Across the sample, with what frequency are the various assessment activities used and to what degree are they represented as portions of students' final grades? To what degree do the assignments provide for *student choice*? By what *criteria* are assignments graded? These questions will be reiterated later when specific data are presented and discussed.

The current chapter opens with a discussion about the "Rate of Return" of the materials requested of department heads and instructors, including rates of return and some possible reasons for them, plus comparisons with rates of return in related studies. After an overview of the nature of the materials received, the bulk of the chapter is a presentation of results. The order of presentation essentially follows the organization of the Main Coding Instrument (MCI; see Appendix E), which itself followed the specific research questions established at the beginning of the study. Some findings are not presented if they were insignificant or inconclusive.

The sections in which analyses are presented begin with "Results Concerning Demographic Information" about instructors and about courses, followed by "Results Concerning Theoretical Orientations." The latter are presented in three subsections, each around a different aspect of theoretical interest. These are followed by a series of "Results Concerning Textual Materials" that begins with a brief look at the differences between "Required versus Recommended Materials," an idea revisited throughout the discussions of specific materials. Results range from presentation of data concerning "Survey Textbooks" and "Monographs and Edited Volumes" through to "Other Print Materials and Non-Print Materials." Specific materials are presented in terms of their popularity.

Because an essential aspect of the present study is its Canadian context, the materials are probed as to their provenance. The final sets of results examined in this chapter are “Results Concerning In-Class Instructional Activities,” “Results Concerning Topics,” and “Results Concerning Assessment.” Each section ends with a brief summary.

Wherever relevant, data tables, including cross-tabulations, are provided to support or clarify the discussions. In many sections of the study, inter-rater reliability figures are reported; these are reported as percentages of direct agreement between the principal researcher and the second rater. The chapter ends with summary comments concerning findings.

### **Rate of Return**

The acquiring of data for this study was a multi-stage process. First, the heads of curriculum departments were asked to name people in their departments who were teaching language arts methods courses appropriate to this study, and to name the courses and sections being taught. The lists thus submitted were intended to represent the total possible number of individual, mandatory, elementary LA methods courses being taught across the country. Second, those who were named as instructors of the various courses were contacted directly, and each was asked to complete a survey and to send in a copy of every applicable course syllabus. The items received were then to be matched one-to-one against the list of items expected. The percentage received would constitute the rate of return for the study.

I anticipated that this would be a straightforward procedure, but was somewhat

disappointed. Some aspects of the problem were my own fault, especially in terms of the materials received. As I started going through the packages I received and started reading the surveys in detail to account for the exact number of syllabi received versus the number expected, I realized that I had made one error in the survey: On page one, where I asked instructors to list "Courses taught in LA/Lit C&I," I meant *mandatory preservice* courses taught in the *current* year. This knowledge could have been extracted from my densely-worded letter, but was not clear on the survey. While some instructors provided the exact syllabi requested (plus surveys and supporting materials), others, not surprisingly (and surely in good faith), sent syllabi from different courses instead of or as well as the ones requested, materials which, ultimately, I was unable to use.

The misunderstandings occurred for several reasons: (a) my request was unclear in parts and therefore subject to misunderstandings; (b) department chairs who had provided me initial information about what the instructors taught provided, in ignorance or oversight, inaccurate or incomplete information; (c) instructors misinterpreted my request, through not reading clearly or because they were overwhelmed with the amount of text I expected them to read.

Among the materials received that were rejected from the study were those relating to courses which were: (a) second-language courses, whether English as a second language (ESL) or French as a second language (FSL); (b) non-mandatory (i.e., elective) courses where mandatory was defined as essential for all teachers graduating as elementary teachers; (c) courses previously taught but not taught in 1998-99; (d) courses that in no direct way concerned pedagogy, such as a survey course in the study of

literature, which, though a requirement for a degree, was not included because it did not deal with teaching per se, but rather dealt with the preservice teachers' *own* knowledge of literature and its analysis; (e) courses that were education courses but not curriculum and instruction courses; (f) courses that were curriculum and instruction courses but were not specifically language arts courses; (g) courses that were exclusively oriented to high school teaching, not elementary school teaching, and (h) courses that were graduate rather than undergraduate courses.

It was at the point of receipt that initial decisions were made about whether or not an item would, in fact, be included in the study; however, while the inappropriateness of some syllabi was uncovered immediately, the inappropriateness of others was not uncovered until coding was underway. It was necessary to scrutinize syllabi to sort what I needed from what I did not.

All in all, therefore, it was somewhat complex to determine exactly the rate of return for this study. There are several ways to examine rate of return. Essentially, I look at two different rates of return, the return from department heads and the subsequent return from instructors. In each instance I present overall returns and, ultimately then, the viable returns. To support the rate of return contextually, I also discuss each type of rate of return in terms of representation, the degree to which it was representative in terms of regions of Canada, and in terms of size of institutions.

### *Rate of Return from Department Heads*

To launch the study, 51 letters (36 English and 15 French) were sent to

department heads to request the names of specific instructors who would then be asked to participate in the study. Follow-up reminders were also sent. Of the 51 curriculum departments originally contacted (see Appendix A), 50 replied, for a rate, initially, of 98 percent. However, 6 institutions of the 51 informed me that they did not qualify for this study: Two were part of cooperative programs, (wherein they were responsible for the arts and sciences aspects of programs, but not the teacher education courses); two were not offering C&I courses at the time; and two did not require LA C&I as mandatory. These six institutions were removed from the study, leaving 45 of the original 51 as qualifying institutions.

Of the remaining 45 departments in institutions which *did* qualify, one did not reply at all (as previously considered). Five institutions were in the process of changing department heads, and, in spite of good intentions, as intimated via the letters sent to me by the former heads (each indicating that they would be passing my request to the new head), their institutions were never heard from again. All in all, I did receive information as requested from 39 of 45 qualifying institutions, a rate of 86.7 percent.

Borg and Gall (1983) advocated that a survey return rate of 80 percent was good (p. 434); however, at this early stage I had actually hoped for a complete return, as the viability of the entire project hinged on receipt of information from department heads. I was curious to determine the degree to which the responses received were representative of the teacher education institutions across Canada, so I examined the sources of materials received. I examined them in two ways: First, I looked at regional representation, and second, I looked at representation in terms of size of institutions.

### ***Representativeness of Departmental Return by Location of Institutions***

The 45 institutions whose department heads responded as desired to my request represented all regions of Canada. Regional data are presented in Table 4.1. From western Canada 12 of the 13 institutions replied (92.3%), from central Canada 19 of the 24 institutions replied (79.2%), and from eastern Canada 8 of the 8 institutions replied (100.0%). Within central Canada, representation was fairly even between Ontario and Quebec: The former responded with 9 of 12, or 75.0 percent, and the latter, with 10 of 12, or 83.3 percent. I considered the return to be fairly evenly representative of all regions of Canada.

Table 4.1

#### ***Rate of Return from Department Heads by Regional Location of Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion in the Study***

Region	Number of qualifying institutions	Number of institutions responding	Percentage responding
Central	24	19	79.2
Western	13	12	92.3
Eastern	8	8	100.0
Total	45	39	86.7

### ***Representativeness of Departmental Return by Size of Institutions***

The 45 institutions remaining in the study were divided into three categories based on size: *small* (fewer than 3,000 students), *medium* (3,500 - 13,500 students), and *large*

(more than 13,500 students). Data concerning size were taken largely from Statistics Canada, provided by the Canadian Association of University Teachers/*Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université* (CAUT/ACPPU, 2003), with supporting statistical data about individual institutions from various other sources (Council on Post-Secondary Education, 2002, 2003; Laurentian University, 2000; *Université d'Ottawa*, 2003a, 2003b; University of Alberta, 2003). There were 15 institutions in each category. Responses for each are provided in Table 4.2. In the *small* category, 14 of 15 department heads responded, a return of 93.3 percent. In the *medium* category, 12 of 15 responded, a return of 80.0 percent. In the *large* category, 13 of 15 responded, a return of 86.7 percent.

Table 4.2

Rate of Return from Department Heads by Size of Institution of Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion in the Study

Size of institution	Number of qualifying institutions	Number of institutions responding	Percentage responding
Small	15	14	93.3
Medium	15	12	80.0
Large	15	13	86.7
Total	45	39	86.7

Again, as with regional representation, representation by size is quite consistent across categories, with relatively small deviations among them and with an overall range of just over 13 percent. The six institutions which could not be included in the study (and

which are not included in these sets of 15) were spread quite evenly across the three groups: Two were *small* institutions, three were *medium*, and one was *large*. Interestingly, of the five institutions where my request was passed on but never fulfilled, two were *medium* institutions and four were *large* institutions. This modest fact suggests that individual department heads in transition might have been too busy in larger institutions to attend to my request. Nonetheless, in other ways size may not have been a major factor: When I grouped the institutions into only two categories, *small* and *large*, with half the institutions in each category, I found that of the six institutions not included in the study, half were from the *small* group and half were from the *large*, thereby again supporting a fairly even representation.

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Table 4.3

Rate of Return from Department Heads of French Institutions by Regional Location of Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion in the Study

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Region	Number of qualifying institutions	Number of institutions responding	Percentage responding
Western	2	2	100.0
Central	11	8	72.7
Eastern	2	2	100.0
Total	15	12	80.0

---

My final attempt to ascertain the representation of information received involved looking only at the French materials received. (I did not look exclusively at English

materials, as the results would be reciprocal to the French receipts.) Information about the receipt of information exclusively from French institutions is provided in Tables 4.3 and 4.4. The former table does not indicate representative results; however, I contend that this is due largely to the fact that French institutions are not distributed at all equally by region, thus fair representation should not be expected. They are heavily weighted to the central region.

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Table 4.4

Rate of Return from Department Heads of French Institutions by Size of Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion in the Study

Size of institution	Number of qualifying institutions	Number of institutions responding	Percentage responding
Small	7	6	85.7
Medium	5	4	80.0
Large	3	2	66.7
Total	15	12	80.0

---

This final glimpse into rate of return, though small, also supports the fact that the information received from department heads, though not complete, is very much representative of the teacher education institutions in Canada. These results concerning French institutions are consistent with the overall results. The lowest representation occurs in the largest institutions, and these institutions are found most often in central Canada.

### *Rate of Return from Instructors*

The percentages of items received from instructors are presented in Table 4.5. Of course, some of the syllabi expected may not, ultimately, have been appropriate within the parameters of the study. Certainly, some of the syllabi received were ultimately

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Table 4.5

#### Rate of Return of Surveys and Syllabi from Instructors by Language

Nature of materials	Number expected	Number received	Percentage received
Total instructor surveys	154	71	46.1
Total syllabi	300	126	42.0
These may be broken down thus:			
English instructor surveys	110	54	49.1
French instructor surveys	44	17	38.6
English syllabi	231	99	42.8
French syllabi	69	27	39.1

---

eliminated because they were inappropriate. If all the syllabi sent by a particular instructor were eliminated, then that instructor's survey was also eliminated.

Because I did not receive responses from all instructors to whom I had sent initial requests, I sent follow-up requests. Borg and Gall (1983), in discussing survey return rates, suggested a return rate of 80 percent was desirable. They stated:

How would the results have been changed if all subjects had returned the questionnaire? If only a small percentage of your subjects fail to respond, this

question is not critical. If more than 20 percent are missing, however, it is very likely that most of the findings of the study could have been altered considerably if the nonresponding group had returned the questionnaire and had answered in a markedly different manner than the responding group. (p. 434)

Although their suggestion of 80 percent does not shed a positive light on my results, I consider their discussion to be relevant because in many ways the study I conducted can be considered a survey: It was a two-page survey with the inclusion of the syllabus parallel to a lengthy response to a final question. As much as possible I followed the advice offered by Borg and Gall for increasing the rate of return in that I sent material to individuals by name (as I had also done in the department head stage of the study), also naming their institutions, their department heads, and listing the specific courses in which I was interested, using the course names and numbers that I had received from department heads. I included a large self-addressed envelope to facilitate the return of the survey and syllabus. I included many types of contact information, which did prove useful, as several instructors contacted me with various questions before submitting their packages. I sent reminder letters, and although they did result in more packages being sent, perhaps the letters could have been more effective if I had sent them earlier. All in all, though, I do feel that the return was representative of the population from which it was solicited. In the sections below I discuss the representativeness of instructor return in terms of the number, the regional location, and the size of institutions.

#### ***Representativeness of Instructor Return by Number of Institutions***

Another aspect of the return that I examined was the representativeness of

institutions. As with the receipt of information from department heads, I wanted to gauge, in general, the degree to which my sample represented the population from which it was drawn. Although the overall rate of return from instructors (see Table 4.5) was only 42.0 percent (for syllabi) and 46.1 percent (for surveys), I did receive materials from 27 different institutions. With the total possible institutions being 51 (see Appendix A), 27 institutions represents 52.9 percent, just over half. Following are further discussions that collectively attempt to support the representativeness of the sample.

### ***Representativeness of Instructor Return by Location of Institutions***

In considering the representativeness of the return, I looked at the provenance of the syllabi themselves. I considered regional location and language as factors, and compared institutions represented within the body of actual syllabi qualifying for the study with institutions which themselves qualified for the study. As evident in Table 4.6, appropriate syllabi were received from 60.0 percent of these qualifying institutions. The regional representation shows that only 54.2 percent of the institutions in central Canada provided appropriate syllabi for the study, the percentage being higher in the east at 62.5 percent, and highest in western Canada at 69.2 percent. Overall, I consider the various representations to show a fairly parallel return across regions, within a range of only 15 percent. The range is greater when considering the differences in representation by language: 66.7 percent of the qualifying English institutions compared to 46.7 percent of the corresponding French institutions provided syllabi, a range of 20 percent.

I suspect that the lower return in French might reflect my lower ability in French than in English. Perhaps my requests were not as well understood by those in French

institutions. I did have considerable help in creating the French versions of the letters, and I feel that they were as clear as my English ones. Nonetheless, there were occasions where I corresponded in French with French department heads, department secretaries, or instructors, whether by e-mail, faxed notes, or telephone. Although my initial follow-up letter was written with assistance, subsequent ones were written by me, without assistance. Though most of the follow-up letters showed positive results, some did not: Most of the syllabi that did not qualify for the study were received from French institutions.

Table 4.6

Representativeness by Regional Location and Language Based on Number of Returned Syllabi Qualifying for Inclusion from Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion

Region and language	Total number of qualifying institutions	Institutions from which qualifying syllabi were received	Percentage of total institutions
West English	11	8	72.7
West French	2	1	50.0
Subtotal West	13	9	69.2
Central English	13	9	69.2
Central French	11	4	36.4
Subtotal Central	24	13	54.2
East English	6	3	50.0
East French	2	2	100.0
Subtotal East	8	5	62.5
Subtotal English	30	20	66.7
Subtotal French	15	7	46.7
Total	45	27	60.0

***Representativeness of Instructor Return by Size of Institutions***

In terms of actual receipt of qualifying syllabi from the various institutions, again the institutions of different sizes were fairly represented, with 60.0 percent overall. Table 4.7 indicates that while only 46.6 percent of *small* institutions (as previously defined) were represented, 60.0 percent of *medium*, and 73.3 percent of *large* were represented. This is a fair representation: larger institutions are involved with more preservice teachers, and thus have more influence on the teaching that occurs across the nation.

Table 4.7

**Representativeness by Size of Institution and Language Based on Number of Returned Syllabi Qualifying for Inclusion from Institutions Qualifying for Inclusion**

Size of institution and language	Total number of qualifying institutions	Institutions from which qualifying syllabi were received	Percentage of total institutions
Small English	8	4	50.0
Small French	7	3	42.9
Subtotal Small	15	7	46.6
Medium English	10	7	70.0
Medium French	5	2	40.0
Subtotal Medium	15	9	60.0
Large English	12	9	75.0
Large French	3	2	66.7
Subtotal Large	15	11	73.3
Subtotal English	30	20	66.7
Subtotal French	15	7	46.6
Total	45	27	60.0

### *Explanations for Rate of Return*

There are many possible reasons for the relatively low rate of return. First, of course, I could have followed up more immediately, including follow-ups by telephone and/or e-mail. I might, too, have put a due date on the returns, though this could also have limited late responders. Likely the main reason why department heads or instructors did not respond is that they were too busy, and that the request got lost in the shuffle of higher priority items. Some might have come upon the request several weeks later and discarded the material, considering it to be too late to send in.

In some institutions one reason for lack of returns may have been that their department headships were in transition, that the current head was not the person I had named, or that the one I had named was on leave or had retired. For whichever reasons, in some departments my request was ignored, set aside, or sat in a mailbox, not anyone's priority. Such transition is an inevitable facet of university life.

Concerning the instructor surveys, some instructors may have perceived their syllabi as only starting points, and, feeling that their syllabi alone did not explain well enough what they did in their teaching, may have intended to clarify to me the role of the syllabi in their teaching and to append explanations or class handouts or students' reading lists as supplements. Some may have intended to send an explanation with their syllabi to attempt to bring them to life the way they come to life in the classroom, to show me how they worked or what parts had not quite worked as written, and so on, but ultimately had not managed to get around to writing such explanations, nor to sending them. Others may have made changes to their courses since the distribution of the syllabi in early

September, and intended to note those changes for me. I base these explanations on a few of the syllabi I received that *did* contain such materials and which included notes with apologies about how long it took to get the materials together.

Of course, other factors may well have been at play, too. Course syllabi are hallmarks of autonomy. This makes them intensely personal pieces of writing in spite of the fact that their intent puts them in the public domain (at least within the domain of the institution wherein they are used). While some instructors might have felt proud of their creations and eager to share them, others may have felt insecure about having theirs scrutinized by me. Still others may have felt protective in a territorial sense, perceiving syllabi as items of their own intellectual property and not wanting their ideas shared or stolen in a research context that promised anonymity. Perhaps some would have preferred my advertising the creators of specific syllabi or specific aspects of them.

Still others may have mistrusted my intentions or otherwise found them distasteful, as illustrated by one letter received by Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) in their study of secondary English curriculum and instruction after they had elicited syllabi from teacher educators. In the words of the professor whom they quoted:

I have decided not to accede to your request to send you material describing the course I teach in English methods . . . . When one suspects that certain others will not take one's statements at their plain face value but instead torture them into a code signifying something else, then one is inclined to guard one's meanings and not willingly allow those others to paraphrase or summarize them. (p. 5)

This fear of the entrusting of one's self, via the syllabus, to unknown others, as well as

the devaluing of seemingly reductionist practices, might well have been factors inhibiting some individuals from responding to my request. Perhaps, too, my status, whether as a “mere” graduate student or as an instructor of a parallel course and thus a potential rival in the job market, may have played in to this situation somewhat. I feel it most likely, however, that most of those who did not respond were simply too busy and did not get around to the task which was not a pressing item on their everpresent list of things to do.

### *Comparison with Rate of Return in Similar Studies*

Craig and Frerichs (1999), in their discussion of the results of their study involving 36 teacher preparation institutions, stated: “The return rate for questionnaires was 60% for schools, 50% for classes and 34% for students” (p. 28). Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), who conducted a much larger study in which they “. . . sent letters to instructors . . . at over three hundred public universities in the United States, requesting that they send us their methods course syllabi” (p. 4), reported that “. . . fewer than one-third of the recipients of the letter sent us their syllabi . . .” (p. 5). The numbers of participating institutions and individuals in the present study falls between those in the two studies mentioned above, as do the rates of return: The overall results in the present study of 86.7 percent from institutions (via department heads), as well as 46.1 percent (for surveys) and 42.0 percent (for syllabi) from instructors seems well within the parameters of these two similar studies. The results are favourably comparable, too, to the return rate of 31 percent that Walker (1990) received in his investigation of full-time Canadian teacher educators of English language arts.

## **Presentation of Results**

Upon receipt of each set of materials from an instructor (completed survey, course syllabus and complementary materials), I labelled the items in the set with a number to indicate the order in which the set had been received. After some other processing details, I photocopied all the material, masking all possible identifying information. I also copied and set aside a randomly selected subset of materials for later use in establishing inter-rater reliability. (See the Chapter Three section "Receipt and Processing of Materials" for a complete description of processing.) I then began coding the materials using the coding instruments I had developed (see Appendices E and G). When that phase was completed, I then trained a second rater who conducted analysis of the subset. The structure of the discussion below largely follows that of the coding instruments.

### ***Overview of Materials Received***

Of the 126 syllabi received, 110 syllabi were ultimately analyzed, 94 English and 16 French. The others were eliminated for various reasons previously discussed. Along with the syllabi, 71 instructor surveys were initially received and 64 ultimately analyzed. There was not a direct one-to-one correspondence between number of syllabi and number of surveys because, in some instances, two instructors taught the same course, thus only one syllabus was counted, yet two surveys were counted. As well, in some instances one instructor may have taught two different courses each appropriate to the study, and/or may have taught multiple sections of a course (each considered as a separate unit for the purposes of this study); thus, for example, four syllabi could be counted, yet only one

survey was counted.

In terms of size and nature within the 110 syllabi ultimately analyzed, there was considerable variation, from a three-page syllabus in which the third page was three fourths blank, to a 45-page syllabus establishing each day's topics, events, and parallel readings, to a printed program handbook of 100 pages detailing classes, textual materials, and assignment expectations for the entire year for all aspects of the entire program.

Most of the syllabi (91 of 110, or 82.7%) were standard in form. The remaining syllabi (19 of 110, or 17.3%) were nonstandard; these were: (a) syllabi in which language arts was taught along with another subject; (b) the program handbook(s) of which only a section concerned language arts in particular; (c) the program handbook(s) that contained a section about language arts but made considerable reference to other parts of the document as well; and (d) program handbook(s) that did not have an explicit section devoted to language arts. In some instances, I probed instructors to verify whether or not some part was missing, but was informed that these were the only materials that students received. One standard syllabus was five pages long but was presented in a 14-point font with wide margins, while another was a very full 10 pages of 12-point, 10-point, and even 8-point text. Some instructors included no complementary material while one instructor included 159 supplementary pages, and yet another graciously included an entire 269-page book written by herself. All in all, 56 of the 110 syllabi (50.9%) were not accompanied by supplementary material. For the 54 that were so accompanied (49.1%), a total of 887 pages was received (*not* counting the instructor's book just mentioned, as it was not considered verbatim for analysis), for an average of 16.4 pages per syllabus.

Ultimately, materials were analyzed and the data recorded on a master spreadsheet for use with the computer program *SPSS 9.0 for Windows*. To enable an analysis of the data collected, I modified the initial—and rather unwieldy—master spreadsheet containing information from all surveys and all syllabi ( $N = 117$ ) into six separate spreadsheets, each of which could be analyzed for different purposes. The specific spreadsheets were created to correspond to the sections of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E). For “Section 1 Identification and Location Information” to “Section 4 Course Context–Part B,” two spreadsheets were created: (a) one containing only instructor information from surveys ( $n = 64$ ), with no duplication in instances of an instructor including two or more syllabi for the same course; and (b) one containing only information from syllabi ( $n = 110$ ), with no duplication in instances of two or more instructors teaching the same course. For efficiency, five other subsets were also created, each containing information exclusively from a separate section of the MCI: (a) “Section 5 Orientations” ( $n = 110$ ); (b) “Section 6 Readings” ( $n = 110$ ); (c) “Section 7 Class Activities” ( $n = 110$ ); (d) “Section 8 Topics” ( $n = 110$ ); and (e) “Section 9 Assessment ” ( $n = 110$ ). Of course, this meant that whenever an analysis was conducted, I was careful to perform it using the appropriate data set.

### ***Overall Results of Inter-Rater Reliability***

Inter-rater reliability was conducted on one tenth of the syllabi. Inter-rater reliability was determined to consist of direct one-to-one correspondence between the judgements of the researcher and a second coder within each item for sections of the

coding instrument that required complex decision making, these being the orientations section, the class activities section, the topics section, and the assessment section. Reliability was not determined for the other sections as these primarily involved straightforward counting. The reliability is reported as percentages of agreement.

The overall reliability for the study, for all four of the sections so analyzed, was 79 percent, with the raters agreeing on 2333 of 2964 individual items. Reliability for the French syllabi was higher in all but one section, and was higher overall: Reliability for the English syllabi was 78 percent and for the French syllabi was 81 percent. The reliability for each section will be presented at the end of that specific section. For discussion concerning inter-rater reliability, please see Chapter Five.

### ***Results Concerning Demographic Information***

The initial overall question about demographic information that guided the present study was: What are the *demographic characteristics* of the sample studied, both in terms of the individual instructors and in terms of the specific courses represented? I describe the results in two sections: “Results about Instructors” looks at the people who taught the curriculum and instruction courses in language arts across Canada, and “Results about Contexts of Courses” looks at several, general, contextual aspects of the specific courses they taught.

#### ***Results about Instructors***

Within the discussion of demographic information concerning instructors, I discuss the aspects that illustrate instructors’ characteristics and situations at the time of

the study, including gender, language, workload, and academic rank, followed by a discussion of instructors' backgrounds in terms of education and teaching experience. Within the presentation and discussion of these data, cross-tabulations are presented where I feel they add a useful perspective to the basic results.

*Gender of instructors.* As evidenced in Table 4.8, exactly three quarters of the instructors qualifying for participation in this study were female (75.0%) and one quarter was male (25.0%). This is almost a 20 percent difference from Statistics Canada data presented by CAUT/ACPPU (2004b) which indicated a ratio of 1265 males (55.9%) to 998 females (44.1%) within full-time Canadian university teachers in the discipline of Education.

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Table 4.8

Gender of All Instructors

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Gender	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
Female	48	75.0
Male	16	25.0
Total	64	100.0

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*Language of instructors.* Of the instructors who qualified for participation in this study, about four fifths were working in English-language contexts, and about one fifth in French-speaking contexts. Exact figures are available in Table 4.9. These proportions differ from those established by Statistics Canada (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004d) wherein 58.0 percent of university professors are reported to have English as a mother tongue,

compared to 19.5 percent having French. This CAUT/ACCPU report also included professors who had both languages as their mother tongue and those who had a third language instead. Extrapolations to exclude another language yielded 74.7 percent with English as a mother tongue and 25.2 percent with French. This quite closely matches the data in Table 4.9, supporting the representativeness of the data in the present study. Differences may be due to: the smaller population in my study wherein  $n = 64$  versus  $n = 30,140$  in the entire population of university professors (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004b); the slight differences in makeup (in terms of workload) of the two groups; and the fact that a few instructors in my study may not have been teaching in the language of their mother

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Table 4.9

Language of Instruction of All Instructors

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Language	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
English	52	81.3
French	12	18.8
Total	64	100.0

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tongue. Unlike the aspect of gender in teacher education, in which it may be claimed that many sociopolitical forces are implicated, one might expect the number of French instructors in this study to parallel the number of French speakers within the national population, because their job is to prepare teachers for that population.

As stated above, 19.5 percent of the professors in Canada identified French exclusively as their mother tongue (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004d), a figure which is very close

to the 18.8 percent evidenced in the present study. French instructors in Quebec accounted for 9 of 13, or 69.2 percent of the instructors in Quebec. While this does not quite match the 82 percent of French mother tongue speakers in Quebec (Neuvel, 2002), it does come close. Differences might include the fact that, whereas the official statistics presented above are based on totals that included speakers of other languages besides French and English, my choices were restricted to the two languages. Furthermore, the official statistics concern mother tongue directly, whereas the language choices in the present study concern language of instruction. Though the figures presented are not identical sets for comparison, they provide grounds for supposing a close match. It would most likely be natural, fluent speakers of a language who would teach about language arts. Mother tongue speakers would arguably be most fluent and accurate in their own language use.

*Workload of instructors.* In most university contexts, full-time workers are preferable to part-time workers in that they have more investment in the undertakings of the department, faculty, and university in which they work. Full-time workers can devote their energies to the tasks at hand and need concern themselves much less with issues such as financial security and employee benefits. They tend to be more available to students and more widely knowledgeable. Unlike the CAUT results (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004b) discussed previously, that were for full-time teachers, the figures in Table 4.8 presented earlier represent both full- and part-time teachers. However, the cross-tabulation in Table 4.10 does not show results consistent with CAUT's either. These

Table 4.10

Cross-Tabulation of Gender of Instructors by Workload

Gender	Full time	Percentage	Part time	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Female	36	72.0	12	85.7	48	75.0
Male	14	28.0	2	14.3	16	25.0
Total	50	100.0	14	100.0	64	100.0

results together suggest that the difference in populations may be attributable to level of instruction: All the full-time instructors in my study worked with undergraduate students, whereas the full-time teachers in the CAUT results would likely have included those working with graduate students and those working largely in administration.

Twelve of the instructors in my study, nearly one fifth of the group, were women who worked part time. The large difference in proportion between female part-time and

Table 4.11

Gender and Workload Status of Instructors

Gender and workload	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
Female full time	36	56.3
Female part time	12	18.8
Male full time	14	21.9
Male part time	2	3.1
Total	64	100.1

male part-time instructors (85.7% vs. 14.3%), as evidenced in Table 4.10, along with the fact that female part-time instructors accounted for 18.8 percent of the entire instructor group whereas the males accounted for only 3.1 percent, as evidenced in Table 4.11, is consistent with other findings that women have traditionally been over-represented among workers of part-time status: “And who makes up the ranks of Canada’s part-time workers? Women, visible minorities, immigrants and persons with disabilities are all overrepresented in the part-time labour force. Women, in particular, make up about 70 per cent of all part-time workers . . . .” (Chic & Fraser, 2003, p. A26). The large proportion of female part-time instructors compared to males in the present study is not consistent with overall gender representation in faculties of education: Statistics Canada data indicated a female-male ratio of 998 to 1,265 (44.1% to 55.9%) within the discipline of Education (CAUT/ACCPU, 2004b). However, within the subgroups that constitute this discipline, the subgroup of “Elementary-Secondary Education,” one of the subgroups that most closely matches the work allocations of the sample in the present study, is shown to have a female-male ratio of 48.7 percent to 51.3 percent. While this almost 50/50 split in Elementary-Secondary is slightly closer to the almost 75/25 split in the present study than is the almost 45/55 split in Education overall, it is, numerically, still not a close match. However, when one looks at the other closely matched category, “Kindergarten-Pre-school Teacher Training,” the female-male ratio is 76.7% to 23.3% (all figures from CAUT/ACPPU, 2004c, p.15). This is closest yet to the 75/25 of the present study, and surpassing it slightly, a fact that is not surprising when one considers that the present study included not only those instructors working with preservice teachers in the early

years, but those working with students in higher grades as well.

A perusal of gender of instructors in relation to the grade-related levels within the study, presented in Table 4.12, confirms the supposition that there are more females involved in work related to the youngest school children. In this table, the columns represent levels taught, and these columns have been placed from left to right, starting with the youngest level, *Early Years*. The four levels are not mutually exclusive but are progressive in the grades they parallel: *Early Years/Primary* (Nursery to grades 3 or 4), *Elementary/Primary-Junior* (Kindergarten to grade 6), *Middle Years* (grades 5 to 8 or 9) and *Junior-Intermediate* (grades 4 to 9 or 10).

Clearly, the female instructors outnumbered males most dramatically at the early years level, where females constituted 88.9 percent of my sample. The elementary level is also very high with females at 76.1 percent, followed closely by middle years at 75 percent. Only in the highest grade level category, junior-intermediate, does the gender representation show as equal.

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Table 4.12

Cross-Tabulation of Gender of Instructors by Grade-Related Level of Course

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Gender	Early years/ Primary		Elementary/ Primary-Jr		Middle years		Junior- Intermediate		Other		Total	
	Inst	Perc	Inst	Perc	Inst	Perc	Inst	Perc	Inst	Perc	Inst	Perc
Female	8	88.9	35	76.1	3	75.0	2	50.0	0	0	48	75.0
Male	1	11.2	11	23.9	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	100.0	16	25.0
Total	9	100.1	46	100.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	1	100.0	64	100.0

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*Academic rank/Level of instructors.* Table 4.13 presents two listings of the instructors in this study by academic rank: The first indicates English instructors, the second, French instructors. While teaching assistants and seconded teachers are not part

Table 4.13

Academic Rank of Instructors by Language of Instruction

Academic rank	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
Teaching assistant	1	1.6
Seconded teacher	6	9.4
Lecturer	5	7.8
Instructor	4	6.3
Assistant professor	7	10.9
Associate professor	16	25.0
Full professor	8	12.5
Other	5	7.8
Subtotal English	52	81.3
<i>Chargé(e) de cours</i>	4	6.3
<i>Professeur(e) adjoint(e)</i>	2	3.1
<i>Professeur(e) agrégé(e)</i>	3	4.7
<i>Professeur(e) titulaire</i>	2	3.1
Other	1	1.6
Subtotal French	12	18.8
Total	64	100.1

of standard university ranking systems, I included them here because the individuals in fact hold a status, albeit a low one by some perceptions. The table indicates that in both languages a large variety of ranks was represented within the sample population. Both groups have some parallels, which I perceived might be viewed more clearly if the two groups were collapsed: The collapsed results appear in Table 4.14. While the designations

Table 4.14

Cross-Tabulation of Academic Rank of Instructors by Workload, with Both Languages Grouped by Parallel Rank

Academic rank	Number of full-time instructors	Percentage of full-time instructors	Number of part-time instructors	Percentage of part-time instructors	Total number of instructors	Percentage of total instructors
Teaching assistant	0	0.0	1	7.1	1	1.6
Seconded teacher	5	10.0	1	7.1	6	9.4
Subtotal	5	10.0	2	14.3	7	10.9
Lecturer	1	2.0	4	28.6	5	7.8
Instructor	2	4.0	2	14.3	4	6.3
<i>Chargé(e) de cours</i>	1	2.0	3	21.4	4	6.3
Subtotal	4	8.0	9	64.3	13	20.3
Assistant professor	6	12.0	1	7.1	7	10.9
<i>Prof. adjoint(e)</i>	2	4.0	0	0	2	3.1
Subtotal	8	16.0	1	7.1	9	14.1
Associate professor	16	32.0	0	0	16	25.0
<i>Prof. agrégé(e)</i>	3	6.0	0	0	3	4.7
Subtotal	19	38.0	0	0	19	29.7
Full professor	8	16.0	0	0	8	12.5
<i>Prof. titulaire</i>	2	4.0	0	0	2	3.1
Subtotal	10	20.0	0	0	10	15.6
Other English	4	8.0	1	7.1	5	7.8
Other French	0	0	1	7.1	1	1.6
Subtotal	4	8.0	2	14.3	6	9.4
Total	50	100.0	14	100.0	64	100.0

of the English and French ranks have slight differences between them, for the purposes of this study they are sufficiently similar as to be comparable. These collapsed results show that while the rank most represented was that of Associate Professor/*Professeur(e)*

*agrégé(e)* accounting for 29.7 percent of the sample, the second largest group was that of Lecturer/Instructor/*Chargé(e) de cours* accounting for 20.4 percent. Only 15.6 percent of the instructor group held the title of Full Professor/*Professeur(e) titulaire*.

In order to determine how the current sample matched the rankings of instructors in the field of Canadian education overall, I compared subtotal results for all instructors (far right hand column from Table 4.14) with Statistics Canada findings concerning “Full-time Canadian university teachers by subject, rank and gender, 2000-2001” (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004c). I have presented the relevant results as percentages in Table 4.15. The results were different; for example, the highest proportion for “Elementary-Secondary Education” in the CAUT report was the associate professor rank at 38.3 percent. When I looked at the CAUT results for “Kindergarten-Pre-school Teacher Training,” I was surprised to see “full professor” as the highest proportion at 48.8 percent. Of the four choices presented by CAUT, full professor was the lowest proportion among the instructors in the present study, with CAUT’s large category of “other” subsuming six of my subcategories. Realizing that my results mixed both full-time and part-time faculty, whereas the CAUT results concerned only full-time faculty, I cross-tabulated my results for academic rank by workload. Table 4.14 indicates a much closer correspondence with the CAUT results, using the “Elementary-Secondary” grouping and the full-time instructors in the present study. Here associate professor/*professeur(e) agrégé(e)* is the rank most represented in both CAUT and the present study, at 38.3 percent and 38.0 percent respectively. Full professor is second, not identical, but not too far apart at 28.1 percent in CAUT and 20.0 percent in the present study. These figures somewhat support

Table 4.15

Comparison of *Statistics Canada* Results in Percentages and Results of Present Study in Percentages for Academic Rank

Academic rank	Number of elementary-secondary university teachers <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of elementary-secondary university teachers <sup>1</sup>	Number of kindergarten-Pre-school teacher trainers <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of kindergarten-Pre-school teacher trainers <sup>1</sup>	Number of instructors in present study	Percentage of instructors in present study
Assistant professor	154	26.2	11	25.6	9	14.1
Associate professor	225	38.3	11	25.6	19	29.7
Full professor	165	28.1	21	48.8	10	15.6
Other	43	7.3	0	0	26	40.6
Total	587	99.9	43	100.0	64	100.0

<sup>1</sup> derived from "Full-time Canadian university teachers by subject, rank and gender, 2000-2001" compiled by Statistics Canada and presented in the *CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada 2004/2004 Almanach de l'enseignement postsecondaire au Canada de l'ACPPU*, Ottawa, ON: Association of University Teachers/Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université, p. 15.

the overall representativeness of the data set in the present study. The big differences are with the remaining two groups. Where Statistics Canada found Assistant Professor/*Professeur(e) adjoint(e)* to account for 26.2 percent and "Other" to account for only 7.3 percent, the figures in the present study were almost reversed with assistant professor/*professeur(e) adjoint(e)* at 16.0 percent and *other* (when all subcategories were added together) at 26.0 percent. I suggest two reasons for the differences: All of the instructors in the present study were teaching at the undergraduate level and all were teaching in the area of curriculum and instruction. Undergraduate teaching is considered

by many university faculty members to be lesser in importance, something that can much more easily be delegated to sessional instructors, graduate teaching assistants, lecturers, instructors, or *chargé(e)s de cours*. Curriculum and instruction courses are often the first to be allocated to sessionals and others of lower ranks because these types of instructors are often much more closely and recently involved with day-to-day classroom practice. The fact that some institutions will second teachers from the field to do this work, often paying them at salaries well beyond those of entrance level academics, supports the reasoning concerning the lower academic ranks, even within full-time workers, of the instructors in this study. The part-time results shown in Table 4.14 serve only to reinforce these reasons: Within this group, only one instructor, accounting for 7.1 percent of the part-time people, was a ranked academic, in the assistant professor rank. The other part-timers in the present study, totalling 92.9 percent of the part-time group, were all lesser in rank; all would be classified as variations of Statistics Canada's "Other" according to Table 4.15.

*Education of instructors.* The educational background which any teacher brings to any teaching enterprise is important. One's background might be considered to be even more important in preservice teacher education; in any professional faculty, a faculty in which graduates will ultimately receive official credentials themselves, the credentials of instructors are often scrutinized by students. In this section of the chapter, the qualifications of instructors will be discussed in terms of the nature, year, and source of highest earned degree.

Table 4.16 shows both the nature of the highest degrees held by each instructor in

the present study as well as the span of years in which they were received. A quarter of the degrees (16 of 64, or 25.0%) were Master of Education degrees, and just over 60 percent of the degrees (39 of 64, or 60.9%) were doctoral degrees; an exact half, 32 of 64 (50.0%), were Doctor of Philosophy degrees and a further 7 of 64 (10.9%) were Doctor of Education degrees. In all, 9 of the 64 (14.1%) highest degrees received were neither Master of Education degrees nor doctoral degrees. In general these figures indicate that the instructors in the present study were a well-educated lot, certainly qualified for the work with which they were charged. Instances in which a graduate degree was not held likely represent older instructors who were hired before graduate degrees became virtually mandatory, seconded teachers who were hired for their practical expertise, or individuals who were hired under specific, unique circumstances.

Table 4.16

Cross-Tabulation of Highest Academic Degree by Year of Receipt

Degree	<1960	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-1999	Total	Percentage
B.Ed.					1		1			2	3.1
M.A.	1				1					2	3.1
M.Sc.							1			1	1.6
M.Ed.				1	1	4	3	3	4	16	25.0
Ed.D.							5	2		7	10.9
Ph.D.			1	3	3	5	7	7	6	32	50.0
Other								1	1	2	3.1
N/A					1				1	2	3.1
Total	1		1	4	7	9	17	13	12	64	100.0
Percentage	1.6	0	1.6	6.3	10.9	14.1	26.6	20.3	18.8	100.0	

Of all the instructors' highest degrees, the oldest was awarded in 1958, 40 years before the year of the present study. The second and third oldest were awarded in 1967 and 1971. The freshest degrees were the five awarded in 1999, two awarded in 1998, and three awarded in 1997.

Although individual institutions hire instructors on a variety of bases, it could be argued that the best postsecondary education for a teacher educator would be a graduate degree in Education. From the data in Table 4.17, if one considers the M.Ed., the Ed.D. and the Ph.D. degrees as graduate degrees in Education, and therefore most desirable, then the female instructors had 44 of 48 (91.7%) of their highest degrees as most desirable whereas the male instructors had only 11 of 16 (68.8%) as most desirable. Within the graduate degrees in Education, nearly 30 percent (29.2%) of the females' degrees were M.Ed. degrees and over 60 percent (62.5%) were doctorates, whereas the males' M.Ed. degrees account for only 12.5 percent of their total. The percentage of males with doctorates, at 56.3 percent, is high, almost matching that of females. Only one instructor in the entire study, a male, reported having more than five academic degrees, among them two Ph.D. degrees. All in all, however, there appeared to be very little pattern to the gender aspect of instructors' academic degrees.

Looking at highest degree by academic rank, in Table 4.18, a clear and not unexpected pattern emerged: In general, lower-ranked instructors had earned lesser degrees than instructors with high academic ranks. Most of the lower-ranked instructors had M.Ed. degrees, with only one or two possessing doctorates, whereas, in the assistant professor ranks and above, most possessed doctorates. This was expected, as in any field

Table 4.17

Cross-Tabulation of Gender by Highest Academic Degree, with Percentages  
(Within Own Gender/within All Instructors)

Gender	MA	MSc	BEd	MEd	EdD	PhD	Other	N/A	Total
Number of females	1			14	7	23	1	2	48
Percentage of females	2.1			29.2	14.6	47.9	2.1	4.2	100.0
Percentage of all instructors	1.6			21.9	10.9	35.9	1.6	3.1	75.0
Number of males	1	1	2	2	0	9	1	0	16
Percentage of males	6.3	6.3	12.5	12.5	0	56.3	6.3	0	100.0
Percentage of all instructors	1.6	1.6	3.1	3.1	0	14.1	1.6	0	25.0
Total	2	1	2	16	7	32	2	2	64
Percentage of all degrees	3.1	1.6	3.1	25.0	10.9	50.0	3.1	3.1	100.0

one tends to remain at a lower rank without continued higher education. The highest degrees of the instructors in this study were awarded from 34 different institutions, with from one to seven of the instructors receiving their highest degree from any one institution. Twenty-two institutions were shown to have only one instructor represented from within the sample of the participants, and 12 institutions were shown to have two or more instructors represented, with from two to seven instructors representing the same institution. Most instructors in this study, 61 of the 64 (95.3%), received their highest

Table 4.18

## Cross-Tabulation of Academic Rank of Instructors by Highest Academic Degree, with Percentages

Academic rank	BEd	MA	MSc	MEd	EdD	PhD	Other	N/A	Total
Teaching assistant								1	1
								1.6	1.6
Seconded teacher	1			4	1				6
	1.6			6.3	1.6				9.4
Subtotal	1			4	1			1	7
	1.6			6.3	1.6			1.6	10.9
Lecturer		1		4					5
		1.6		6.3					7.8
Instructor				3		1			4
				4.7		1.6			6.3
<i>Chargé(e) de cours</i>				1		2		1	4
				1.6		3.1		1.6	6.3
Subtotal		1		8		3		1	13
		1.6		12.5		4.7		1.6	20.3
Assistant professor				1	1	5			7
				1.6	1.6	7.8			10.9
<i>Professeur(e)</i>						2			2
<i>adjoint(e)</i>						3.1			3.1
Subtotal				1	1	7			9
				1.6	1.6	10.9			14.1
Associate professor	1				4	10	1		16
	1.6				6.3	15.6	1.6		25.0
<i>Professeur(e)</i>						3			3
<i>agrégé(e)</i>						4.7			4.7
Subtotal	1				4	13	1		19
	1.6				6.3	20.3	1.6		29.7
Full professor					1	7			8
					1.6	10.9			12.5
<i>Professeur(e) titulaire</i>						2			2
						3.1			3.1
Subtotal					1	9			10
					1.6	14.1			15.6
Other		1	1	3			1		6
		1.6	1.6	4.7			1.6		9.4
Total degrees	2	2	1	16	7	32	2	2	64
	3.1	3.1	1.6	25.0	10.9	50.0	3.1	3.1	100.0

degrees from institutions in North America. One each was received from Europe, Africa, and Australia. Institutions within Canada accounted for 45 of the 64 (70.3%) while institutions within in the United States accounted for 16 of the 64 (25.0%).

Table 4.19 provides the breakdown by province within Canada. Shaded areas indicate the number of instructors in the present study who received their highest degree in the province where they were teaching; this phenomenon is represented by 33 of the 64 instructors, just over half (51.6%). This may be accounted for in that many of the instructors are sessional instructors in some capacity and are therefore already committed to living in the geographical area of their degree institution whether to attend graduate school at the institution as they teach part time, to teach at a neighbouring school as they work on secondment at the university, or for other personal reasons. This makes sense in light of the information in Table 4.15 which showed that 40.6 percent of the instructors in

Table 4.19

Cross-Tabulation of Province of Instructor's Current Institution by Province of Receipt of Highest Degree, with Provinces in Eastern Canada Collapsed

Province of current institution	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	East	Outside Canada	Total instructors in current institution
BC	2				1			3	6
AB		3						3	6
SK	1	1	3		1			3	9
MB	1			3				0	4
ON		2			13			5	20
QC					1	8		3	12
East	2				1	1	1	2	7
Total degrees	6	6	3	3	17	9	1	19	

the study were of a lesser academic rank than assistant professor/*professeur(e) adjoint(e)*.

The provinces from which highest degrees were awarded, in order from most to least, are shown in Figure 4.1, and the number of highest degrees awarded in each province is shown in the middle column. The column on the right shows the number of institutions offering preservice teacher education in any capacity (as provided in Appendix A, Canadian Teacher Education Institutions). These institutions do not all offer graduate degrees, nonetheless the list of number of institutions does suggest the relative

Figure 4.1

Province of Highest Degree in Order of Representation Compared to Number of Institutions Offering Teacher Education, with Provinces in Eastern Canada Collapsed

Province	Number of highest degrees represented	Number of institutions involved in teacher education
Ontario	17	14
Quebec	9	12
British Columbia	6	6
Alberta	6	4
Manitoba	3	2
Saskatchewan	3	4
Eastern Canada	1	9

size of provincial involvements in the field. If one were to look at the order of the two lists, one could easily see that the numbers of institutions represented in each list, while not identical, were nonetheless parallel. There is a direct correspondence, in that the

province with the most is Ontario in both lists, the province with the second most is Quebec in both lists, and so on. The only exception is the final set of items listed: Institutions in the eastern part of Canada number more than those in British Columbia, although only one degree came from eastern Canada. The aberration may well be due to my collapsing of figures. In both Table 4.19 and Figure 4.1, I chose to collapse all the figures for the four eastern provinces in order to mask the participation of individual institutions to preserve anonymity.

Walker (1990) inquired into characteristics of teacher educators in English language arts. He looked only at full-time faculty. Of that group he found 102 of 110 (92.7%) had doctoral degrees, of which 77 of 102 (75.4%) were Ph.D.s and 25 of 102 (24.5%) were Ed.D.s. Table 4.20 shows that in the present study only 37 of 50 (74.0 %) full-time instructors had doctoral degrees; however, the ratio of Ph.D.s to Ed.D.s, at 81.1 percent and 18.9 percent respectively, is similar to that of Walker.

Thirty-seven percent of Walker's participants received their doctorates from Canadian, 60 percent from American, and 3 percent from British universities. In the present study, of the 50 full-time participants, 37 (74.0%) had earned doctoral degrees, as shown in Table 4.21. Of those who received doctorates, 22 of 37 (59.5%) were received in Canada, 14 of 37 (37.4%) were received in the United States, and 1 of 37 (2.7%) was received in Australia. Interestingly, this is a direct reversal of Walker's results for Canada versus United States, with his percentages at 37 versus 60, and mine rounding off to 60 versus 37 (59.5% vs. 37.4%), with both of us consistent in terms of percentage of other sources, Walker at 3 and me at 2.7. This reversal of trends can be seen as a positive

Table 4.20

Cross-Tabulation of Highest Academic Degree by Workload

Highest academic degree	Full-time instructors	Part-time instructors	Total number of instructors
B.Ed.	2	0	2
M.A.	1	1	2
M.Sc.	1	0	1
M.Ed.	8	8	16
Ed.D.	7	0	7
Ph.D.	30	2	32
Other	1	1	2
N/A	0	2	2
Total	50	14	64

indication that Canada is now increasingly able to prepare its own professoriate to educate its own teachers; as a nation it no longer needs to rely so heavily on its southern neighbour.

Walker identified four universities that graduated almost half of the doctorates among his participants. These were (in order, with number of doctorates following): the University of Alberta (22), the University of Minnesota (11), the University of British Columbia (7), and the University of Georgia (7; p.119). Within the present study, and considering only full-time instructors, as Walker did, the top institutions graduating doctors were (in order, with number of doctorates following): the University of Alberta (5), the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (5), the

*Université de Montréal* (4) and the University of British Columbia (3). All other institutions in the study were represented only once or twice. The consideration of the entire pool of instructors, including part-time people, did not change the results for doctorates from various institutions. Data are not directly comparable in terms of percentages, as Walker based his listings and numbers not only on his data but also on other information he acquired by other means. As well, he examined only English contexts and looked at teacher educators of both undergraduate and graduate levels. Nonetheless, the results of the present study appear strongly to reinforce the fact that Canada is educating its own language arts professoriate.

Ultimately, perhaps it makes sense regardless of the specific constitution of the

Table 4.21

Cross-Tabulation of Highest Academic Degree by Country of Receipt of Degree, Full-Time Instructors Only

Highest academic degree	Canada	Percent-age	United States	Percent-age	Other	Percent-age	Total number of full-time instructors	Percent-age
BED	2	4.0	0	0	0	0	2	4.0
MA	0	0	0	0	1	2.0	1	2.0
MSC	0	0	1	2.0	0	0	1	2.0
MED	8	16.0	0	0	0	0	8	16.0
EDD	2	4.0	5	10.0	0	0	7	14.0
PHD	20	40.0	9	18.0	1	2.0	30	60.0
Other	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	1	2.0
Total	33	66.0	15	30.0	2	4.0	50	100.0

groups to say that Walker's participants should not be comparable to mine. His study was conducted in the year 1985. According to the data in Table 4.16, 65.7 percent of the participants in the present study received their highest degrees after 1985, and although the degrees were not all received in Canada and although there is not a direct correspondence, nonetheless it is largely educators of the vintage of Walker's study who prepared those in the present study. Academically, they are close to a whole generation apart.

*Teaching experience of instructors.* In the pages that follow I examine the data concerning the teaching experience of the participants in the present study. I examine experience in the school system teaching children, as well as experience teaching at the university level. Besides number of years at each level, I compare the latter three sets of information, those concerning university-level work, because each subsequent set is a subset of its predecessor.

*Teaching at the nursery to grade 13 level.* As Table 4.22 indicates, the instructors in the study had a wide variety of experience teaching children. Although one instructor claimed to have no experience at this level of teaching, nearly half of the group (30 of 64, or 46.9%) had taught children for anywhere from one to 10 years. Another large group, 22 of the 64 instructors (34.4%), had even more experience, having taught children for 11 to 20 years. In many ways this type of experience is invaluable; it not only provides a direct experience base for the instructor in his or her teaching of language and literacy, but also for his or her continued learning. Perhaps most importantly, it provides preservice students with confidence, in that they feel the instructor has "been there" in

parallel with their own current experiences. Such experience gives instructors credibility with their students, and also with teachers during any possible involvement in students' practicum experiences.

Only 4 of the 64 instructors (6.3%) had 21 to 30 years' experience, and only 4 (6.3%) had beyond 30 years' experience. Instructors with little direct experience teaching

Table 4.22

Teaching Experience of Instructors at the Nursery to Grade 13 Level

Number of years	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
1-2	2	3.1
3-4	5	7.8
5-6	7	10.9
7-8	10	15.6
9-10	6	9.4
Subtotal 1-10	30	46.9
11-12	7	10.9
13-14	3	4.7
15-16	5	7.8
17-18	4	6.3
19-20	3	4.7
Subtotal 11-20	22	34.4
21-22	0	0
23-24	1	1.6
25-26	1	1.6
27-28	1	1.6
29-30	1	1.6
Subtotal 21-30	4	6.3
31-32	2	3.1
33-34	2	3.1
Subtotal >30	4	6.3
None	1	1.6
N/A	3	4.7
Subtotal Other	4	6.3
Total	64	100.2

children could be those who moved quickly from the school classroom to graduate work and then to teaching at the university level, but they could also be those who worked in education-related positions such as school administrators or school division consultants, those who ran a private practice such as a reading clinic, or those who taught adult education. Each of these perspectives could bring directly relevant experience to preservice teaching in language arts.

*Teaching at university level.* The other aspect of teaching that is relevant to working as an educator of preservice teachers is experience teaching at the university level. (Although the survey question concerned experience at the college and/or university level, the former is not discussed specifically because I felt that, for the purposes of the present study, teaching experience at the college level would parallel experience at the university level.) University students in faculties of education are adults with a variety of backgrounds. Some are just a few years out of high school, or have just finished a first degree, or have returned to university after having raised a family or worked for years at a job that may or may not be related to teaching. At any age these adult students may be working to raise money for university, for rent, for transportation, or for the support of a family. As older adults, some may have very little in common with the school children with whom a new instructor may be more familiar. In essence, older students likely have more in common with the parents of those children. Experience with children is an asset, but in order for an instructor to be effective as an educator of preservice teachers, experience teaching children needs to be supplemented with experience teaching adults. Of course, the more the experience represents what one

intends to continue to do, the more valuable it can be, in that one can accumulate materials and strategies specific to one's work, and thereby avoid the constant preparing of brand new material and classroom activities. Perhaps more importantly, experience can help one gain insight into the concerns, interests, and learning needs of those adults

Table 4.23

Teaching Experience of Instructors at the University or College Level

Number of years	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
1-2	7	10.9
3-4	10	15.6
5-6	4	6.3
7-8	4	6.3
9-10	11	17.2
Subtotal 1-10	36	56.3
11-12	4	6.3
13-14	2	3.1
15-16	3	4.7
17-18	2	3.1
19-20	8	12.5
Subtotal 11-20	19	29.7
21-22	0	0
23-24	3	4.7
25-26	2	3.1
27-28	1	1.6
29-30	1	1.6
Subtotal 21-30	7	10.9
31 -32	0	0
33-34	0	0
≥ 35	1	1.6
Subtotal >30	1	1.6
None	1	1.6
Subtotal Other	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0

studying in a particular domain and can help one to hone courses to make them increasingly effective.

The three adjacent tables, Tables 4.23, 4.24, and 4.25, show the number of years of experience of instructors in this study at three related levels, at the university in general, within the field of Education in particular, and within the specific area of language and literacy education. The figures in these tables show that the postsecondary teaching experience of the instructors in this study was considerable. Well over half in each circumstance had from one to 10 years experience at each level: university at 56.3 percent, Education at 56.3 percent, and language and literacy at 59.4 percent. From a quarter to nearly a third had even more experience, from 11 to 20 years at each level: university at 29.7 percent, Education at 29.7 percent, and language and literacy at 25.0 percent. Fewer individuals in this group had the higher amounts of experience: at all levels those teaching for 21 to 30 years accounted for 10.9 percent of the group, and those teaching more than 30 years accounted for 1.6 percent. This is a reasonable finding in that most instructors would be too young to have accumulated that many years of experience at anything. (I regret that I failed to ask specifically for age on the instructor survey; that information may have yielded some interesting comparisons.) Looking at the three tables together, and focussing particularly on the shaded subtotals, one can see a very close correspondence in the percentages presented above. Although the individual figures in Tables 4.23 and 4.24 are not absolutely identical, the fact that the subtotals are identical suggests a very strong correspondence: For most of the instructors in this study all their

Table 4.24

Teaching Experience of Instructors at the University  
Level Working Specifically in the Field of Education

Number of years	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
1-2	7	10.9
3-4	11	17.2
5-6	4	6.3
7-8	3	4.7
9-10	11	17.2
Subtotal 1-10	36	56.3
11-12	4	6.3
13-14	2	3.1
15-16	4	6.3
17-18	1	1.6
19-20	8	12.5
Subtotal 11-20	19	29.7
21-22	0	0
23-24	3	4.7
25-26	2	3.1
27-28	1	1.6
29-30	1	1.6
Subtotal 21-30	7	10.9
31-32	0	0
33-34	0	0
≥ 35	1	1.6
Subtotal >30	1	1.6
None	1	1.6
Subtotal Other	1	1.6
Total	64	100.0

years of work at the university were in faculties of education. Similarly, the proximity between Tables 4.24 and 4.25 suggests a strong correspondence: For most of the instructors all their years of work in faculties of education involved working in the area of language and literacy education. The slight differences indicate that for some individuals, time in education was spent elsewhere, perhaps in non-curricular areas such as

educational psychology, educational administration, or educational foundations, or in general curriculum. Only one instructor reported having taught at the university level in a subject area other than language arts/literacy, and that was for a period of only one to two years. Almost all the instructors (61 of 64, or 95.3%) identified language arts as their area

Table 4.25

Teaching Experience of Instructors in the Field of Education Working Specifically in the Area of Language and Literacy

Number of years	Number of instructors	Percentage of instructors
1-2	9	14.1
3-4	12	18.8
5-6	3	4.7
7-8	3	4.7
9-10	11	17.2
Subtotal 1-10	38	59.4
11-12	2	3.1
13-14	2	3.1
15-16	4	6.3
17-18	0	0
19-20	8	12.5
Subtotal 11-20	16	25.0
21-22	1	1.6
23-24	3	4.7
25-26	3	4.7
27-28	0	0
29-30	0	0
Subtotal 21-30	7	10.9
31-32	0	0
33-34	0	0
≥ 35	1	1.6
Subtotal >30	1	1.6
None	2	3.1
Subtotal Other	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

of expertise. All in all, the instructors in this study had a strong grounding in direct teaching experience with children, and also had a strong grounding in the type of university teaching in which they were involved at the time of the study.

*Summary of instructor information.* A typical instructor of language arts curriculum and instruction as presented in the present study could be said to possess the following characteristics: The instructor is female, works full time, and teaches in English at the rank of associate professor. She holds a Ph.D. degree received in 1990 from a Canadian university. She worked for eight years teaching children before coming to teach at the university, where she has now worked for nine years, all of them in the Faculty of Education in the area of language and literacy, her area of expertise.

#### *Results about Contexts of Courses*

The following portion of this section concerning demographic information focusses on the types of information directly related to the specific courses whose syllabi formed the data of this study. Among the subsets of information looked at are whether or not team teaching was involved in the courses, student enrollment in the various sections, total contact hours and lengths of term, as well as level (in relation to grades the preservice teachers were being prepared to teach), the major mode(s) of the courses, and the degree of integration of the course in the programs of which they were a part. As well, a brief look is taken at some of the policies under which classes operated.

*Team teaching of courses.* As Table 4.26 indicates, over one quarter (31 of 110, or 28.2%) of the courses were taught in a team teaching arrangement of some sort. Most of these courses (29 of 110, or 26.4%) were taught by two or more instructors both

charged with responsibility for teaching, whereas very few courses (2 of 110, or 1.8%) involved an instructor working with a teaching assistant. In each of the latter two cases, the assistant was a graduate student of the main instructor. Table 4.27 exhibits information about the number of instructors teaching specific sections of a course. While most courses in the present study (90 of 110, or 81.8%) were taught by individual instructors on their own, 18 of the 110 courses (16.4%) represented a circumstance in

Table 4.26

Team Teaching Acknowledged within Courses

Presence of team teaching	Number of courses	Percentage of courses
Yes—professor	29	26.4
Yes—teaching assistant	2	1.8
No	79	71.8
Total	110	100.0

which courses were taught by two instructors, and 2 of the 110 courses (1.8%) represented a circumstance in which courses were taught by three instructors. There is, however, not a direct correspondence between the figures available in this study and the actual events as they occurred. One reason is that not always were both members of a teaching team involved in the study. In some cases, though I knew of both and invited both to participate, only one chose to do so. At other times, I was informed by the instructor that he or she had a teaching partner, whom I subsequently invited to participate, although not all of them chose to follow through.

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Table 4.27

Number of Instructors Teaching a Specific Course  
Section Represented by a Syllabus

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Number of instructors	Number of course sections	Percentage of course sections
1	90	81.8
2	18	16.4
3	2	1.8
Total	110	100.0

---

In essence, a part of my problem, too, was my lack of clarity in defining “team teaching” or “partnering,” and to some degree, my lack of clarity in conceptualizing the notion myself. While I envisioned a circumstance in which two instructors worked closely together to offer a course to the same group of students, to the point where they would often be in the classroom together with the students, I realize now that others viewed teaming differently. Some saw it, I gather, as a sharing of a course in which one person would teach part one and the other, part two, or where two or more people would plan an identical course together—using the same textbooks and class activities and assignments—and then each of them would teach the course to a different section of students. Possible, too, was the situation in which a team or an individual would plan the outline of course content for a faculty, but each instructor in his or her own way would then expand the outline, deliver the content to a section of students, and assesses students’ understanding. Because of all these differences, I can say little about my data except that they do indicate that instructors primarily worked alone, and to some degree

in some cases with others.

*Student enrollment in sections.* Student enrollment in individual sections of a course, also known as class size, is a variable of context that is important to all concerned, the instructor and students most of all, and also the program administrators, who are in charge of quality of staffing and efficiency of funding, variables that do not necessarily go together easily. Class sizes are determined by a vast array of factors including the number of students who require a particular course, the number of instructors available to teach it, the term and time of day it is taught, its conflict with other courses including practica, and the physical size of available classrooms. According to the data in Table 4.28, the majority of class sections within this study numbered between 21 and 40 students. The 30 sections numbering 21 to 30 students accounted for 27.3 percent of the entire set of courses investigated, and the 43 sections numbering 31 to 40 students accounted for 39.1 percent of the entire set. Together these two groups accounted for 66.4 percent of all the sections, just shy of a full two thirds.

Data from the present study also showed a few very small classes of 10 or fewer and a few very large ones. Actual counts indicated that the five smallest sections enrolled four, eight, nine, 15, and 16 students, while the five largest enrolled 95, 95, 100, 100, and 200. I admit I am somewhat apprehensive about the latter figures: While large classes were possible, and while teaching in some institutions may well have occurred with only large-group lectures (or with lectures followed by small-group seminars), it may also be that the instructors misunderstood my request. It may be that someone taught the same course to three different groups of 30 to 35 each, hence “about 100” in all, or that

Table 4.28

Cross-Tabulation of Student Enrollment in Sections of a Course by Province,  
with Provinces in Eastern Canada Collapsed

Student enrollment in section	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	East	Total
1-10				1		1	1	3
11-20				1		2		3
21-30	4	2	8	2	7		7	30
31-40	6	1	5	4	19	4	4	43
41-50					5	4		9
51-60						3		3
71-80					3			3
81-90					5			5
91-100		2				2		4
101-150								0
151-200						1		1
N/A			6					6
Total	10	5	19	8	39	17	12	110

someone taught the same course to four groups of 50. I was unable to obtain verification for these figures. In the present study, I considered each separate class as a separate section, even if the different groups followed identical syllabi, but considered a large group as a single section if I was not informed otherwise.

While Statistics Canada data manifest a ratio of from 17.5 to 22.5 across the decade from 1991 to 2001 (CAUT/ACPPU, 2004a, p. 5), these data do not take into account part-time faculty. In addition, they count overall students-to-faculty member ratio, and do not show ranges of class size for individual faculty members, nor ratios for classes of the type in the present study. While some university courses, especially

graduate courses, can contain but a handful of registrants, other courses, especially introductory courses, can certainly contain hundreds. Both of these extremes are, in my experience, highly unusual for undergraduate education courses.

The Statistics Canada data do indicate a breakdown by provinces, showing that Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island are the provinces with the lowest student-to-faculty ratios, whereas Quebec and Ontario are the highest. The information in Table 4.28 shows similar results for the present study: No instructor in any institution in eastern Canada claimed a class size of over 40, and Quebec and Ontario indicated a couple of incredibly large classes. The major difference was the aberration within the present study of the one large class in an Alberta institution.

I was concerned as to which instructors were teaching the large classes, if, in fact, the large class sizes were true representations. In elementary schools there is a popular mythology contending that new teachers, as underlings, are assigned the biggest classes. I was curious to see how this myth played out in my data. I considered the part-time people as the underlings because of their generally lower ranks and inexperience in the system. I was pleased to see, as evidenced in Table 4.29, that all of the largest classes were taught by full-time personnel.

The fact that the vast majority of classes in this study had enrollments of 21 to 40 students is likely reflective of three major factors: (a) the projected needs of the field for teachers; (b) physical logistics such as the availability of practicum classrooms and the size and availability of university classrooms; and (c) the availability and workload of instructors. While some universities, likely those with smaller enrollments overall, accept

any candidates who meet a minimum standard, others must limit enrollment, accepting some and turning others away. There is a limit to the number of teachers any one jurisdiction needs in a given year, and in spite of an ethic based on the understanding that the market will dictate hiring and that faculties of education should therefore welcome any candidates who qualify, there is, at least rhetorically, a counter-ethic saying it is

Table 4.29

Cross-Tabulation of Student Enrollment in Sections of a Course by Workload of Instructors

Student enrollment in section	Full-time instructor	Part-time instructor	Total
1-10	1	2	3
11-20	2	1	3
21-30	22	8	30
31-40	34	9	43
41-50	7	2	9
51-60	2	1	3
61-70	0	0	0
71-80	3	0	3
81-90	5	0	5
91-100	4	0	4
101-150	0	0	0
151-200	1	0	1
N/A	6	0	6
Total	87	23	110

unfair to graduate candidates in fields where employment potential is limited.

Physical logistics are surely more immediate variables predicting class size: Classes generally contain about 35 students because that is the number of desks that will fit into a standard classroom. Because LA C&I classes are mandatory (at least within the present study), they are generally filled to capacity in larger institutions. Exceptions would be special programs (e.g., the University of Manitoba's Weekend College or the Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program), although even these must function as much as possible on an economically viable basis, and therefore might not run every year.

Instructor workload must be taken into consideration as well. An instructor must be assigned an overall amount of work that is manageable. Preparation, implementation, and student assessment all require time. While certain models of instruction suit smaller classes better than larger, and vice versa, some classes could be taught more efficiently in groups of 70 or 100; however, while class time might be reduced, the time to mark the work of two or three times as many students would indeed be great. Classes must therefore be limited in size; because instructors have traditionally been able to "handle" the workload equivalent to several classes of 35 students, faculties of education continue to work with these arguably outdated formulas.

Also in the mixture of factors culminating in class size, albeit peripherally, is the overall availability of instructors in a specific discipline or related instructional area. An institution ought only to take in students if it can provide quality instruction for them. It is for reasons of lack of instructors that some instructors are forced from time to time to

teach classes as large as 40 or 45; the faculty does not have enough instructors to assign two separate classes of 20 to 23 students apiece.

**Total contact hours.** When I asked instructors to provide information about the total contact hours for their courses, I intended that they would tell me how many actual hours of instructional time they spent with students in that class. The data in Table 4.30 show that the ways different universities allocated courses and/or the ways different instructors conceptualized contact hours were very different from mine. The bulk of the courses were, as expected, in the middle range, with nearly half (52 of 110, or 47.3%) in the range of 31 to 40 contact hours, and a total of 79 of 110, or 71.8 percent, in the range

Table 4.30

Contact Hours for Course Sections

Total contact hours	Number of course sections	Percentage of course sections
1-10	5	4.5
11-20	3	2.7
21-30	11	10.0
31-40	52	47.3
41-50	16	14.5
51-60	4	3.6
61-70	19	17.3
Total	110	100.0

of 21 to 50 contact hours. Strangely, however, five courses claimed to be only 1 to 10 contact hours in total duration and nearly four times that many claimed to be 61 to 70 hours in duration. Sadly, the data suggest that if instructors' reporting was accurate, then in some ways the courses' contents were not comparable, because any instructor could surely accomplish more and different things in a course of seventy hours than in a course of 10 hours.

*Length of term.* Related to contact hours is length of term. A course that is long, generally running weekly across both terms of an entire academic year, has more scope than a short course, also known as a single-term course, albeit the latter may be offered twice a week. The lengths of term for the courses investigated in the present study are presented in Table 4.31. Most of the courses (66 of 110, or 60.0%) were single-term half-courses, and about half as many (37 of 110, or 33.6%) were double-term, full courses. A cross-tabulation of contact hours by length of term showed no discernible pattern. Also, I did not investigate the exact nature of the ways in which practicum timing interrupted or supported the learning of course materials.

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Table 4.31

Length of Term for Courses

Length of term	Number of course sections	Percentage of course sections
Both terms	37	33.6
One term	66	60.0
Other	7	6.4
Total	110	100.0

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*Levels of sections.* Earlier in this chapter, grade-related levels of instruction were discussed in relation to the instructors involved in the present study (see discussion concerning Table 4.12). However, the notion of level was an important one in its own right. Throughout the years and in different provinces across Canada many different terms have been and continue to be used to designate levels. (For definitions of specific levels, see Chapter One.) I was interested in finding out, within the overall label of “elementary,” the predominant ways in which courses were offered in preservice teacher education. Table 4.32 shows that over 70 percent of the sections (78 of 110, or 70.9%) were designated as *Elementary* (or the Ontario equivalent pairing of *Primary-Junior*). Of the remaining sections which did have a designation, 15 of the 110 (13.6%) were designated as *Early Years* (Nursery to grade 4) and only about half as many, 8 out of 110 (7.3%) were designated as *Middle Years* (grades 5 to 8). However, the level called *Junior-*

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Table 4.32

Grade-Related Levels of Course Sections		
Level	Number of sections	Percentage
Early years	15	13.6
Middle years	8	7.3
Junior-Intermediate	6	5.5
Elementary/Primary-Junior	78	70.9
Other	3	2.7
Total	110	100.0

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*Intermediate* accounted for 6 of the 110 (5.5%); this level is quite closely analogous to middle years. If both middle years and junior-intermediate were combined, the total would be 14 of 110, or 12.7 percent, an amount very close to the early years amount. This closeness suggests that where such designations as early and middle are used, the frequency of their offerings is about the same. This similarity was to be expected: Teachers are needed equally to cover both grade-level spans, so teacher candidates should be prepared in equal numbers.

***Major mode(s) of courses.*** Canada's earliest schools focussed predominantly on the teaching of reading, supplemented, as time passed, with some aspects of writing, such as handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage, and basic composition. "Language arts, a term coined under the aegis of the progressive education movement in the 1930s . . . ." (Walker, 1990, p. 116), was the fusion of these two forms of print literacy along with recognition of the importance of teaching in the areas of oral language. Not only did children need to listen, at school, they needed to be taught how to listen optimally. Similarly, they needed to be taught how to learn various aspects of speaking, formal and informal, public and private, individually and in groups.

In terms of the preparation of teachers, some institutions historically offered three separate courses in the teaching of reading and writing and oral language (including both speaking and listening), while others espoused the notion of integrating all four modes offered as one course. This course, entitled curriculum and instruction in language arts, would prepare teachers to teach all modes, with the intention of emphasizing their reciprocity. What one learned about being a good listener, for example, could be applied

to what one would do as a good speaker, or that one could learn to read not merely as a reader, but also as a writer. Similarly, what one learned about how to comprehend in listening could be applied to comprehension in reading. Via the present study I sought to find out whether learning to teach the various modes would be undertaken by preservice teachers via separate modes or via a comprehensive course in language arts.

Furthermore, the field has recently been expanded in that the idea of the importance and distinctiveness of the giving and receiving of messages beyond the oral-aural or print mechanisms is gaining credibility. The reciprocal modes within this visual realm are often labelled as viewing and representing. I was interested to see how many institutions were formally recognizing these newly emerging modes by addressing them formally in courses.

Table 4.33 shows that the largest single grouping of modes in evidence in the syllabi of the present study was the grouping involving all six modes: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. Although the latter two modes were relatively new, having become part of provincial curricula only in the middle or latter part of the 1990s (see, for example, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1997; Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 1996), they were already becoming well established at the time of the present study, with 41 of the 110 (37.3%) syllabi involving all six modes. Sixteen of the 110 syllabi (14.5%) involved the four traditional modes. Putting the two groups together, findings indicated that instructors who created these 57 syllabi (51.8%) attended explicitly to the integration of modes. An examination of the modes along with provinces or grade-related levels revealed no patterns or distinctions.

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Table 4.33

Modes of Language of Course Sections

Modes	Number of sections	Percentage of sections
All 6 modes	41	37.3
4 modes(SLRW)	16	14.5
Oral-aural (SL)	2	1.8
Print-based (RW)	3	2.7
Reading	11	10.0
Writing	6	5.5
Other	22	20.0
Unclear	9	8.2
Total	110	100.0

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To say that in over half the syllabi attention was paid to integration does not mean at all that instructors of the others ignored integration. What it does mean is that in some universities mandatory courses were offered in a specific mode or subset of modes. Eleven of the 110 syllabi (10.0%) were for courses exclusively designated as courses in the teaching of reading methods, while only 6 of the 110 (5.5%) were designated as courses in the teaching of writing. This suggests a continuation and a validation, however modest, of the historical prominence of reading in the education of children. A cross-tabulation of modes of courses by institutions revealed that all but one of the institutions involving courses in the teaching of reading or writing also offered a course in the teaching of language arts, a course that included reading and writing. This finding indicates that the institutions valued extra emphasis for these language modes.

No mandatory courses were offered exclusively in listening, speaking, viewing, or representing. Only 5 of 110 syllabi (4.5%) involved pairs of modes together: 2 syllabi (1.8%) denoted courses in oral language, involving the modes of speaking and listening, and 3 syllabi (2.7%) denoted courses in the area of print literacy, involving the modes of reading and writing. These pairings of modes make sense because the modes paired are reciprocal.

A full 20.0 percent of the syllabi, 22 of the 110, were coded as *Other* and a further 8.2 percent, 9 of the 110, were coded as *Unclear*. This finding, that nearly one third of the syllabi were nonstandard in terms of mode, was unfortunate in terms of this study because these 31 syllabi did not help support any particular trend. Perhaps, too, the finding is unfortunate for preservice teachers taking such courses, as they may be uncertain, if judging largely by their course syllabi, which areas of instruction they are working within. Some “other” areas were defined even if they did not match available choices in the coding. For example, a professor may have offered a course described as primarily involving “oracy and reading” or “listening and reading,” and while there must have been some intent for such pairings, no intent was made explicit. It is not unlikely that, unlike me, some instructors might have considered the entire notion of dividing language arts by modes as artificial (and therefore in defiance of children’s—or humans’—natural tendencies to use language for authentic purposes), and might thus have structured their courses by purposes rather than modes. Of course, the structuring by modes may have seemed so overly obvious to an instructor as to remain unarticulated in the syllabus itself.

*Integration of courses within programs.* One of the items in the coding instrument concerned the fact of whether or not individual courses, as represented by the syllabi, were or were not integrated into programs, and if they were, the degree to which they were integrated. The nature of the integration was determined primarily by grading, such that if a final grade were available for the language arts portion, the course was defined as a separate course, a distinct entity in its own right. If, on the other hand, the language arts portion as evidenced in the syllabus merely *contributed* to a final grade, the course was not considered to stand on its own. I expected that the degree of integration would be important to judge because not only would it indicate the cohesion of programs, but also the lack of autonomy for individual instructors, whether in constituting the content of a course or in assessing it, or both.

According to the results presented in Table 4.34, the most prevalent method of organizing mandatory courses in language arts curriculum and instruction was to have them stand alone as independent courses: This type of organization was reflected in 91 of the 110 syllabi, or 82.7 percent. Three of the syllabi (2.7%) were of the type wherein the program was all-inclusive, in that the preservice teachers followed a single program that purportedly addressed all areas of needed learning, as opposed to the majority which were structured to fulfill needed learning by means of separate courses. The separate courses, mandatory within their respective institutions, were surely linked somehow within the requirements of those various institutions, but were designed so that learning could be indicated in grades, unlike the situation reflected in the three syllabi which were, in fact, detailed program handbooks. They contained the closest representations available

Table 4.34

Degree of Integration of Language and Literacy Courses in Programs

Nature of integration of LA C&I courses	Number of course sections	Percentage of course sections
Part of whole program	3	2.7
Part of larger C&I course	1	0.9
Independent C&I course	91	82.7
Part of language/literacy course not C&I	6	5.5
Unclear	8	7.3
Other	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

regarding what specifically was studied under the rubric of language arts, but the only mark allocated would be a “pass” or a “fail.” The course in 1 syllabus of the 110 (0.9%) was identified as part of a larger C&I course, not standing alone, though it did have its own time slot and contents; the mark from this course contributed to a mark for a larger course. Another single course (1 of 110, or 0.9%), identified in Table 4.34 as *Other*, was a language arts and mathematics C&I course. A unique entity within the present study, it appeared to be a somewhat experimental fusion of previously stand-alone courses in an attempt toward conceptual and methodological integration. Six of the 110 syllabi (5.5%) represented course components in which marks would be contributed to a greater course but in which the greater course was not exclusively a C&I course. Last, 8 of 110 syllabi (7.3%) could not be classified according to the scheme laid out in the coding instrument; some of these were types of language arts and mathematics fusion courses as well.

Ultimately, I felt at the time of coding and continue to feel upon appraising the findings, that the scheme was not clear and not particularly useful. This was reinforced by the fact that one institution evidenced one or more syllabi in every one of the six categories shown in Table 4.34. It is possible that as a group the instructors did not have a clear idea of what they were doing and/or could not articulate that idea clearly enough in their syllabi for me to detect any particular tendency in their programmatic intentions. More likely, though, is the possibility that I was so ignorant of the many possible ways to organize courses that I failed to offer a choice to match their practice. I created the categories trying to clarify the degree to which other institutions matched my own in their manner of including LA C&I into programs, but I do not feel I was particularly successful, and in retrospect see the narrowness of such an approach.

The independence of the majority of the courses seems to signal something positive in that it appears to afford instructors autonomy in their practice, a principle highly valued by many academics. However, the cost of such autonomy can be a fragmentation of activity, of concept, and of purpose. Some may argue that whole programs or whole C&I courses or even such courses as the LA-mathematics fusion are more conceptually integral, more authentic to what actually occurs in children's minds as learning takes place (not unlike the previous discussion concerning modes). Others may argue for structures that help preservice teachers analyze the various parts of any enterprise, structures such as courses, subject disciplines, and subdivisions (such as modes in language arts). They might argue further for procedures that help preservice teachers put those parts together in ways that are meaningful to them.

Besides acknowledging that the coding item lacked sufficient scope, I also realized that there were limitations to my overall methodology of analyzing individual syllabi outside of the full contexts in which they were originally embedded. The biggest danger in decontextualization is the ease with which one can slip toward forming an assumption that because an element does not appear in a syllabus, therefore preservice teachers taking that course do not learn that particular element. Perhaps they may not learn it in the given course (though that, too, is contentious), but they may well learn it fully in some other part of the program.

***Policy statements.*** I included questions about the policies evidenced in course syllabi largely to illustrate the variety of concerns an instructor faces beyond concern for the planning, implementing, and assessing of a course. Even if policies do not exist—and perhaps especially where they do not exist—the possibility lurks that an instructor will encounter difficulty with a student, a special interest group, or an entire class. The evidence in Table 4.35 implies that the biggest individual policy issue facing instructors of LA C&I was the lateness and/or absence of students. Over half the syllabi (59 of 110, or 53.6%) specifically made reference to this issue. Students' deportment in class also seemed of high concern, with 33 of the 110 syllabi (30.0%) alluding to it. Only 10 syllabi (9.1%) mentioned academic integrity (such as plagiarism and other kinds of cheating). Nine syllabi (8.2%) referred to the ethics of collecting information from children and/or teachers in schools, and 10 syllabi (9.1%) to the need to treat information about children, parents, teachers, and related personnel with confidentiality.

There is no direct evidence to confirm that these issues were problems for specific

instructors or their institutions, but the presence of policies and the explicit inclusion of them in course syllabi suggest that these have been problems for instructors in parallel if

Table 4.35

Reference within Individual Syllabi to Specific Policies from Official and Unofficial Sources

Nature of policy statement	Yes official		Yes unofficial		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ethics	1	0.9	8	7.3	101	91.8	110	100.0
Confidentiality	0	0	10	9.1	100	90.9	110	100.0
Acad. Integrity	4	3.6	6	5.5	100	90.9	110	100.0
Lateness/Absence	18	16.4	41	37.3	51	46.4	110	100.0
Department	3	2.7	30	27.3	77	70.0	110	100.0
Other	19	17.3	29	26.4	62	56.4	110	100.0

not identical contexts. Within the 110 syllabi, 37 (33.6%) referred explicitly to an external policy beyond the course; these were at the program, department, faculty, or university level. These references suggested that the policy, and perhaps the stating of it in the syllabi, were beyond the jurisdiction of individual instructors. Other instructors and/or their institutions might well have had policies also, yet they may have felt it unnecessary to mention them in the syllabus (assuming them subsumed by university calendars, or faculty or program guidelines), or they failed to mention them in spite of expectations to do so.

*Summary of course context information.* If one were to look at the course context of the typical instructor in the present study, one would find her teaching her course on her own, not in a team teaching context nor any other type of arrangement involving shared responsibility. It would be a stand-alone curriculum and instruction course for which she would have full autonomy. She would have about 35 students in the class, with whom she would spend about 35 contact hours in total, all of them in a single term. Her course would be designated as “Elementary/Primary-Junior,” covering the range from kindergarten to grade 6, and covering all six modes of language arts. It would be governed by her own policy concerning students’ lateness and/or absence and other matters she deemed important.

### *Results Concerning Theoretical Orientations*

In general, the beliefs a person holds have a strong influence on the ways in which that person behaves. Specifically, the beliefs that an instructor of language arts methods holds about a variety of aspects of learning and teaching will influence what that instructor teaches and the overriding methods chosen for helping learners to learn. Formally, I asked the following set of questions about the instructors as one of the major research questions of the present study: What *theoretical orientations* underlie the work of the instructors? What are their orientations to how language is initially learned, to how language arts/literacy might best be taught at school, and to how a course for preservice teachers should best be taught?

I wanted to devise a way to answer my questions by means of the instructors’

syllabi. To do so, I developed three sets of lists as parts of the Main Coding Instrument, one concerning theories of language acquisition, one concerning theories of language arts teaching, and one concerning theories of teaching within teacher education. Each of these sets of typologies was based on the ideas of others. Specific descriptions of the delineations within each set of theories as well as details regarding how these aspects of the instrument were developed are available in Chapters Two and Three respectively. Essentially, each section of the instrument dealing with theoretical orientations involved a list that was matched to words or ideas in the syllabi themselves. The number of matches within each typology of a theoretical construct was tabulated, and the orientation that predominated by having the highest number of matches was recorded as the orientation held by the instructor who developed that syllabus. In some instances, if there was a tie for the highest number of matches, a label of *Tie* was recorded. Below I present data for each of the three sets of orientations.

### ***Results of Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition***

The intent of this portion of the study concerning theoretical approaches to language acquisition was to attempt to determine, via the syllabi of instructors, the nature of the general beliefs they held concerning how language is acquired. Four major orientations were identified based on the work of Bohannon and Warren-Leubecker (1985). As Table 4.36 indicates, the orientation known as *Cognitive Interactionist* was the one most evident, clearly the most predominant in over half (57 of 110, or 51.8%) of the syllabi. A *Linguistic* orientation was the second most predominant at 12.7 percent, a *Behaviourist* orientation was third at 6.4 percent, and the least evident orientation was the

*Social Interactionist* at a mere 3.6 percent. The syllabi for which orientations were not applicable accounted for 8.2 percent; these were the syllabi (9 of 110 syllabi) in which none of the key words appeared at all in any orientation. The relationships of the various orientations can be seen clearly in Figure 4.2.

I had expected social interactionism to be much more highly in evidence because it was a large component of the discussion of children's language learning in popular LA C&I textbooks (e.g., Edwards & Malicky, 1996; Tompkins, Bright, Pollard, & Winsor, 1999). Also, it was the most historically current of the theoretical orientations, so I thought it reasonable that it was the one most instructors might emphasize. Suspecting that more social interactionism might be hidden in the large group of syllabi for which *Tie* scores had been recorded, a group accounting for nearly one fifth of the syllabi (19 of 110, or 17.3%), I returned to the data to separate the orientations that accounted for the ties. Any time a syllabus clearly evidenced only one orientation (as in the non-tied situations presented in Table 4.36), I allocated it a score of one (1), equivalent to one syllabus representing an orientation. However, when two orientations were tied, instead of merely allocating them to a *Tie* grouping (as shown in Table 4.36), I allocated a score of one half (0.50) to each orientation comprising the tie within a particular syllabus; if the tie was a three-way tie, I allocated a score of one third (0.33) to each. The halves and thirds together would add up to be equivalent to the 19 syllabi in the tied group. I felt the totals derived in this way would give a truer picture of the beliefs underlying instructors' work.

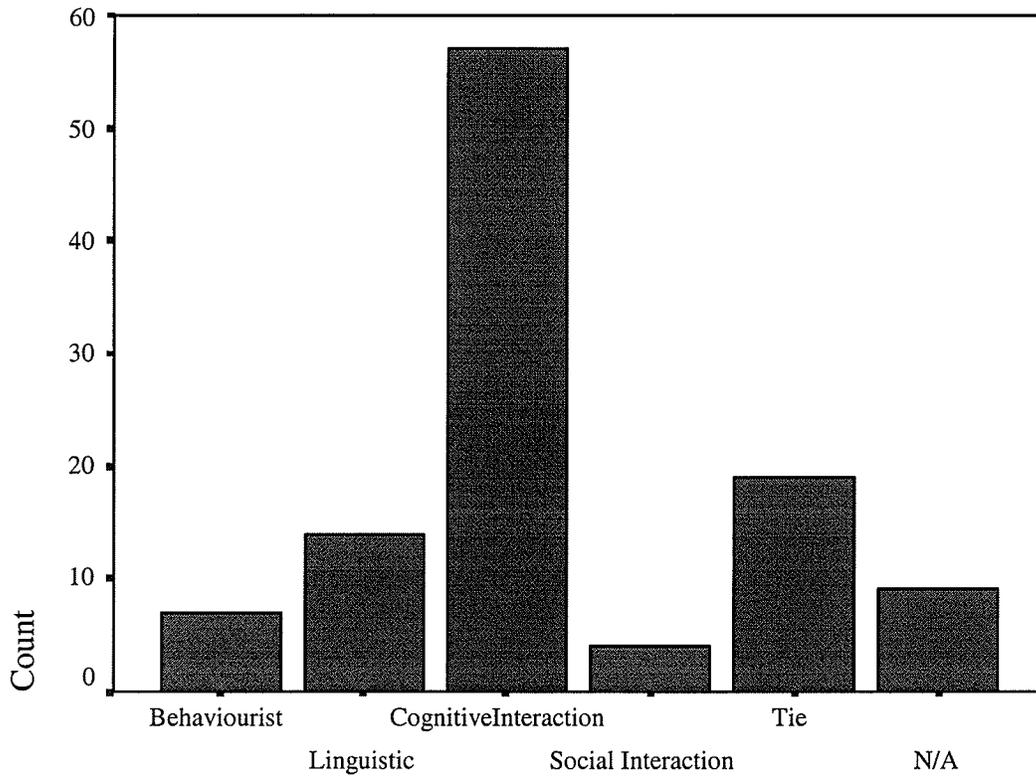
Table 4.36

Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition

Orientation	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Behaviourist	7	6.4
Linguistic	14	12.7
Cognitive interactionist	57	51.8
Social interactionist	4	3.6
Tie	19	17.3
N/A	9	8.2
Total	110	100.0

Figure 4.2

Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition



The revised data, shown in Table 4.37 and Figure 4.3, are not dramatically different from the original data in Table 4.36. Cognitive interactionism was still the orientation most predominant, now very much nearing 60 percent (65 of 110, or 59.1%). The linguistic orientation at 15.5 percent was second, the behaviourist orientation at 12.3 percent was still third, and social interactionism at 5.0 percent remained a distant fourth.

As indicated in Table 4.38, there was no discernible pattern in the cross-tabulation of year of highest degree and theoretical approach. Interestingly, 18 of the 19 syllabi (94.7%) from instructors with the oldest degrees were cognitive interactionist in their orientation, and only one was behaviourist. Because behaviourism is the older theoretical orientation, I had expected more behaviourism in the group of older instructors (as measured by year of highest degree).

Maybe the specific terms selected for use in the coding instrument did not play out because this was not a course in children's language development per se, inasmuch as one would expect a course in LA C&I to be grounded in and responding to what the instructor and students know about language learning. Results in this section may signal that courses are more focussed toward *how* than toward *why* and thereby the theoretical approach to language acquisition receives less overt emphasis. Alas, if an instructor does not overtly and purposefully address the theoretical conceptualizations behind practice, it may well be true that the theoretical approach to language acquisition receives little emphasis at all.

Table 4.37

Revised Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition (With Ties Added In)

Orientation	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Behaviourist	13.5	12.3
Linguistic	17	15.5
Cognitive interactionist	65	59.1
Social interactionist	5.5	5.0
N/A	9	8.2
Total	110	100.1

Figure 4.3

Revised Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition

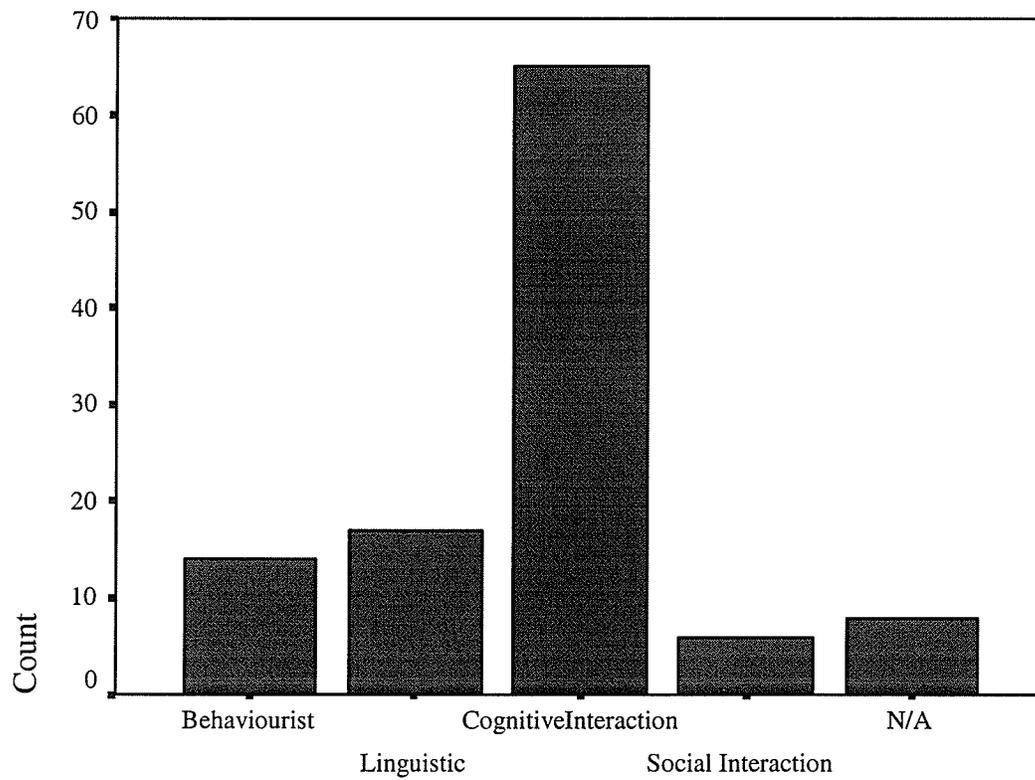


Table 4.38

Cross-Tabulation of Year of Highest Degree by Revised Theoretical Approach to Language Acquisition

Year of highest degree	Behaviourist	Linguistic	Cognitive interactionist	Social interactionist	N/A	Total
≤1960	0	0	4	0	0	4
1961-65	0	0	0	0	0	0
1966-70	0	0	7	0	0	7
1971-75	1	0	7	0	0	8
1976-80	1	1	7	2	0	11
1981-85	4	6	4	0	2	16
1986-90	1	1	17	0	0	19
1991-95	5	6	9	4	0	24
1996-99	2	3	10	0	6	21
Total	14	17	65	6	8	110

Note: Figures from Table 4.37 were rounded to whole numbers for entry into the database; nonetheless, the lack of pattern is evident.

### *Results of Overall LA/Literacy Orientation*

The intent of the portion of the study concerning overall language arts/literacy orientations was to attempt to determine via the syllabi of instructors what general beliefs they held concerning how the school subject of language arts (or the wider label of lifelong literacy, as some instructors would conceptualize their task) was best taught to children in schools. Three major orientations were identified based on the work of Butler-Kisber, Dillon, and Mitchell (1997). As presented in Table 4.39, the orientation known as *Process* was the one most popular in the syllabi according to the methods used in the Main Coding Instrument and the Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding

(Appendices E and F respectively). Seventy-six of the 110 syllabi, or 69.1 percent, represented a process orientation. A *Product* orientation was represented in 24.5 percent of the syllabi (27 of 110) and a *Postmodern* orientation was represented in only 5.5 percent of the syllabi (6 of 110). The relationships are illustrated in Figure 4.4.

The pronounced focus on process was not surprising in light of the general emphasis throughout education on advanced and applied strategies for teaching and learning, as well as on models and processes of several types of activities including language activities. Several of the books about language arts teaching and learning in the 1980s and 1990s implied the importance of process, or stated it directly, as in the general C&I textbook *Language Arts: A Process Approach* (Farris, 1993). Some of the older books, popular a decade before the present study, might well have formed or reinforced orientations held by some of the instructors in the study. Table 4.25 showed that while almost 60 percent of the instructors in the present study had 10 or fewer years' experience teaching in the area of language and literacy, the remainder had over 10 years experience, with over 12 percent having more than 20 years experience. Books such as Temple and Gillet's (1984) *Language Arts: Learning Processes and Teaching Practices*, and Hoskisson and Tompkins' (1987) *Language Arts: Content and Teaching Strategies* were popular, as I recall from my own experience in the field. Other titles (taken from the list of required or suggested materials at the end of Appendix F) offered a process approach (or an applied strategies approach) to a specific aspect of language arts teaching, among them: *Reading Process and Practice: From Socio-Psycholinguistics to Whole Language*

Table 4.39

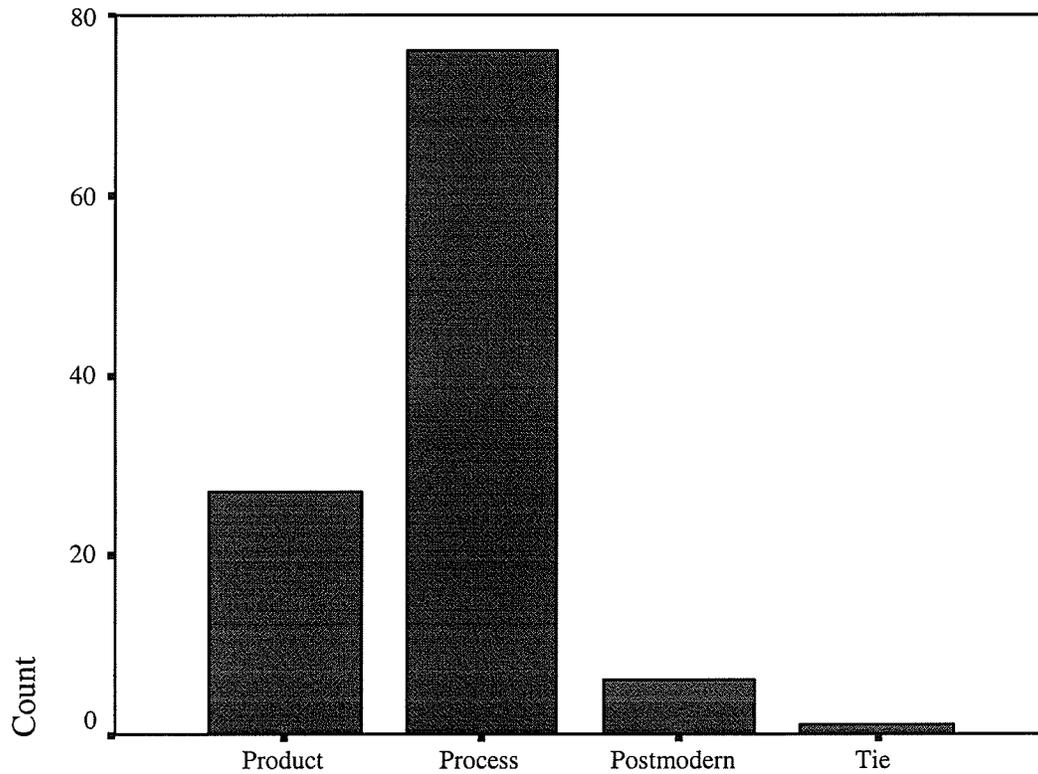
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Language Arts/Literacy Orientation		
Orientation	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Product	27	24.5
Process	76	69.1
Postmodern	6	5.5
Tie	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

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Figure 4.4

Language Arts/Literacy Orientation



(Weaver, 1994); *Reading and the Middle School Student: Strategies to Enhance Literacy* (Irvin, 1998); *The Writing Process in Action: A Handbook for Teachers* (Proett & Gill, 1986); *Problem Solving Strategies for Writing* (Flower, 1993); *Graphic Organizers: Visual Strategies for Active Learning* (Bromley, Irwin-DeVitis, & Modlo, 1996); and *Assessment and Evaluation: Techniques and Strategies for Use with Children Ages 5-9* (Booth, Booth, & Phenix, 1994).

Although one can find some books directly advocating aspects of product (and its component skills-based approach), such as Anderson and Lapp's (1988) *Language Skills in Elementary Education* or Tompkins' (1994) *Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product*, such books were much more rare by the late 1990s. One might not unreasonably assume that another book by Tompkins, *Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach* (1997), would, by virtue of its proximity in years to the 1994 book, be advocating the importance of product to some degree as part of its definition of "balanced." Similarly, one might also assume that her major texts, *Language Arts: Content and Teaching Strategies*, from the first edition (Hoskisson & Tompkins, 1987) to the Canadian edition that had just emerged at the time of the present study (Tompkins et al., 1999), would also contain traces of a product orientation. Furthermore, one might not be surprised at the field's paradigmatic confusion when trying to strand out the theoretical orientation to language arts teaching that would be promoted in a book with a title such as *Balanced Instruction: Strategies and Skills in Whole Language* (McIntyre & Pressley, 1996). Nonetheless, process clearly was the order of the day in the present study, in spite of residual, disguised, or unclear product orientations in some popular materials.

One could also make a justifiable argument that aspects of a postmodern orientation were available in the professional literature in language arts/literacy education at the time of the present study. Several books dealing with postmodern concerns were mentioned. Some of these were education books not specific to language arts/literacy, among them *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (Banks & Banks, 1997) and *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice* (Bigelow, Levine, & Miller, 1995), as well as the recent classics *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (Delpit, 1995), *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach* (Britzman, 1991), *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (Postman, 1985), and *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (Heath, 1983). Books specific to language arts C&I that indicated postmodern underpinnings were also in evidence, such as *Literacy Instruction in Multicultural Settings* (Au, 1993), *Teaching Language Arts: A Student- and Response-Centered Classroom* (Cox, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom* (Daniels, 1994), *Thinking and Learning Together: Curriculum and Community in a Primary Classroom* (Fisher, 1995), and *The Languages of Learning: How Children Talk, Write, Dance, Draw, and Sing Their Understanding of the World* (Gallas, 1994). Examination of these C&I materials, however, would indicate that in spite of a rhetoric proposing focus on learners, many of these materials were nonetheless variations of how-to-teach manuals with process orientations.

The general historical trend concerning a language arts/literacy orientation might be described as a shift in focus. Fifty years ago the field was firmly entrenched in an

orientation in which the focus was largely on product, but throughout the late seventies, the eighties, and the early nineties, the focus shifted so that emphasis was largely on process. It is true that the processes were student-centred in that they involved *student* thought and action, but most often, I suggest, the agenda was firmly in the hands of the teacher. During the past decade, increasingly influenced by postmodern thought, the focus has been shifting again to a point where it is more than ever on the students in the sense that students not only engage in processes of thought and action, but they take (and/or are given) increasing responsibility for choosing the processes in which they will engage, whether as individuals, groups, or classes, and for choosing the topical/thematic areas in which they will work. All in all, postmodernism sees a continued de-centering, a continued move away from the teacher as centre toward students each as centres of their own learning agendas, actions, and achievements.

One might wonder, then, why so little evidence of a postmodern orientation exists in the sample. I suggest there may be three reasons: First of all, most of the instructors in this study were themselves educated as teachers or graduate students in the process era, when the process orientation was being recognized, then implemented, and then celebrated, during the time when process was “overcoming” product. The process orientation is the way they see the world and the way they pass on the seeing of the world to the preservice teachers with whom they work. They may not be schooled or acculturated in postmodern thought or may devalue postmodern notions in favour of what they know as their “tried and true” vision for language arts teaching.

Second, the lack of postmodern orientations in evidence in the syllabi, or, for that

matter in the textual materials, may not be a problem of instruction but rather of definition within the study, a problem of trying artificially to separate things inextricably connected. It is hard to conceive of any of these orientations as mutually exclusive. Both a process orientation and a postmodern orientation inevitably result in product, which must be dealt with in classrooms. One can attempt to focus on several aspects of the learners—as beings whose lives are situated in contexts of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic variables, ability, and so on—yet when teaching these learners language arts, process is inevitably going to be a focus and product is going to be created.

Third, an emphasis on process in the present study might more reflect the nature (or at least the nature as it has historically been conceptualized) of the course, a methods course involving what to teach and how to teach it, and not a course exclusively about learner characteristics and needs. While an instructor may care deeply about many facets of children's lives and address those facets in daily teaching, those facets might not necessarily be the focus of how the course is organized, not by virtue of not caring, but by virtue of having a different agenda mandated or expected of the course itself. Related to this idea is that most instructors may believe preservice teachers need a foundation based on an understanding of process before they can function competently as teachers who can focus on learners. Yes, a teacher can claim that children are the focus of the class, but what exactly is it that the children will *do*? In other words, a process orientation is still valid, not replaced by postmodernism, but working alongside it, just as product has not been done away with albeit it receives less emphasis and a different emphasis. In many ways, the three act together as we learn from the past and look toward the future.

Currently, in an ideal context, children learn the processes that lead to various products, they learn the purpose of their products, they share their products with as wide an audience as possible, they help create the assessment criteria by which products will be gauged, and sometimes they engage directly in the assessment and later articulate their accomplishments via portfolio annotations and/or student-led conferences, working in a school where they are celebrated as a community of diverse learners, all of them recognized positively for the uniqueness they bring to the entire enterprise of learning. At times, too, their learning will move beyond the classroom to family and community contexts encompassing both local and global pursuits.

### ***Results of Pedagogical Orientation***

Pedagogical orientation in the present study concerned the mind-sets about their own teaching that instructors brought to their work. In addition to thinking about how children learn language and how teachers should teach children to use language, instructors of LA C&I courses must also concern themselves with the approach they will take to their own teaching. If they do not pay attention to this aspect of planning, working toward a coherent, defensible practice which they articulate to students, then students will be more likely to be confused about instructors' intentions and values. In an attempt to discern instructors' pedagogical orientations through their syllabi, I used a typology advanced by Carter and Anders (1996). They suggested five orientations to pedagogical practice that were specifically applicable to teacher education. To gauge the orientations of instructors, I matched their identified practices as articulated in their syllabi with five sets of descriptors illustrating the pedagogical orientations. Unlike the previous two types

of orientations, the procedure was not to match specific, exact vocabulary items, but rather to match instructors' intentions in activities with a predetermined set of intentions that would be parallel, but not necessarily identical.

Table 4.40 provides the results for these five types of pedagogical orientation. Unlike the two types of orientations discussed previously, the results for pedagogical orientation were not as strong, in the sense that no one pedagogical orientation accounted for half or more of the syllabi represented. Three orientations shared highest percentages. The *Technological* orientation prevailed at 28.2 percent (31 of 110 syllabi) but was followed quite closely by the *Personal* at 24.5 percent (27 of 110 syllabi). Close to the personal orientation, but lower, was the *Practical/Craft* orientation at 16.4 percent (18 of 110 syllabi). Scarcely evident at all were the *Academic* orientation, accounting for only 3.6 percent (4 of 110 syllabi), and the *Critical/Social* orientation accounting for a mere 1.8 percent (2 of 110 syllabi). Here, too, as in the previous sets of orientations, the situations in which a *Tie* was represented accounted for nearly a quarter of the syllabi, 27 of 110, or 24.5 percent. These results are clearly visible in Figure 4.5.

Revising the data to account for tie situations, allocating to each orientation the equivalent of one half (0.50) or one third (0.33) of a syllabus (as was done for theoretical approaches to language acquisition), resulted in the totals presented in Table 4.41 and Figure 4.6. The table shows actual data and the figure shows the representation of each orientation rounded to a whole number (to enable the creating of the figure).

Technological and personal orientations competed here for dominance, with the practical/craft orientation not far behind. Most of the ties were a combination of

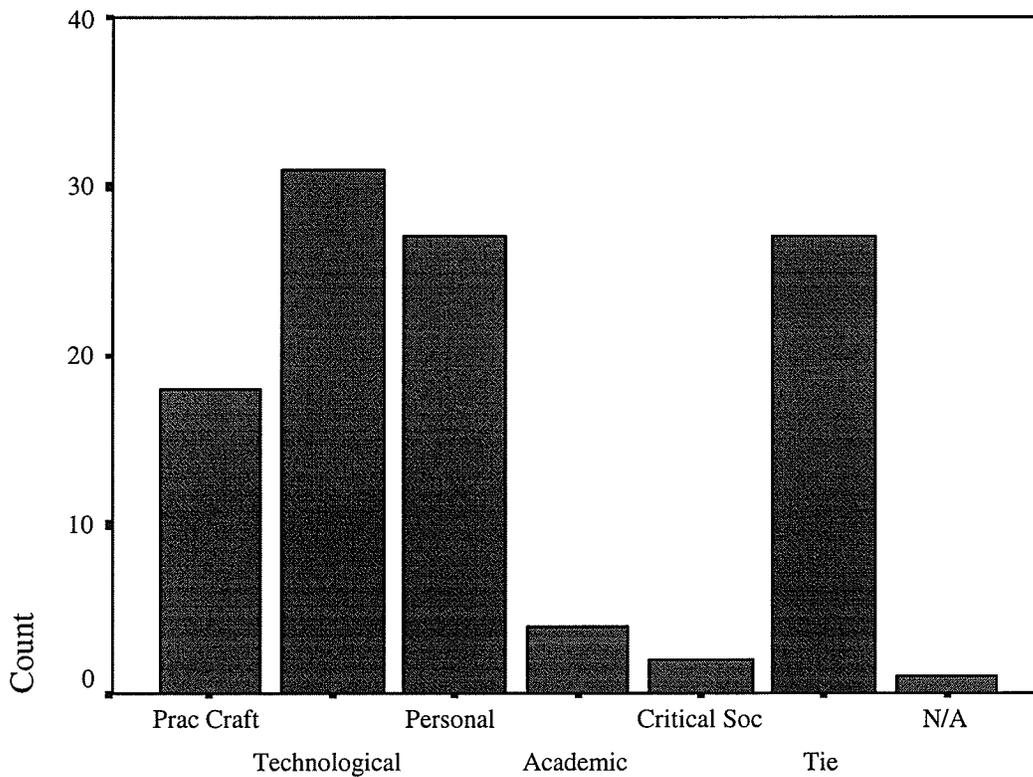
Table 4.40

Pedagogical Orientation

Orientation	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Practical/Craft	18	16.4
Technological	31	28.2
Personal	27	24.5
Academic	4	3.6
Critical/Social	2	1.8
Tie	27	24.5
N/A	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

Figure 4.5

Pedagogical Orientation



practical/craft and personal (12 of the 27 ties), technological and personal (6 of the 27 ties), or practical/craft and technological (6 of the 27 ties). The representations for the academic orientation did not change at all, and the representation for critical/social changed by only one syllabus (i.e., only 2 of the 27 tie situations involved the critical/social).

There are many ways to account for these data, and none of the results contains any element of great surprise. A technological orientation has long prevailed in all teaching, including university teaching, and, with the work of theorists such as Tyler (1949), has characterized curriculum theory and curricular practice for the last half century. Data here indicate that if preservice teachers were ultimately to adopt the models being used with them in their preservice work, regardless of what orientations were advocated verbally or via textual materials, a solid third would go on to perpetuate a technological approach. Another third would perpetuate the personal orientation they saw in their preservice classrooms, and over a quarter of them would perpetuate a practical stance to hone the craft of teaching. The heavy emphasis currently audible across the field concerning the need for teachers to recognize and validate their own “personal practical knowledge” (Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) over and above the technological approaches advocated within many teachers’ manuals, strategy guides, and even government curricular materials corresponds positively with the data.

For the elementary preservice teachers who were learning about teaching via the syllabi in the present study, a great emphasis on an orientation that was largely academic would not have been present in their LA C&I courses and will likely not characterize the

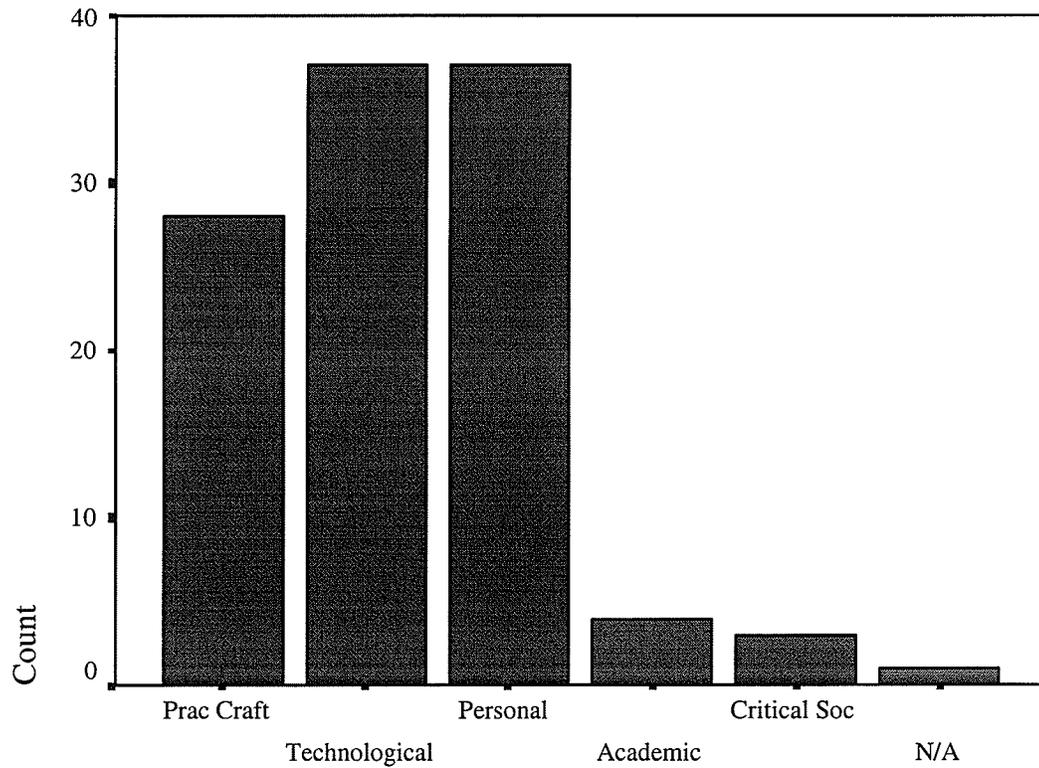
Table 4.41

Revised Pedagogical Orientation (With Ties Added In)

Orientation	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Practical/Craft	27.83	25.3
Technological	37.33	33.9
Personal	36.83	33.5
Academic	4	3.6
Critical/Social	3	2.7
N/A	1	0.9
Total	109.99	99.9

Figure 4.6

Revised Pedagogical Orientation



language arts they teach to children in schools. This may not be such a startling finding, because methods courses by definition have a practical bent. Many instructors—and very likely the ones in this study, as indicated by the data—would not want elementary teachers overemphasizing academic rigour, arguing that technical skills and strategies and/or a focus on one's own efficacy in a practical realm can serve children well as preparation for future academic life. A few outnumbered others might argue, however, that without an academic orientation as a base in elementary school, it is hard for young adolescents to adopt an academic stance in high school.

The only finding which was at all unexpected was the very low incidence of the critical/social agenda in the pedagogical orientations of this group of instructors. I had expected somewhat more attention to these aspects, wherein the teaching of language arts would be directed toward social reform and social emancipation along the lines of *With Literacy and Justice for All: Rethinking the Social in Language and Education* (Edelsky, 1991) or *Making Justice Our Project: Teachers Working toward Critical Whole Language Practice* (Edelsky, 1999). In all three of the types of orientations looked at in the present study, any orientation related to social considerations was the lowest orientation to be evidenced. In theoretical approaches to language acquisition, social interactionism was lowest at 3.6 percent (revised to 5.0 percent). In language arts/literacy orientations, the postmodern orientation was lowest at 5.5 percent (and the one and only tie was a tie between product and process). In pedagogical orientations, the critical/social orientation was the lowest at 1.8 percent (revised to 2.3 percent). While these finding cannot be celebrated in terms of acknowledgement of social issues and influences among

the instructors of the present study, they can be recognized as providing parallel evidence, and thereby increased confidence in the data, in that three different ways of examining the syllabi all produced somewhat similar results.

### ***Inter-Rater Reliability of Orientations Section***

Inter-rater reliability was determined as percentage of agreement between both coders in the present study. Of all the sections of this study for which inter-rater reliability was determined, the inter-rater reliability for the orientations section was the lowest of all at 61 percent. Within the three typologies, however, there was considerable difference. The set of orientations dealing with language acquisition was the lowest of the three, with the reliability being only 42 percent. The final set of orientations, pedagogical orientations, was the next highest at only 58 percent. The highest agreement of all was within the language arts/literacy orientations where agreement was at 83 percent.

Within the entire orientations section there was considerable difference between the results for the English syllabi and the results for the French syllabi: While the reliability of the English results was only 56 percent, the reliability of the French results was 78 percent. Possible reasons for this discrepancy are discussed in Chapter Five.

### ***Summary Discussion Concerning Orientations***

Of course, throughout the analysis of this data, it is important to keep in mind that very few of the syllabi indicated intentions which matched only one orientation. Only 19 of 330 orientations sections (110 x 3 orientations), or 5.8 percent, represented only one orientation, and all of these were in the theoretical approaches section. The exclusiveness of a single orientation here is likely due in large part to the fact that only 15 terms were

available for each orientation, whereas in the language arts/literacy orientation 50 terms were available for each, and in pedagogical orientation, exact terms were not needed. What is more important to take note of is that in 311 of the 330 orientations sections, or 94.2 percent, the orientations presented as data represent the orientations which predominated in each syllabus, but these were not represented exclusively. Cognitive interactionist was by far the most predominant orientation in theoretical approaches to language acquisition. Process was by far the most predominant orientation in the language arts/literacy orientations. The technological orientation predominated in the pedagogical orientations, but was followed closely by the personal and the practical/craft orientation; instances of any two of these three pedagogical orientations occurring together were frequent enough to be worth noting.

### ***Results Concerning Textual Materials***

This section of Chapter Four corresponds to Section 6 of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E) and replies to the following initial research question: What are instructors' expectations (requirements and recommendations) concerning *textual materials* for use in their courses? Of course, with 64 different instructors from across the country creating 110 syllabi in two languages, there was a great deal of textual material mentioned within the context of this study. The following discussion presents the nature of that material. After a brief presentation of the language of materials and the overall requirements and recommendations, five major sets of information are featured:

(a) textbooks, (b) monographs (including packages of readings and journal articles),

(c) government documents, (d) children's literature, and (e) other print and non-print materials. Each section contains a brief look at the matter of requirements and recommendations of the specific types of materials. Following these sections is a presentation about the popularity of specific textual materials and their national origins.

There were 110 syllabi in the present study; 94 came from anglophone institutions and were written in English, and 16 came from francophone institutions and were written in French. As Table 4.42 shows, the language of the materials used by the instructors of these courses followed a similar division. All courses offered in English that included readings listed them in English; however, of the parallel courses offered in French, two listed readings in both languages. The number of English books was definitely very low, but the fact of some syllabi listing material in both languages suggests that preservice

Table 4.42

Cross-Tabulation of Language of Instruction by Language of Readings Required or Recommended within the Syllabi

Language of instruction	English readings	French readings	English and French readings	No readings	N/A	Total
English instruction	93	0	0	1	0	94
French instruction	0	13	2	0	1	16
Total	93	13	2	1	1	110

teachers of language arts in francophone institutions require some familiarity with the English language, while the reciprocal requirement does not exist for their compatriots in anglophone institutions.

### ***Required versus Recommended Materials***

Two items in the Main Coding Instrument probed the overall presence of materials required versus materials recommended. Although physically and literally, such items are one and the same materials, they differ in their intended uses. Courses are often organized around required materials, and are often referred to repeatedly in a course. Sometimes some required materials are expected to be brought to classes and may be needed to complete key portions of assignments. This means that most students will want to own the materials. It likely also means that most students will have read some or all of such required materials. Recommended materials, on the other hand, are supplementary, not focal. Their function is to fill in gaps that instructors deem to be missing from required materials, or to provide enrichment or alternate views from those posited in required materials. Recommended materials will likely be purchased much less frequently; rather, students will access them as library materials, whether as materials in library stacks or as material the instructor has set aside, on reserve for students in a particular course and/or from the instructor's own collection. Recommended materials could form the basis of students' selection of topics of choice in certain assignments.

Table 4.43 indicates the overall number of textual items required by instructors as evidenced in individual syllabi. Only two syllabi clearly included no required material whatsoever. For eight syllabi, the inclusion of required materials was unclear, meaning that materials were listed but their number could not be discerned or, more often, their status as required or recommended was unclear. One hundred of the 110 syllabi in the present study (90.9%) included required materials. Computation of the figures in Table

4.43 showed that, within these hundred syllabi, over 552 textual items were required, an average of over 5.5 items per course. These might be survey textbooks, monographs,

Table 4.43

Overall Textual Items Required

Number of items	Number of syllabi requiring materials	Percentage of syllabi requiring materials
1 item	7	6.4
2 items	6	5.5
3 items	14	12.7
4 items	6	5.5
5 items	12	10.9
6 items	9	8.2
7 items	2	1.8
8 items	1	0.9
9 items	9	8.2
≥ 10 items	34	30.9
None	2	1.8
Unclear	8	7.3
Total	110	100.0

government documents, or journal articles, among others. It is likely that if only one item were required, it was a survey textbook or an item of curricular material. If more than 10 items were required, it is likely that several of them were shorter items such as book excerpts (usually individual chapters) or perhaps children's literature selections, wherein the whole class would read one or more short books for use in discussing and illustrating

strategies. Requirements of specific types of items will be discussed following the presentation of the incidence of those items.

Table 4.44 presents the overall number of textual items recommended but not

Table 4.44

Overall Textual Items Recommended

Number of items	Number of syllabi recommending materials	Percentage of syllabi recommending materials
1 item	3	2.7
2 items	5	4.5
3 items	1	0.9
4 items	1	0.9
5 items	3	2.7
6 items	0	0
7 items	3	2.7
8 items	3	2.7
9 items	0	0
10 items	0	0
11-20 items	8	7.3
21-30 items	2	1.8
31-40 items	2	1.8
41-50 items	2	1.8
51-60 items	4	3.6
61-70 items	1	0.9
71-80 items	0	0
81-90 items	0	0
91-100 items	0	0
>100 items	2	1.8
Several	24	21.8
None	41	37.3
Unclear	5	4.5
Total	110	100.0

required by instructors as evidenced in individual syllabi. Sixty-four syllabi out of 110 (58.2%) recommended materials. Forty-one syllabi out of 110 (37.3%) did not recommend any materials whatsoever. A relatively small number of syllabi included a relatively small number of recommended materials: 19 of the 110 syllabi (17.3%) recommended fewer than 10 items each, with half of them recommending only one to four items. A few instructors recommended vast amounts of material supplementary to the course: 7 of the 110 syllabi (6.4%) included specific mention of over 50 items, and within those syllabi, 2 included mention of over 100 specific items. Over one fifth of the syllabi (24 of 110, or 21.8%) recommended several materials, but did so in a general and unquantifiable way, claiming, for example, that extra reading of many and varied materials was expected, although the number and specific nature or sources of the materials were not provided. Recommendations of specific types of items will be discussed following the presentation of the incidence of those items.

*Survey textbooks.* Perhaps the most important single element in any course, over and above the people directly involved in it, is the course textbook. The text brings the ideas and voices of another person or several people, though indirectly, into the classroom conversation via the medium of the written word. The writer of a survey textbook is someone well versed in the field. The writer provides a perspective, organizes the various aspects of the field, offers and supports specific suggestions, and illustrates many aspects with rich and varied examples, including visuals. The writer generally helps the reader access the ideas in the textbook—by means of pre-reading activities, cues during the reading, and post-reading activities—and as well offers suggestions for further reading.

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Table 4.45

Major LA Survey Text Required

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Number of textbooks	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
1 LA survey text required	42	38.2
2 LA survey texts required	3	2.7
No LA survey texts required	65	59.1
Total	110	100.0

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Publishers accompany textbooks with instructor's guides, test banks, overhead transparencies and, currently, CD ROMs and/or web sites to help the students and the instructor, as well as practitioners in the field who might purchase the textbook.

Whereas Table 4.43 indicated that 100 syllabi of 110 (90.9%) had specified some sort of required material, totalling 552 items in all, Table 4.45 shows that only 45 syllabi of 110 (40.9%) specified survey textbooks in language arts C&I, for a total of only 48 items in all. Nearly three fifths of the syllabi did not include textbooks at all. Table 4.46 shows that relatively few of the recommended materials were LA C&I textbooks either.

In addition to major textbooks in language arts C&I, I expected some incidence of textbooks in other subject areas, as I had supposed that some courses would be taught in an integrated manner. Table 4.47 provides the evidence that slightly over one tenth of the syllabi required textbooks that were not language arts textbooks. In fact, all the required textbooks herein were textbooks in mathematics curriculum and instruction, with the recommended materials being textbooks in science and social studies. Six different instructors were involved, some teaching multiple sections.

Table 4.46

Major LA Survey Text Recommended

Number of textbooks	Number of syllabi	Percentage
1 LA survey text recommended	6	5.5
2 LA survey texts recommended	1	0.9
3 LA survey texts recommended	1	0.9
4 LA survey texts recommended	1	0.9
6 or more LA survey texts recommended	5	4.5
No LA survey texts recommended	94	85.5
Unclear	2	1.8
Total	110	100.0

Table 4.47

Major Textbook in Subject Other than LA Required or Recommended

Number of textbooks	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage recommending
1 non-LA textbook	12	10.9	0	0
2 non-LA textbooks	1	0.9	2	1.8
3 non-LA textbooks	0	0	1	0.9
4 non-LA textbooks	0	0	1	0.9
No non-LA textbooks	97	88.2	105	95.5
Unclear	0	0	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

*Monographs and edited volumes.* Another common type of book in a university course is a monograph. A monograph is “a detailed, well-documented study in one or more volumes of a limited subject or of a limited aspect of a general subject . . . .” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 157). This category is included here primarily to distinguish monographs from textbooks that provide an overview of a field from a particular perspective, but which, by their nature cannot provide much depth or detail. Among some current Canadian monographs in English language arts are: *Penpal Programs in Primary Classrooms* (Berrill & Gall, 2000); *Writing Instruction in the Intermediate Grades: What is Said, What is Done, What is Understood* (Bright, 1995); *Canadian Connections: Experiencing Literature with Children* (Jobe & Hart, 1991); and *Spelling: Sharing the Secrets* (Scott, 1993). In addition to individually or collaboratively authored books, edited volumes are also considered to be monographs: Among these are, for example, Jaggar and Smith-Burke’s *Observing the Language Learner* (1985) and Short and Pierce’s *Talking about Books: Creating Literate Communities* (1990). These books had multiple contributors, but all contributions focussed on a singular topic.

In the present study, as evidenced by Table 4.48, language arts monographs were very popular as items for reading by preservice teachers. Whereas 45 syllabi of 110 (40.9%) required textbooks, 72 syllabi of 110 (65.5%) required monographs. The number of books in each category was distinctly different as well: 48 textbooks were required, an average of 1.07 books per syllabus (of those syllabi requiring textbooks), whereas at least 162 monographs were required, an average of 2.25 books per syllabus (of those syllabi requiring monographs). In terms of recommended books, whereas textbooks were

Table 4.48

## Major LA Monograph/Edited Volume Required or Recommended

Number of LA monographs	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage recommending
1 monograph	36	32.7	5	4.5
2 monographs	27	24.5	1	0.9
3 monographs	6	5.5	2	1.8
4 monographs	0	0	0	0
5 monographs	0	0	0	0
6 or more monographs	3	2.7	32	29.1
No monographs	38	34.5	68	61.8
Unclear	0	0	2	1.8
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

recommended as readings in 14 of 110 syllabi (12.7%), wherein they recommended a total of at least 45 books, an average of 3.21 books per syllabus, monographs were recommended as readings in 40 of 110 syllabi (36.4%), wherein they recommended a total of at least 205 books, an average of 5.13 books per syllabus. Table 4.49 indicates that monographs in subjects other than language arts were included in syllabi, albeit considerably less so than for language arts. Here, too, more were recommended than required.

Monographs are likely suggested as required or recommended materials more often than survey textbooks in part because they are specific. As required materials, they present material in a way that matches an instructor's philosophical orientation and/or

they present strong counter arguments. If the books are directly practical, then they present practical material in a way that the instructor believes is clear, and perhaps they also offer some rationale for methodology. Monographs are also popular because they tend to be much cheaper per item than survey textbooks, which can sell for around one hundred dollars. Textbooks, which must be comprehensive but also timely, and which therefore must be written or revised quickly, must also be sold around the time they are first published. Few survey texts individually become best sellers, though in regular revision they can endure. The timeliness and the requirement for a great deal of an author's time are factors in cost, especially considering that the authors are usually full professors or associate professors.

A more significant aspect related to cost, however, is that of production, transportation, and marketing, coupled with a market that, in the eyes of publishers, may be viewed as small and unstable. Although publishers generously provide instructors with free desk copies of books, there is no guarantee that those instructors will continue to require students to use the same books in the following year. Publishers also generously provide instructors with complimentary preview copies of newly published material, but again with no guarantee that instructors will adopt the material. Instructors are reluctant to require expensive textbooks because students have difficulty affording them, to the point where some manage without them. Expecting the purchase of a monograph will strike some instructors as a much more realistic alternative, and often, a student can purchase one, two or even three monographs for the price of a survey text. Cost of books

Table 4.49

## Major Monograph/Edited Volume in Subject Other than LA Required or Recommended

Number of non-LA monographs	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage recommending
1 monograph	2	1.8	1	0.9
2 monographs	0	0	7	6.4
3 monographs	0	0	1	0.9
4 monographs	1	0.9	0	0
6 or more monographs	0	0	1	0.9
No monographs	107	97.3	99	90.0
Unclear	0	0	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

is an especially relevant factor in elementary teacher education where preservice teachers usually take courses in every subject that they might be expected to teach to children. Eight subjects times one hundred dollars per subject for survey textbooks is simply not realistic on top of current tuition costs and other necessary expenses.

One last reason why monographs may be favoured is that they tend literally to be smaller and physically lighter than survey textbooks, a fact that may contribute to their actually being read by students. A smaller book seems more accessible, less a chore, and can be brought back and forth to university much more easily.

***Packages of readings.*** Packages of readings are collections of various readings, usually journal articles and book chapters or excerpts from chapters, that the instructor values and wants to share with the students. Conceptually, a package of

readings to some degree parallels an edited volume, a volume in which the instructor himself or herself is the editor (although the collection will likely have much less cohesiveness than most edited volumes). Notwithstanding the fact that different institutions have slightly varying policies on duplication of materials, it is likely that most, if not all, follow Canada's copyright laws.

A package of readings may be put together formally or informally. For "formal" packages, the actual requesting and photocopying would be carried out by library personnel or university bookstore personnel as a service to an instructor. Instructors in institutions offering such services would be required to submit materials well in advance of course start dates. Duplicated materials would often be bound. At the time of the present study, materials selected by an instructor were normally duplicated on a cost-of-materials basis once permission had been secured from the publisher, whereas currently authors and/or publishers are paid a set fee under the Access Copyright (2004) licencing program. To create an "informal" course package, instructors placed individual items in the university library in an area reserved for students of a particular course, and expected students, one by one, to photocopy the materials, page by page, at their own cost.

Either of these methods, formal or informal, is labour intensive for someone, over and above the work of the instructor in deciding exactly which materials should be included in the package (and, sometimes, scouting out the original sources). Nonetheless, course packages are valuable in that they allow instructors to use materials they especially want to use without breaking copyright (and, in fact, such packages serve as signals to preservice teachers that infringement of copyright is not allowed), and saving the

instructors' departments from the cost of duplicating handouts which would be distributed free to students. In some institutions instructors duplicate material in their departments which in turn charge students a cost recovery fee.

In spite of the time commitment and effort required to create a package of course readings, nearly one fifth of the syllabi in the study required such a package (see Table 4.50). No packages of reading materials were merely recommended, likely due to the work involved in their creation. Packages of material can be useful for students not only

Table 4.50

Package of Reading Material Required

Requirement of package of readings	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage requiring
Package—yes	21	19.1
Package—no	88	80.0
Unclear	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

because of the items contained within them, but also because, if such packages are the sole requirement, students are spared the high cost of textbooks. Some instructors, however, required both, as evidenced in Table 4.51: In 7 of the 110 syllabi of the study (6.4%), a package of readings supplemented a major survey textbook.

Table 4.51

Cross-Tabulation of Major LA Survey Text Required and Package of Reading Material Required

LA survey text required	Package required	Package not required	Unclear	Total
1 LA text	7	35	0	42
2 LA texts	0	3	0	3
No LA texts	14	50	1	65
Total	21	88	1	110

*Journal articles and chapters.* Some instructors assign the reading of journal articles as key elements of their courses. There are many professional journals in the field of language arts. Many are written for academic researchers, graduate students and teacher educators, but many are targeted also toward practicing classroom teachers, both veterans and neophytes. Several assume an audience interested in scholarly writing and research as well as those interested in practical information. Journal articles are timely, short and thus accessible, and very focussed on a particular aspect of language arts curriculum and instruction. Different articles can be assigned each year as instructors find newer or better examples of specific content. Many instructors do not codify the articles as packages of materials but merely put them on reserve or provide them as handouts. Most professional journals permit such copying for classroom use in universities. In addition to journal articles per se, instructors sometimes assign a chapter from a textbook or monograph. In the present study, book chapters were counted as articles.

Table 4.52

## Language Arts Articles or Chapters Required or Recommended

Number of articles	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage of syllabi requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage of syllabi recommending
1-5 specified articles	23	20.9	10	9.1
6-10 specified articles	5	4.5	1	0.9
≥11 specified articles	3	2.7	13	11.8
Some unspecified	15	13.6	13	11.8
Unclear	4	3.6	3	2.7
No articles	60	54.5	70	63.6
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

Journal articles (and chapters) were counted in groups of five for convenience of coding and efficiency of analysis. They were counted only if they were named specifically. Another category accounted for articles which were required but which were not individually listed in the syllabi themselves. Table 4.52 provides the information that 46 of the 110 syllabi in the present study (41.8%) required the reading of journal articles as part of the LA C&I experiences; 31 syllabi, representing 28.2 percent of the entire set of syllabi, named specific articles to be read. Thirty-seven of the 110 syllabi (33.6%) recommended the reading of journal articles, while 24 syllabi, representing 21.8 percent of the entire set of syllabi, suggested specific articles as recommended reading.

As Tables 4.53 and 4.54 suggest, some instructors were not content with a major textbook or monograph. In 10 of the 110 syllabi (9.1%) both a textbook and specific

Table 4.53

Cross-Tabulation of Syllabi Requiring Articles and/or Individual Chapters and Requiring Major LA Survey Texts

Number of items required	1 LA textbook	2 LA textbooks	No LA textbooks	Total
1-5 articles	8	0	15	23
6-10 articles	1	0	4	5
≥ 11 articles	1	0	2	3
Some articles	2	0	13	15
Unclear	0	0	4	4
No articles	30	3	27	60
Total	42	3	65	110

articles were required readings. Similarly, in 9 of the 110 syllabi (8.2%), both a monograph and specific articles were required. As well, in 10 of the 110 syllabi (9.1%) two monographs and specific articles were required. Only 2 of the 21 syllabi requiring packages of reading material also required specific articles.

The fact that several groups of preservice teachers across the nation were each required to read several items may have been a problem in terms of cost, but in terms of their learning it was a sound expectation. A more serious finding evident in Tables 4.53 and 4.54 is the fact that 27 of 110 syllabi (24.5%) required no textbook and no articles, and 28 of 110 syllabi (25.5%) required no monographs and no articles. Although, as was seen earlier in Table 4.43, only 2 syllabi of 110 (1.8%) did not require any textual items of any kind, one might wonder about the overall depth of reading materials required when

approximately one fourth of the syllabi in the sample evidenced neither textbooks, monographs nor specific articles, and 45.5 percent (50 of 110 syllabi) required neither textbooks nor packages of readings (see Table 4.51). Also, in spite of the fact that many

Table 4.54

Cross-Tabulation of Syllabi Requiring Articles and/or Individual Chapters and Requiring Monographs and/or Edited Volumes

Number of items required	1 LA monograph	2 LA monographs	3 or more LA monographs	No LA monographs	Total
1-5 articles	5	10	3	5	23
6-10 articles	3	0	1	1	5
≥ 11 articles	1	0	1	1	3
Some articles	10	1	1	3	15
Unclear	2	1	1	0	4
No articles	15	15	2	28	60
Total	36	27	9	38	110

instructors did require or recommend many articles, in 60 of the 110 syllabi (54.5%) no articles at all were required. One might wonder in the entire picture of preservice readings if there were syllabi that required no substantive readings of any kind. In fact, a series of cross-tabulations involving each syllabus by every type of textual material showed 3 syllabi requiring no specific textual materials and 10 syllabi that each required one item only (4 requiring one textbook each, 2 requiring one monograph each, 1 requiring one package of readings, and 3 requiring one government document each). These syllabi may

well have recommended a variety of materials in lieu of mandating specific materials; alternately, they may have been those in which instructors' intentions were unclear. In contrast, 29 of the 110 syllabi, or 26.4 percent, required textual materials in four or more categories, providing preservice teachers experience with a wide range of professional materials.

*Government documents.* Government documents was another category of readings analyzed in the present study to determine the extent of the use of these documents across the nation. Government documents relating to LA C&I courses were of two types: The main documents from each province were those specifying the curricular requirements for language arts instruction at the various grade levels, while the second type of documents were those generally called support documents, documents intended to help teachers implement the curricular requirements stated in the main documents. In the present study the two types were not distinguished.

Table 4.55 presents the number of government documents required in the syllabi, wherein 82 of the 110 syllabi (74.5%), virtually three quarters of the syllabi in the study, clearly included one or more government documents as requirements. The average number of government documents required, of those requiring them, was at least 2.4. Sometimes the situation was evidenced in which one syllabus required more than one government document. Some such situations were those in which a document of curricular requirements (i.e., a standard curriculum document) was paired alongside one or more support documents. The other type of similar situation evidenced often was the requiring of two standard documents, each for a different level. For example, some

Manitoba syllabi required both an early years and a middle years document, some Ontario syllabi required both an elementary (grades 1-8) and a kindergarten document, and some Nova Scotia syllabi required both a primary (grades P-3) and an intermediate (grades 4-6) document.

Fourteen of the 110 syllabi (12.7%) recommended a total of 40 government documents, an average of 2.9 documents per syllabus of those requiring such documents. In addition to requiring main government documents, instructors from Ontario and Quebec, in particular, required or recommended several of their provinces' older supplementary materials. A complete listing of the overall government materials included in the syllabi of this study is provided in the "Codes for Government Documents" section of the "Textual Materials Codes" section of Appendix F, Specific Guidelines for Decision Making during Coding.

The fact that three quarters of the syllabi required government documents is not surprising. One might, in fact, have expected this requirement considering that the courses were defined as courses in curriculum and instruction, thereby allocating a key role to curriculum. Of course, in most if not all faculties of education, "curriculum" in course titles and descriptions is likely intended to encompass something much more comprehensive than just government curricula. Irrespective of specific government mandates, one can teach about what to teach within one's discipline and how to teach it. Furthermore, instructors might not agree with the orientations to curriculum encoded in the documents of their provinces, and might therefore feel somewhat traitorous when attempting to teach these, promoting values counter to their own. Alternately, preservice

Table 4.55

Government Documents Required and Recommended

Number of government documents	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage of syllabi requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage of syllabi recommending
1 document	45	40.9	4	3.6
2 documents	5	4.5	4	3.6
3 documents	9	8.2	2	1.8
4 documents	11	10.0	0	0
5 documents	4	3.6	2	1.8
≥6 documents	8	7.3	2	1.8
None	26	23.6	90	81.8
Unclear	2	1.8	6	5.5
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

teachers could be taught to critique their governments' orientations; however, for most, this is a task for which they are not yet sufficiently equipped, and which might not serve them well as they launch their careers. Preservice teachers are required to teach the curricula of their provinces, thus it could be seen as a requirement that C&I instructors focus on these curricula, or at least refer to them from time to time. In some if not all jurisdictions, inclusion of provincial curricula in C&I courses is a legal requirement.

The importance of preservice teachers' learning about provincial curricula is clear insofar as the government that mandates any particular curriculum is the same government that created it, the same government that assesses children's learning of it, and the same government that will certify a faculty's new graduates to be teachers in the

province. In light of this, the problem in the data may be with the instructors in the present study who do *not* require any government materials. With 82 of 110 syllabi (74.5%) requiring government materials, and a total of 14 of the 110 (12.7%) recommending them, there is, possibly, 12.7 percent remaining, representing 14 courses in which government materials were neither required nor recommended. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the preservice teachers within the present study did have exposure to government expectations in elementary language arts.

*Children's and young adult literature.* Literature, especially narrative literature, is an essential element of current elementary classrooms in Canada. In many classrooms, children's literature selections have replaced basal readers as the instructional texts. Children's literature serves a variety of important functions: It helps children learn language arts by providing models of language use; it introduces children to a wide variety of vocabulary; it entertains children as they build a rapport with their teacher and classmates; and it expands children's experiences and knowledge in a variety of realms, including self-awareness and awareness of others. Often, literature is a key element in the structuring of instructional experiences (Cullinen, 1990, 1992; Daniels, 1994, 2002; Hennings, 1997; Pennac, 1992; Tompkins & McGee, 1993; Yopp & Yopp, 1992), for whole classes and for individual children. Teachers of elementary-level children require a strong foundation in children's literature. Teachers working with upper-elementary or middle years children would benefit too from familiarity with literature known as "adolescent literature" or "young adult literature," intended, as the names suggest, for children aged 13 to 18, but often read by competent or precocious pre-teens. In the

present study, children's literature was understood to encompass all these levels of books for young people.

In addition to gauging the inclusion in course syllabi of professional literature and government materials written expressly for preservice or inservice teachers, the present study also probed the active promotion of children's literature by counting the number of times such books were required and recommended. It further probed the nature of those specific books. Table 4.56 reveals that in 51 of the 110 syllabi (46.4%) children's literature was a definite requirement, with over 188 children's literature selections required in all, for an average of 3.69 books for each syllabus requiring such books. Slightly under one fifth of the syllabi (19 of 110, or 17.3%) required only one item of children's literature, while nearly one fourth of the syllabi (25 of 110, or 22.7%) each required six items or more. Although 51 of the 110 syllabi (46.4%) required preservice teachers to read one or more children's books, an equal number did not require any. Only 6 of the 110 syllabi (5.5%) recommended children's books as preservice readings.

Why were instructors in the field divided in this way on the matter of including children's literature in their preservice LA C&I courses? Of course the data say nothing about the rationale behind any of the decisions. On the surface one might conjecture that half of the instructors in the study did not value children's literature. This is likely untrue, but it may be true that they valued it less than other materials, the ones they did require, or they valued it less overall than other content that they felt pressure to include. Perhaps they found ways to include children's literature without making the purchase of specific items a course requirement. Professional textbooks, monographs, and journal articles can

Table 4.56

Children's/Young Adult Literature Required and Recommended

Number of children's books	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage of syllabi requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage of syllabi recommending
1 book	19	17.3	0	0
2 books	4	3.6	1	0.9
3 books	2	1.8	0	0
4 books	0	0	0	0
5 books	1	0.9	0	0
≥6 books	25	22.7	5	4.5
None	51	46.4	101	91.8
Unclear	8	7.3	3	2.7
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

be found that contain information and excerpts as examples of a variety of genres of children's literature. Students can be asked to bring books to class without making that activity a formal assignment. Instructors can discuss specific books when teaching specific instructional strategies and can bring to class examples of various genres of children's literature from their personal libraries, from the university library, or from public libraries.

Certainly some instructors may not have valued literature as much as they valued programmed basal reading materials; materials-based or basal programmed instruction was a topic that was listed in 21 of the 110 syllabi (19.1%; see Appendix H). However, the inclusion of a topic indicates by no means whatsoever that the topic was advocated.

Finally, children's literature may not have been directly required in some C&I courses because the preservice teachers might well have encountered the topic elsewhere, such as in elective courses specifically concerning children's literature, or perhaps drama, courses possibly subscribed to by a large percentage of those enrolled in the C&I course.

The probing in the Main Coding Instrument of the children's literature included in course syllabi was specifically intended to indicate the national flavour of required or recommended materials. It did not yield much information beyond the fact, perhaps, that most of the materials included were American. Although at least 219 children's books were accounted for in the present study (at least 188 required and at least 31 recommended, with possible duplication across syllabi), mentioned in at least 51 syllabi, in only 12 of the 110 syllabi (10.9%) was there any indication of books that were Canadian: six of those syllabi referred to Canadian books in general, two referred explicitly to books about regions of Canada, and four referred to books about specific provinces. While preservice teacher education courses in LA C&I can provide an excellent opportunity for instructors to introduce Canadian children's literature to prospective teachers, as evidenced by course syllabi, the opportunity was largely missed, although there may have been opportunities offered to preservice teachers beyond those evidenced in the textual materials requirements or recommendations in the syllabi of these courses.

*Other print materials and non-print materials.* Because so much of language arts concerns the making of meaning from materials, I was curious about what types of materials might appear in an LA C&I course beyond the standard materials of textbooks,

Table 4.57

Other Print Materials Required and Recommended

Number of other print items	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage of syllabi requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage of syllabi recommending
1 item	23	20.9	5	4.5
2 items	2	1.8	0	0
3 items	1	0.9	0	0
≥6 items	1	0.9	2	1.8
None	74	67.3	98	89.1
Unclear	9	8.2	5	4.5
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

monographs, journal articles, curriculum documents, and children’s literature selections. Table 4.57 indicates that, in fact, relatively few other materials were involved. Less than one fourth of the syllabi (27 of 110, or 24.5%) required other print materials and a mere 7 syllabi among 110 (6.4%) recommended any. Most syllabi requiring other print materials required only one type of item.

Among the types of items included in the syllabi considered as other print items were: (a) policy reference materials (program handbooks, university mission statements, school board guidelines); (b) in-class materials (notes from class discussions, children’s writing samples, peers’ journals, peers’ personal writing, peers’ assignment drafts, and Internet printouts); (c) materials for teacher candidates’ own learning of language arts (popular adult nonfiction, popular magazines, newspapers, adult novels, adult plays,

Table 4.58

## Non-Print Materials Required and Recommended

Number of non-print items	Number of syllabi requiring	Percentage of syllabi requiring	Number of syllabi recommending	Percentage of syllabi recommending
1 item	6	5.5	1	0.9
2 items	3	2.7	1	0.9
3 items	6	5.5	0	0
≥6 items	4	3.6	2	1.8
None	87	79.1	102	92.7
Unclear	4	3.6	4	3.6
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

dictionaries, grammar handbooks); and (d) instructional materials (basal program materials, non-fiction informational books, children's magazines, alphabet books, counting books, puzzle books, and a metacognitive reading strategies inventory).

The number of non-print materials mentioned explicitly by instructors in their syllabi was, like the number of other print materials, relatively low, as shown in Table 4.58. In only 19 of the 110 syllabi (17.3%) were non-print materials clearly required, and in only 4 syllabi (3.6%) were they clearly recommended. Among the types of items included in the syllabi considered as non-print items were: (a) electronic-related materials (videos, largely for use in class, videocassettes, audiocassettes, records, slides, computer software programs, CD ROM versions of children's books, and web sites); and (b) non-electronic, non-print materials (concrete mathematics manipulative materials, puppets, games, personal photos, collages, sketches, maps, graphic organizers, and posters).

### *Popularity of Specific Materials*

To present the most popular textual materials in the present study, I created a series of figures. The first of these figures, Figure 4.7, presents the top materials in the entire set of English syllabi in the study. These were the textual materials to which reference was made most often in the entire set of English syllabi, whether the materials were required or recommended. The entire set of syllabi included multiple instructors and/or multiple sections taught by an individual instructor. Figure 4.7, therefore, could be considered to represent those materials actually used most often across the country. Items listed as popular items are any that were mentioned in 10 or more syllabi of the 94 English syllabi in the study. Figure 4.8 presents the parallel information for all 16 of the French syllabi in the study. For the French items, those listed as popular items are any that were mentioned in five or more syllabi.

I considered that another important measure of popularity, and possibly a more important measure, was the selection by individual instructors of specific materials. This measure would eliminate the possible perception of the popularity of a particular item being “overinflated” in importance because one instructor taught more sections than another. A measure by individual instructors would thus represent the decision making of instructors across the nation. Figure 4.9 presents the most popular items as selected by individual instructors, that is, using only one syllabus per course section per instructor instead of any multiple syllabi. Both English and French materials are included and the designation as a popular (“top”) item refers to any item mentioned in five or more syllabi.

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Figure 4.7

Top Textual Materials from All English Syllabi (Items Represented in 10 or More Syllabi) in Order of Use, Preceded by Total Number of Syllabi Represented

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- 25—*The Ontario curriculum, grades 1-8: Language.* (1997).
- 20—*Language Arts* (journal)
- 19—*The Reading Teacher* (journal)
- 19—Booth, D., Swartz, L., & Zola, M. (1994). *Classroom voices: Language-based learning in the elementary school.* Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace.
- 13—Graves, D. H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- 13—*The Ontario curriculum, The kindergarten program.* (1998).
- 12—Barton, B. (1986). *Tell me another: Storytelling.* Markham, ON: Pembroke.
- 12—Edwards, J. B., & Malicky, G. (1996). *Constructing meaning: Integrating elementary language arts.* Toronto, ON: Nelson Canada.
- 12—Scott, R. (1993). *Spelling: Sharing the secrets.* Toronto, ON: Gage.
- 11—Depre, H. & Iversen, S. (1994). *Early literacy in the classroom: A new standard for young readers.* Richmond Hill, ON: Scholastic.
- 11—Gentry, J. R., & Gillet, J. W. (1993). *Teaching kids to spell.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- 11—Tompkins, G. E. (1994). *Teaching writing: Balancing process and product* (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- 10—Calkins, L. M. (1994). *The art of teaching writing* (New ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- 10—Crowhurst, M. (1994). *Language and learning across the curriculum.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
- 10—*The Ontario curriculum, grades 1-8: Mathematics.* (1997).
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Figure 4.8

Top Textual Materials from All French Syllabi (Items Represented in Five or More Syllabi) in Order of Use, Preceded by Total Number of Syllabi Represented

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8–Saint-Laurent, L., Giasson, J., Simard, C., Dionne, J. J., & Royer, E. (1995).

*Programme d'intervention auprès des élèves à risque : une nouvelle option éducative.* Montréal, QC: Éd. Gaëtan Morin.

7–Chartrand, S.-G. (Éd.). (1996). *Pour un nouvel enseignement de la grammaire : propositions didactiques* (2e éd.). Montréal, QC: Logiques.

5–Tardif, J. (1992). *Pour un enseignement stratégique : l'apport de la psychologie cognitive.* Montréal, QC: Logiques.

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***National Origins of Popular Materials***

Of the 17 different textual materials that appeared in the single syllabi of at least five individual instructors (as listed in Figure 4.9), 11 (64.7%) were Canadian. The four curriculum documents, two from Ontario, one from Quebec, and one from British Columbia, were Canadian by definition. The two journals (included in syllabi as materials in their own right and not because they were the source of any particular article or articles) were more popular than many textbooks and monographs. Both of the journals were (and continue to be) American: *Language Arts* is the main elementary-level professional journal of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and *The Reading Teacher* is the main elementary professional journal of the International Reading Association (IRA). Although both are published in the United States, they contain articles from authors of many countries, including Canada.

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Figure 4.9

Top Textual Materials from Single Syllabi of Individual Instructors both English and French (Items Represented in Five or More Syllabi) in Order of Use, Preceded by Total Number of Syllabi Represented

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- 12—*The Ontario curriculum, grades 1-8: Language.* (1997).
- 10—*Language Arts* (journal)
- 10—*The Reading Teacher* (journal)
- 9—Booth, D., Swartz, L., & Zola, M. (1994). *Classroom voices: Language-based learning in the elementary school.* Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace.
- 9—Edwards, J. B., & Malicky, G. (1996). *Constructing meaning: Integrating elementary language arts.* Toronto, ON: Nelson Canada.
- 8—*Programme d'études : Le français – enseignement primaire.* (1994). [Quebec]
- 7—Saint-Laurent, L., Giasson, J., Simard, C., Dionne, J. J., & Royer, E. (1995). *Programme d'intervention auprès des élèves à risque : une nouvelle option éducative.* Montréal, QC: Éd. Gaëtan Morin.
- 7—Tompkins, G. E. (1998). *Language arts: Content and teaching strategies* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- 6—Chartrand, S.-G. (Éd.). (1996). *Pour un nouvel enseignement de la grammaire : propositions didactiques* (2e éd.). Montréal, QC: Logiques.
- 6—Crowhurst, M. (1994). *Language and learning across the curriculum.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
- 6—Graves, D. H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- 5—Chapman, M. (1997). *Weaving webs of meaning: Writing in the elementary school.* Toronto, ON: ITP/Nelson.
- 5—Cooper, J. D. (1997). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- 5—Scott, R. (1993). *Spelling: Sharing the secrets.* Toronto, ON: Gage.
- 5—*The Ontario curriculum, grades 1-8: Mathematics.* (1997).
- 5—*Provincial curriculum guide (Integrated resource package for language arts) Prescribed learning outcomes (PLOS).* (1996). [British Columbia]
- 5—Tompkins, G. E. (1994). *Teaching writing: Balancing process and product* (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.
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Of the 11 most popular books, 7 (63.6%) were written by Canadian<sup>6</sup> authors and published in Canada, and 4 (36.4%) were written by American authors and published in the United States. For a detailed description and discussion of the popular journals, textbooks, and monographs in the present study, please see Appendix I.

I initially considered distinguishing overall the number of Canadian books mentioned in the present study versus the number of American books. This turned out to be an impossible task because the location of a book's publication is not a sign of the citizenship of its author. Canadians sometimes publish with American publishing houses. Furthermore, many of the books written by Americans are currently published simultaneously by both Canadian and American publishers, under reciprocity agreements, as is the case with Irwin in Canada and Heinemann in the United States. A glance at the "Books" sections of the "Textual Materials Codes" section of Appendix F suggests strongly that the majority of the English-language materials related to the present study was undoubtedly American. This listing is not exhaustive, so official statistics cannot be drawn; unofficially, American materials accounted for about 60 percent of English-language materials, while about 35 percent were Canadian and about 5 percent were from Great Britain, Australia, or New Zealand. In terms of French-language materials, about 60 percent came from Canada (i.e., Quebec) and about 40 percent came from francophone Europe, especially Paris.

The most popular materials in the present study tell a somewhat different story. A

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<sup>6</sup> The actual citizenship of the authors is an assumption on my part; while I am sure it is accurate to a large extent, the actual citizenship of each individual is not known to me.

few of the most popular English materials were American, certainly, but the most popular choices made by instructors teaching in English in the present study were Canadian materials. In parallel, none of the most popular French materials were European; all were products of Quebec. Although it is easy to assume that the field of curriculum and instruction in French was long dominated by European materials, largely from France, though with materials, too, from other countries, notably Belgium and Switzerland, such was not the case for the most popular materials. While some of the materials advocated for French preservice teachers continue to be of European origin (see the “Textual Material Codes” section of Appendix F), none of these were the more popular materials. The Canadian French market appears to be well served by made-in-Quebec materials. Some instructional material for children is produced in other francophone regions, but based on the evidence of the present study, C&I material for teacher education lately has largely been produced only in Quebec. Although the English and French materials in the present study differed somewhat in direction or degree of emphasis, there was, for the most part, quite a bit of similarity in the nature of the teaching advocated. All in all, it is easy to see that at the time of the present study, Canada was coming into its own in terms of writing and publishing in the area of language arts curriculum and instruction, and that Canadian instructors of LA C&I were supporting Canadian products.

### ***Summary of Readings Information***

As expected, the majority of readings (96.4%) included in course syllabi were in the language of the courses themselves, although a couple of French syllabi included a small number of readings in English. Most courses (90.9%) included some required

textual material; on average each course requiring materials included 5.5 items, though requirements ranged from one item to 10 or more items. Just over half of the courses (52.8%) included some recommended material, ranging from one specific item to over 100.

Nearly two fifths of the courses (38.2%) required materials that were categorized as language arts C&I survey textbooks, and 14 syllabi (12.7%) recommended them. Some textbooks in mathematics C&I were also required in some courses. Educational monographs were much more popular as requirements than were survey textbooks. Nearly two thirds of the syllabi (65.5%) required monographs. More monographs than textbooks were also recommended. Nearly one fifth of the syllabi (19.1%) required a package of readings put together by the instructor. Over two fifths of the syllabi (41.8%) required the reading of journal articles and just over a third (33.6%) recommended them.

Almost three quarters of the syllabi (74.5%) required government documents but only 12.7 percent of the syllabi recommended them. In just under half of the syllabi (46.4%) children's literature was required, very few syllabi (5.5%) recommended any, and only about one tenth of the syllabi (10.9%) named children's literature that was Canadian. Although almost one quarter of the syllabi (24.5%) required other types of print material, very few such materials were required per syllabus. Even fewer syllabi (17.3%) required non-print materials. Within the entire set of syllabi, two syllabi (1.8%) did not stipulate any textual material at all, whereas over one quarter of the syllabi (26.4%) required four or more different types of textual material.

From within the entire set of textual materials mentioned in the entire set of data,

a small number of popular materials (included in many syllabi) were identified. Considering all the popular materials identified in the analysis, these were comprised of: 16 books, two journals, and five curriculum documents, including both French and English materials. While many individual books in the present study overall were American, or in the case of French materials, European, the very most popular materials tended to be Canadian. Nine of the 16 textbooks and monographs (56.3%) were Canadian, both of the journals (100.0%) were American, and all five of the government documents (100.0%) were Canadian, for a total of 14 of 23 (60.9%) Canadian items in all.

### ***Results Concerning In-Class Instructional Activities***

The section of the Main Coding Instrument that dealt with “Classroom Activities in University Teaching” (see Appendix E, pages 15-17) was created and applied in an attempt to answer the following question: What *instructional activities* are included in the entire set of activities that comprise regular class time? What activities are used most and least frequently? My first task in this section was to probe the locus of courses. After presenting data concerning locus of courses, I put forward the data concerning frequency of specific activities undertaken in preservice LA C&I classrooms.

#### ***Locus of Courses***

Data for locus of instruction are presented in Table 4.59. While one can assume that most courses would literally occur in classrooms within their respective faculties, I had heard of circumstances where courses essentially were conducted in the field, in the

sense that teacher candidates or interns would work for the entire academic year in a school placement and that the course instructor, perhaps with a group of collaborating teachers, would run the course at the school site. Some courses, I suspected, might be *Faculty-based* or *Field-based*, or *Both* (a combination), depending on the physical site(s) of the courses. Additionally, Table 4.59 concerns the presence or absence of instruction. While I expected most courses would be standard courses with regular, planned classroom instruction, be it direct, indirect, or a combination, I also provided in the Main Coding Instrument for the possibility that courses were provided without regular, direct,

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Table 4.59

Locus and Presence of Instruction

Locus and presence of instruction	Number of syllabi	Percentage of syllabi
Faculty-based/Instruction	106	96.4
Field-based/Instruction	0	0
Both/Instruction	3	2.7
Faculty-based/No instruction	0	0
Field-based/No instruction	0	0
Both/No instruction	0	0
Unclear	1	0.9
Total	110	100.0

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whole-class instruction. These would be courses in which each preservice teacher would learn whatever he or she wanted to know by consulting the course instructor(s), collaborating teacher(s), other colleagues, the children, or various textual materials

whenever the current placement context called for the need for further learning. In such a *No instruction* context, regularly-scheduled classes would not be held.

In fact, the data indicated that courses in which there were no formally-scheduled classes did not exist in the sample syllabi. The vast majority, 106 of 110 syllabi (96.4%), were the standard variety of courses that took place in university classrooms and involved scheduled meetings rather than consultation. Only 3 syllabi of 110 (2.7%) represented an alternative model that was in part field-based and in part faculty-based, but which did involve scheduled classes. While many instructors might greatly value field-based learning for their preservice students—learning in real schools with real children—others might value it less so, particularly for the parts of courses involving initial exposure to ideas or exposure to theoretical notions such as the rationale for a specific practice or the history of changes in instructional paradigms. I am sure that what was expected by most instructors in the present study was that the learning of preservice teachers would ultimately be applied, first in a practicum and later in employed teaching; however, that application was likely seen by many instructors as sufficient, an essential adjunct to a traditional course but not a replacement for it.

I expect that any instructor who very much prefers a field-based model or would at least like to experiment with one, especially someone who has actively considered such a model to the point of investigating its possibilities, very quickly encounters the gamut of factors impeding it. A full class of 35 preservice teachers could likely not be accommodated at one school. An instructor would thus most likely have to be involved with several schools, all the more logistically impossible for instructors teaching multiple

course sections. The instructor's transportation costs and time commitments would also have to be considered. Having all the preservice teachers come as a group to different schools would depend on the goodwill of the schools and their physical ability to accommodate them. Such a model could also involve transportation problems for the preservice teachers. If all their other courses were held in the traditional manner at the university, transportation problems would be exacerbated, as they would be required to be in at least two different places many days of the week. Furthermore, the field-based school or schools would best be located relatively close to the university. The entire formation of such "professional development" or "laboratory" schools would thereby fuel political controversies; for example, if universities are supported with provincial funds, why should only those few schools around the university benefit by having professional schools?

One institution within the present study (involving the three instructors in the *both* category) had embarked upon a venture which shared some attributes of a professional or laboratory school model, and although neither the logistics of it nor its success were directly relevant to the present study, it seems obvious that such an undertaking could not have occurred without a great deal of effort at planning and implementation, nor without a great deal of commitment and collaboration and risk-taking on the part of a great many individuals—instructors, school personnel, university administrators, school division administrators, children's parents, preservice teachers, and perhaps even the school children themselves. Weighing all the factors, it thereby seems obvious that the majority of courses represent a standard model.

### *Frequency of In-Class Activities*

To investigate what was intended to occur in the preservice classrooms, I listed class activities that, as evidenced in the syllabi, could be coded as *Yes* for activities definitely included, *No* for activities definitely not included, or *Unclear* if the nature of the activity or its inclusion were not clear. A fourth category allowed for a code to be entered for syllabi in which the listing of specific class activities was *Not applicable*.

Just as it makes sense that most courses were set up in a standard fashion, so too does it make sense that the courses themselves contained relatively standard activities. As shown at the top of Table 4.60, Classroom Activities in University Teaching (the large, two-page table, in which activities are ranked by frequency), the most common in-class activity in the C&I courses was *Lecture*: Over three quarters of the syllabi in the present study, 85 of the 110 (77.3%), were coded as including lecturing. *Presentations to peers* was the second most common activity, in evidence in 71 of the 110 syllabi (64.5%). *Demonstration* and *Discussion (general)* were each in evidence in 70 of the 110 syllabi (63.6%), *Group activities (unspecified)* were in evidence in 63 of the 110 syllabi (57.3%) and *Discussion (specific)* was close behind, in 62 of the 110 syllabi (56.4%). These six activities were the only ones each evidenced in more than half of the syllabi.

Some of the cross-tabulations I conducted show the high degree of overlap within pairs of these activities. Within the top two activities, lecture and presentation to peers, nearly half the syllabi in the study (52 of 110, or 47.3%) were involved, as shown in Table 4.61. When lecture was crossed with demonstration, again nearly half the syllabi in

Table 4.60

## Classroom Activities in University Teaching (Ranked Order Listing)

Activity	Yes	%	No	%	Unclear	%	N/A	%	Total	%
Lecture	85	77.3	15	13.6	7	6.4	3	2.7	110	100.0
Presentation to peers	71	64.5	35	31.8	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Demonstration (as observer)	70	63.6	35	31.8	2	1.8	3	2.7	110	100.0
Discussion (general)	70	63.6	37	33.6	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Group activities (unspecified)	63	57.3	40	36.4	4	3.6	3	2.7	110	100.0
Discussion (specific)	62	56.4	42	38.2	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Writing exam/test/ quiz	53	48.2	50	45.5	4	3.6	3	2.7	110	100.0
Government documents	49	44.5	44	40.0	14	12.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Group projects (graded)	47	42.7	58	52.7	2	1.8	3	2.7	110	100.0
Individual project/ assignment	45	40.9	57	51.8	5	4.5	3	2.7	110	100.0
Explanation of assignments	41	37.3	56	50.9	10	9.1	3	2.7	110	100.0
Review-of syllabus/policies	29	26.4	73	66.4	5	4.5	3	2.7	110	100.0
Materials examin/ analysis	28	25.5	77	70.0	2	1.8	3	2.7	110	100.0
Video/film/TV presentation	25	22.7	82	74.5	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Writing response/ quickwrite	22	20.0	84	76.4	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Literature sharing (children's/YA)	21	19.1	77	70.0	9	8.2	3	2.7	110	100.0
Computer activity	20	18.2	82	74.5	5	4.5	3	2.7	110	100.0
Conferencing (indiv/group)	18	16.4	84	76.4	5	4.5	3	2.7	110	100.0

continued . . .

Notetaking	18	16.4	89	80.9	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Problem solving	13	11.8	92	83.6	2	1.8	3	2.7	110	100.0
Assessing children's work	12	10.9	94	85.5	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Journal/logbook	12	10.9	92	83.6	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Portfolio develop't/ sharing	12	10.9	92	83.6	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Seminar	12	10.9	95	86.4	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Guest speaker	11	10.0	94	85.5	2	1.8	3	2.7	110	100.0
Writer's workshop	11	10.0	90	81.8	6	5.5	3	2.7	110	100.0
Reading (article/text)	9	8.2	95	86.4	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Making teaching materials	8	7.3	99	90.0	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Roleplaying	8	7.3	96	87.3	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Survey completion	8	7.3	96	87.3	3	2.7	3	2.7	110	100.0
Site visit	7	6.4	100	90.9	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Review—for tests/ exams	6	5.5	100	90.9	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Case study	5	4.5	101	91.8	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Laboratory (with children)	3	2.7	104	94.5	0	0	3	2.7	110	100.0
Library visit (research)	3	2.7	100	90.9	4	3.6	3	2.7	110	100.0
Electronic newsgroup	2	1.8	100	90.9	5	4.5	3	2.7	110	100.0
Review—of tests/ exams	1	0.9	105	95.5	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0
Reader's workshop	0	0	106	96.4	1	0.9	3	2.7	110	100.0

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Table 4.61

Cross-Tabulation of Lecture by Presentation to Peers

Presence of lecture	Presentation yes	Presentation no	Presentation unclear	N/A	Total
Lecture yes	52	32	0	0	84
Lecture no	15	0	0	0	15
Lecture unclear	4	2	1	0	7
N/A	0	0	0	4	4
Total	71	34	1	4	110

the study (50 of 110, or 45.5%) were involved, as shown in Table 4.62. Similarly, the activities of demonstration and general discussion were shared in 58 of the 110 syllabi (52.7%) and the activities of general discussion and specific discussion were shared in 57 of the 110 syllabi (51.8%). None of these data are particularly surprising, as the activities are common and expected, and it is likely that most of them occurred in every course even if they were unarticulated in the syllabi.

It is not surprising either that 63 of the 110 syllabi (57.3%) overtly included mention of group activities and that an almost equal number, 62 of the 110 syllabi (56.4%) overtly included mention of individual projects or assignments as part of what would occur during class time. One fact that I did find surprising, however, was the relatively high number of courses in which teacher candidates were expected to write examinations or tests: 53 of the 110 syllabi (48.2%) included this activity. This is surprising to me because, according to my general understanding, formal testing is often discouraged if not assailed within elementary language arts education, considered as

something to be decreased or eliminated in favour of “authentic” assessment. Authentic assessment is a type of assessment “in which teachers examine both the processes that students use . . . , and the artifacts or products that students produce . . . .” (Tompkins et

Table 4.62

Cross-Tabulation of Lecture by Demonstration

Presence of lecture	Demonstration yes	Demonstration no	Demonstration unclear	N/A	Total
Lecture yes	50	32	2	0	84
Lecture no	15	0	0	0	15
Lecture unclear	5	2	0	0	7
N/A	0	0	0	4	4
Total	70	34	2	4	110

al., 1999, p. 70). Such assessment is usually discussed in opposition to testing, also known as “traditional assessment [that] reflects outdated views of how students learn . . . and offers an incomplete assessment of . . . abilities” (p. 70).

One might think that C&I instructors, in an attempt to model desired practices, would themselves eliminate examinations and tests. While an immediate tendency might be to accuse almost half of the instructors of enacting a “do as I say, not as I do” code of behaviour, such an accusation would be wrong indeed. It is possible that several among this subset of instructors do value authentic forms of assessment for children, and do, in fact, advocate them, but do not value them for adult learners. These data suggest that almost half of the instructors valued the functions that test and examinations served for

their adult learners in a specific discipline. Elementary schools should not always be paralleled to professional faculties in university, in part because many aspects of children's learning differ from adults' learning and, in part, because the purposes of the institutions are different, with the most important differences (relevant to this discussion) being that the university program is self-selected and that assessment can lead to a formal university degree, usually to provincial certification, and to a grade point average (GPA) entailed later in admission to graduate programs and in the receipt of financial aid and awards within graduate programs. Then again, some instructors might very much value authentic assessments for all levels but find them impossible to implement given the constraints of university class sizes, deadlines for grade submissions, the objectivity implicitly required to counteract students' grade appeals, and general workload expectations including research and service.

Perhaps the greatest truth evidenced in these data is that, ultimately, like teachers in elementary schools, instructors of curriculum and instruction courses are, by and large, a conservative lot. As Table 4.63 clearly shows, 49 of the 110 syllabi (44.5%) involved students in lectures and the writing of exams (or tests or quizzes), both hallmarks of traditional university instruction. While other activities were also in evidence, lectures and exams appear to have formed the foundation of many LA C&I classrooms.

I was also surprised at what I considered to be the high incidence of instructors devoting class time to the deliberate consideration of government documents. Forty-nine of the 110 syllabi (44.5%) gave evidence of this. In retrospect, I should not have been

Table 4.63

Cross-Tabulation of the Activities of Listening to Lectures and Writing Exams, Tests, or Quizzes

Presence of writing exams	Lecture yes	Lecture no	Lecture unclear	N/A	Total
Writing exams yes	49	2	1	0	52
Writing exams no	32	13	5	0	50
Writing exam unclear	3	0	1	0	4
N/A	0	0	0	4	4
Total	84	15	7	4	110

surprised: Virtually every province in Canada was facing some or all new curriculum documents in language arts, documents that were large and complex, and, in fact, much larger and much more complex than any that had preceded them, and clearly, many instructors were interested in teaching actively about the government curriculum in a course called “curriculum and instruction” and/or felt obligated to do so. Perhaps my surprise stemmed from my own initial distaste not for the curriculum documents of my province themselves, but for the obligation I felt concerning them and for the intrusiveness I felt they effected on my already overburdened curriculum. Language arts is a vast domain and I felt my students would not benefit by the addition of complex concepts, complex terminology, complex numbering systems (for specific outcomes), and the strong possibility of the codifying of strategies that in my view (and in the view of most of its writers, I expect) were intended as possibilities, not mandates.

I should not have been surprised, of course, as I myself was among those

purposefully using a hands-on approach to curricular documents. In hindsight, perhaps I should have been more surprised at the fact that over half the instructors were *not* using these government documents in their classes. Whatever an instructor's personal views might be, there is an expectation that part of the job of teaching a C&I course is helping preservice teachers negotiate the vast territory of curriculum expected by the province in which most of them intend to work. Furthermore, unlike older curricular documents, the current documents are comprehensive, including philosophical orientations, instructional approaches, descriptions for the instruction of strategies, listings of support materials, and guidelines for assessment and evaluation, all integral elements of C&I.

Another area I found interesting was the examination of data relating to the involvement in instruction of people besides one main instructor. As discussed earlier (see Table 4.26), nearly one third of the syllabi represented courses in which team teaching was involved, with two (or, rarely, three) professors or a professor and a graduate assistant presenting the course on a shared basis. Of course, even a class with only one instructor and the students also has, as part of its overall conversation, the voices of whoever is present via their printed materials, such as the voices of textbook authors; nonetheless, relatively few other voices were directly involved, based on evidence from Table 4.63 showing class activities. Less than one quarter of the syllabi (25 of 110, or 22.7%) involved visual media (video, film, or TV presentations). If other instructors did include such media, perhaps their uses were spontaneous, not articulated in the syllabi. I suppose that involving others might also have been assumed, taken for granted, in the way that one would not mention the use of an overhead projector or whiteboard in one's

course syllabus; however, because most media events need to be planned ahead of time, both in terms of acquiring the materials and, often, the means by which to show them, it would not have been unreasonable to have included them in a syllabus.

Similar to the showing of visual media, nearly as much computer activity was in evidence (in 20 of 110 syllabi, 18.2%), although the exact nature of the computer use was unclear. These C&I classes were far from being multimedia classrooms: Only eight syllabi (7.3%) showed evidence of visual presentations and computer activities combined. Only 11 syllabi (10.0%) showed advanced plans to include a guest speaker. Only seven syllabi (6.4%) included any type of site visit. Going to a library or working with children (laboratory) were each included in only three syllabi (2.7%). Largely, then, the instructor(s), students, and printed text materials constituted the bulk of the source of ideas available in the LA C&I classrooms.

I conducted cross-tabulations of some of the activities with the modes of the courses. I did this because I felt certain activities would be specific to a course in a specific mode; however, I was largely mistaken in this notion. For example, of the 11 syllabi evidencing writer's workshop as an activity, four were in courses specifically focussed on C&I in writing, but the remainder were in courses offering C&I in all six modes (four syllabi) or in the four traditional modes (two syllabi). One was from a syllabus in which mode was unclear.

I expected that activities involving the sharing of children's literature would occur most in courses devoted exclusively to C&I in reading. As it turned out, as revealed in Table 4.64, children's literature was shared—by the instructor or preservice teachers—in

only one of the 11 syllabi from courses devoted to reading. This fact suggests that there may be a dichotomy in instructional practice in C&I that separates the act of children's learning to read from the actual books which they read, or which conceptualizes the material children use when learning to read as something other than literature. Of course, it might also suggest that aspects of children's literature are instead learned about in the more comprehensive courses in language arts such as those involving all six modes or all

Table 4.64

Cross-Tabulation of Mode of Course and the Activity of Sharing Children's Literature

Modes	Literature sharing yes	Literature sharing no	Literature sharing unclear	N/A	Total
All 6 modes	10	30	0	1	41
4 mode only	4	10	1	1	16
Oral modes (S&L)	0	2	0	0	2
Print modes (R&W)	2	1	0	0	3
Reading	1	7	3	0	11
Writing	2	4	0	0	6
Other	2	19	0	1	22
Unclear	0	3	5	1	9
Total	21	76	9	4	110

four modes. Both these phenomenon are illustrated in Table 4.64 which shows that 14 of the 21 syllabi evidencing the sharing of literature (66.7%) come from those comprehensive courses. Taken together, these findings may well say more about the

complex and differing structure of courses within programs at various institutions than they say about the importance of children's literature in the LA C&I courses of preservice teachers.

There were 22 other activities coded as supplementary, but half of those were present in only one syllabus each, and none of the 22 activities was represented in more than one tenth of the syllabi. For this reason they are not included here.

### ***Summary of In-Class Activities Information***

As evidenced in the syllabi, most of the courses in the present study (96.4%) occurred in regularly-scheduled classes in university classrooms. Standard instructional activities predominated; among these were, in order of highest frequency: lecturing, class presentations, demonstrations, general discussions, unspecified group activities and specific discussions. These activities were evidenced in over half of the syllabi analyzed in the study, with many of these activities evidenced together in several syllabi.

In almost half of the syllabi (48.2%), preservice teachers were required to write exams or tests. Less prevalent but still worthy of mention were the in-class use of government documents (44.5%), visual media presentations (22.7%), and the in-class writing of responses (20.0%). Several other activities, relatively standard in nature, were also included in the syllabi, but most of these were not highly in evidence at all.

### ***Inter-Rater Reliability of In-Class Activities Section***

As with the other sections of the present study, inter-rater reliability was determined as the percentage of agreement between the researcher and the second coder. The reliability for class activities was 67 percent. As with the reliability in the

orientations section discussed previously, there was a large discrepancy between English results and French results: For the English syllabi, the reliability for the class activities section was only 61 percent, but for the French it was 74 percent.

### ***Results Concerning Topics***

This section of the present study concerning topics responded to a research question that seemed straightforward initially: What *topics* are covered in these courses? Across the sample, which topics are allocated the most and the least attention? To unearth the answers, several topics were listed in “Section 8 Topics in University Teaching” of the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E, pages 18-23), and during the coding, each topic within a syllabus was marked as being overtly “Listed,” “Mentioned” to any degree, or “Not Mentioned” at all. A choice was also available for syllabi that were structured in a way that listed no topics. The entire set of topics and their presence or absence is listed in Appendix H. Within this chapter itself, tables of the most popular topics are included and discussed, in terms of both overt listings and cumulative listings. Specific attention is then given to modes as topics and types of assessment as topics.

#### ***Top Topics–Listed***

Table 4.65 shows the 23 most popular topics coded as being key topics in the course syllabi. These topics were overtly listed as main areas of study in at least one fourth of the syllabi in the present study. In the column labelled *List* (for *Listed*) the number of syllabi in which the topic was listed is presented, followed by the percentage of the entire set of 110 syllabi. Although these listed topics are main data of concern in

this table, the number and percentage of items labelled *Ment* (for *Mentioned*), *Not* (for *Not Mentioned*), and *N/A* (for *Not Applicable*) are also provided to indicate the context in which the first column may be read. In addition, a *Cum* (for *Cumulative*) column was created to show the total number of syllabi in which a topic was listed or mentioned. The final column shows the total number of syllabi analyzed for each topic. For consistency and completeness of information, sets of data are presented this way in all data tables concerning topics.

From Table 4.65 one can see that the very most frequent topic in the entire set of syllabi was *Assessment*, highly evident in 92 of 110 syllabi (83.6%). The positioning of this topic makes sense for many reasons. First of all, it is general. An instructor may wish to have students learn about the concept of assessment in the teaching of language arts, the various types of assessment, their differing purposes, as well as issues related to assessment. The relationship of assessment to evaluation would certainly be a reasonable inclusion here, as would the roles of assessment to inform instruction. All of these subtopics, enough to constitute an entire course, might well be included in a syllabus simply with one word, "assessment." Although there is no guarantee that all of these subtopics were intended in every syllabus listing assessment, it is likely that most instructors listing it intended to cover many of them.

Another reason why assessment would be likely to rank high is that assessments of various types occur very frequently in classrooms. Assessing occurs from the moment a teacher encounters a student each day until that student leaves. Sometimes the assessment is planned and specifically focussed. At other times it is general, perhaps not

even recorded, maybe not even consciously acknowledged. Daily processes and products are assessed as well as products created as culminations of learning. Classroom teachers or other educational professionals administer teacher-made tests, published standards tests and/or published standardized tests. They develop rubrics and checklists to assess products and processes. Children's achievements are shared in many ways, from formal report cards showing a percentage grade for language arts (or even for some of its components) to showcase portfolios which students present to their families to show their learning across a term in all facets of their school experience. This wide spectrum of content may be intended in C&I courses under the single word "assessment" on a syllabus. The absence of assessment as a topic in 8 of the 110 syllabi (7.3%) could have resulted from situations where assessment was covered as an integrated aspect of modes, lessons, strategies, or some other instructional organizer, rather than as a topic unto itself. Alternately, in some institutions assessment may have been covered in a required course (such as a course exclusively on assessment, or in an educational psychology course, a general curriculum course, or a principles of teaching course) wherein the intention was that C&I courses would provide opportunity for application of the learning but not duplication of content. The presence of specific types of assessments as discrete topics within the present study will be discussed later.

The second most popular single topic listed in the course syllabi was *Approaches to instruction*, evident in over three fifths of the syllabi. Again this makes sense as the topic label is very general and could cue a vast number of ways to approach the teaching of language arts: formal versus informal approaches; explicit, direct instruction versus

Table 4.65

## Top Topics Listed as Main Areas of Study, Ordered by Frequency

Topic	List	% Ment	% Cum	% Not	% N/A	% Total	%
Assessment (General)	92	83.6	6 5.5 98 89.1	8	7.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Approaches to instruction	67	60.9	9 8.2 76 69.1	30	27.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Curriculum (Govt's)	56	50.9	35 31.8 91 82.7	15	13.6	4 3.6	110 100.0
Reading (General)	54	49.1	5 4.5 59 53.6	47	42.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Instructional planning	52	47.3	36 32.7 88 80.0	18	16.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Literature-Child. liter.	52	47.3	15 13.6 67 60.9	39	35.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Writing process(es)/ Models	52	47.3	2 1.8 54 49.1	52	47.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Speaking (General)	51	46.4	2 1.8 53 48.2	53	48.2	4 3.6	110 100.0
Writing (General)	51	46.4	12 10.9 63 57.3	43	39.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Theory & research	48	43.6	22 20.0 70 63.6	36	32.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Emergent literacy	44	40.0	1 0.9 45 40.9	61	55.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Listening (General)	40	36.4	3 2.7 43 39.1	63	57.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Spelling (General)	39	35.5	10 9.1 49 44.5	57	51.8	4 3.6	110 100.0
Strategies-based instruction	38	34.5	8 7.3 46 41.8	60	54.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Grammar	36	32.7	8 7.3 44 40.0	62	56.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Integration of subject domains	35	31.8	9 8.2 44 40.0	62	56.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Resources/Materials for instruction	34	30.9	19 17.3 53 48.2	53	48.2	4 3.6	110 100.0
Lesson planning	33	30.0	19 17.3 52 47.3	54	49.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Differentiated instruction-Ability	31	28.2	21 19.1 52 47.3	54	49.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Reading process(es)/ Models	31	28.2	8 7.3 39 35.5	66	60.0	4 3.6	110 100.0
Integration of language modes	30	27.3	9 8.2 39 35.5	67	60.9	4 3.6	110 100.0
Language across curr (e.g.WAC)	30	27.3	11 10.0 41 37.3	65	59.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Response to literature	30	27.3	15 13.6 45 40.9	61	55.5	4 3.6	110 100.0

informal, experiential learning; individual instruction versus cooperative and collaborative learning; skills-based, language-based, literature-based, or strategies-based instruction, or some combination thereof; and teacher-centred, student-centred, or materials-centred instruction. *Approaches to instruction* is a far-reaching term, synonymous with the “instruction” part of “curriculum and instruction.” It is not surprising to see it listed near the top. Where it was not listed, perhaps instructors intended to focus on only one major approach or they considered the topic implicit to the entire course and not an entity in and of itself. As with other topics not listed, perhaps some instructors knew that instruction approaches were covered in one or more of the course readings and therefore did not duplicate it by listing it in a syllabus.

It is not surprising either to see *Curriculum (government’s)* as the third highest ranked topic. In evidence in over half the syllabi, *curriculum* accounted for the other half of the “curriculum and instruction” label. Because the present study was restricted to the analysis of C&I courses, the presence of these labels as key topics makes sense. Another reason why the ranking of curriculum makes sense is that every province has formal, provincial curriculum guides and aspects of these guides are usually mandatory within the respective provinces. Where but in a C&I course would prospective teachers be introduced to these documents, their provenance, their purpose and structure and function? Again, as with the hands-on use of government documents in the “Activities” section of the coding instrument discussed earlier, what may be more surprising here is that only half of the syllabi analyzed (56 of 110, or 50.9 percent) made explicit reference to curriculum as a topic.

Topic number four was the language mode of *Reading*. Again, this general label takes in many facets of reading. Any aspect of the learning or teaching of this mode could be included under this label. For many people, instructors, preservice teachers and parents among them, the teaching of reading has been one of the cornerstones of language arts instruction since the days of the three Rs. Reading was listed as a key topic on 54 of the 110 syllabi (49.1%). *Writing*, the other cornerstone of language arts since the earliest days of elementary teaching, was also highly represented in the present study: 51 of the 110 syllabi (46.4%) listed writing in a general way and 52 of the 110 syllabi (47.3%) listed *writing process(es)/models*. A cross-tabulation revealed that 38 of the syllabi (34.5%) included both of these topics and 65 of the syllabi (59.1%) included one or the other. Another key topic, as popular as writing, was *Speaking*. The popularity of the modes listed above is understandable, as the four major modes have for decades constituted the subject of language arts in elementary schools. The surprise might be that *Listening* was not accorded such a high rating. Where any of the top modes was not listed in a syllabus, perhaps one might speculate that the institution offered an entire course in that mode, whether as a mandatory course or as a highly subscribed elective; however, this seems highly unlikely for the mode of listening. Modes as topics will be discussed further later in this chapter.

*Children's literature* was another of the top topics. This can be explained by the popularity of literature-based instruction in which the teaching of all modes can be carried out using literary selections as materials. Tompkins et al. (1999) advocated the "literature focus unit" as a fundamental instructional approach in which ". . . a unit is organized

around a featured selection or several related books” (p. 59). Their other principal approaches, “theme cycles” (p. 61) and “readers and writers workshop” (p. 62) also involve children’s literature. Children can use literature for reading, but also as models for their writing. They can listen to literature read aloud to them and listen to discussions about literature. They can speak informally about literature and make formal presentations about literature, whether a short story that the entire class is studying, a poem being shared by a small group, or a self-selected novel that has been read by an individual. Viewing and representing often focus on literature as well, as children watch different media presentations of pieces of literature, commonly films or plays, or create their own response and extension projects related to a literary selection or an aspect of it, such as a story map of the general literary elements, a pen-and-ink sketch of a main character, a map or diorama of a setting, a graph of a plot, a storyboard of an alternate plot, an abstract painting of the mood of the piece, and so on. It is easy to see why the topic of children’s literature would rank high in elementary C&I.

*Instructional planning*, a top topic equal in popularity to children’s literature, is also, like several of the others, very general. It could subsume everything from the task-analysis of a 10-minute activity to the cross-grade interdisciplinary organization of an entire year of teaching. Within that span might be the planning of activities, lessons, projects, topical units, thematic units, and integrated units for learners at various levels of ability. Everything from small-scale routines such as morning message, daily silent reading, and current events, to the large-scale organizational frameworks such as literature circles or writer’s workshop might appear when preservice teachers learn about

instructional planning. Possibly such subtopics were treated in courses even when that major heading was not included in the syllabi.

The tenth most popular topic listed in the present study was *Theory and research* which was overtly included as an important area of study in 48 of the 110 syllabi (43.6%). Theory and research accounted for the implicit aspects of the courses called “curriculum and instruction” courses. These “methods” courses were loosely translated to mean what to teach and how to teach it. The theory and research aspect adds the dimensions regarding conceptual frameworks and rationale, an investigation into explanations of why one should teach such aspects as are suggested, and why one should consider the instructional methods advocated. I contend that most instructors would be dissatisfied with their preservice teachers merely regurgitating someone else’s idea verbatim or citing research findings including years and statistics. The goal, rather, is to have preservice teachers understand that the content and teaching strategies selected by teachers are selected for reasons, reasons that teachers can articulate, each in relation to their own contexts, and that, once such an understanding is established, that the preservice teachers themselves learn to support their own intentions based on solid reasoning and evidence from experience, both others’ and their own.

The following topics discussed are those in the bottom half of the table, those which were in the top twenty, but not in the top 10. The topic that ranked eleventh in popularity was *Emergent literacy*. This topic primarily concerns how very young children learn to make meaning using print, both as beginning readers and beginning writers, and of instructional practices to support this learning. In a way, as a top topic, emergent

literacy was an echoing of the modes of reading and writing, in the upper half of the table.

The next topic is *Listening*, the final mode of the traditional set of four. Though represented in only 36.4 percent of the syllabi, listening was, nonetheless, ranked very high relative to the entire set of topics possible in a C&I course. *Spelling* was also surprisingly high; I consider this surprising because learning to spell might have been subsumed in emergent literacy or in other possible spelling topics included on the coding instrument, *Spelling–invented/developmental* or *Spelling–lexical/morphological*, the latter especially relevant to older children as well. Eleven syllabi of 110 (10.0%) included both the general spelling topic and the invented spelling topic, but only one syllabus (0.9%) explicitly listed lexical/morphological spelling. I was also somewhat surprised to see spelling so popular as a separate topic because throughout my own teaching career at the preservice level spelling has been advocated as a tool of writing, yet based on the syllabi, it appeared virtually as a mode of language unto itself. *Grammar*, another area I have conceptualized as a tool for writing, was ranked almost as high as traditional language modes. What one cannot know from the ranking, of course, is the stance instructors took as they taught students about these topics. In the case of grammar, for example, perhaps it was rated so highly in the rankings so that instead of perpetuating traditional grammar instruction (and/or teaching preservice teachers basic grammar principles), instructors made sure to spend time helping preservice teachers recognize the rightful role of grammar and its instruction as established via research (see, for example, Hillocks, 1986).

### ***Top Topics–Cumulative***

In Table 4.66 the results of the analyses of topic frequencies are listed in order of

their cumulative totals. In this analysis, incidents of a topic being listed and incidents of it being only mentioned were collapsed to provide a more complete and more accurate depiction of the importance of the topic. Even though a topic might not have been overtly listed too often, it might have been mentioned by just about every instructor. This, however, did not appear to be the case most of the time. Usually, top topics listed were also top topics, in very much the same order, when viewed cumulatively. The topic of assessment continued to predominate, with 98 of the 110 syllabi (89.1%) including the topic. Government curricular materials, which were high in the overt listings, were slightly higher in the cumulative listing, representing 91 of the syllabi, or 82.7 percent, a much more reassuring figure than the 50.9 percent overtly listed. Overall, the top ranked topics in the cumulative ranking continued, for the most part, to be the same topics ranked at the top of the overtly listed ranking in Table 4.65. The most notable difference appeared to be a higher rank for the topic of theory and research, cumulatively evidenced in 70 of the 110 syllabi (63.6%).

***Top topics by region.*** Table 4.67 shows the regional distribution of the top topics in the entire set of syllabi. This table shows that in spite of a few high ranges that hovered around 50 percent (54.2%, 45.2%), the totals and percentages were nonetheless not attributable to only one region. As one might well expect, the topics were represented quite fairly across the three regions. The top five topics have ranges of less than twenty percent, as do resources/materials for instruction, spelling, and emergent literacy. The cases in which ranges were highest were the ones in which representation from the eastern provinces was lowest. The fact that only one, two or three syllabi were involved

Table 4.66

Top Topics Listed as Main Areas of Study in at Least Two Fifths of Syllabi, Ordered by Frequency of Cumulative Totals (Shaded)

Topic	List	% Ment	% Cum	% Not	%N/A	% Total	%
Assessment (General)	92	83.6	6 5.5 98 89.1	8	7.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Curriculum (Govt's)	56	50.9	35 31.8 91 82.7	15	13.6	4 3.6	110 100.0
Instructional planning	52	47.3	36 32.7 88 80.0	18	16.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Approaches to instruction	67	60.9	9 8.2 76 69.1	30	27.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Theory & research	48	43.6	22 20.0 70 63.6	36	32.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Literature—Child. liter.	52	47.3	15 13.6 67 60.9	39	35.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Writing (General)	51	46.4	12 10.9 63 57.3	43	39.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Reading (General)	54	49.1	5 4.5 59 53.6	47	42.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Writing process(es)/ Models	52	47.3	2 1.8 54 49.1	52	47.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Resources/Materials for instruction	34	30.9	19 17.3 53 48.2	53	48.2	4 3.6	110 100.0
Speaking (General)	51	46.4	2 1.8 53 48.2	53	48.2	4 3.6	110 100.0
Differentiated instruction—Ability	31	28.2	21 19.1 52 47.3	54	49.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Lesson planning	33	30.0	19 17.3 52 47.3	54	49.1	4 3.6	110 100.0
Spelling (General)	39	35.5	10 9.1 49 44.5	57	51.8	4 3.6	110 100.0
Reflection/Reflexivity	18	16.4	30 27.3 48 43.6	58	52.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Strategies-based instruction	38	34.5	8 7.3 46 41.8	60	54.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Emergent literacy	44	40.0	1 0.9 45 40.9	61	55.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Response to literature	30	27.3	15 13.6 45 40.9	61	55.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Grammar	36	32.7	8 7.3 44 40.0	62	56.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Integration of subject domains	35	31.8	9 8.2 44 40.0	62	56.4	4 3.6	110 100.0

from the east seems to be a larger factor than the topics per se. Overall, in only two instances was the eastern representation the highest (theory and research at 75.0% and reflection/reflexivity at 58.3%). Similarly, in only four instances was the western representation the highest (assessment, 92.9%; approaches to instruction, 69.0%; lesson planning, 66.7%; and response to literature, 45.2%). The central provinces predominated in 14 topic areas. It seems that the number of syllabi from each region played a larger role than topic in these findings.

In the six instances where topic was not weighted toward the central region, it is likely that the variable at play was the number of syllabi contributed by particular instructors. If an individual instructor contributed syllabi for two identical sections of a course, his or her topic choices would count as two instances (refer to Table 4.67). In a sense, one instructor would receive two votes for the same topic, because the study was structured so that each section of a course was the unit of analysis. Thus each section was treated as a separate course in the analysis, regardless of instructor. These findings were therefore skewed with one instructor in the west being responsible for 11.9 percent of that region's syllabi, one in the central region being responsible for 12.5 percent of that region's syllabi, and one in the east being responsible for 33.3 percent of that region's syllabi. I did not feel that it would have been worthwhile to redo the analyses using only one syllabus per instructor, but doing so may have made a difference, particularly in eliminating the most extreme ranges.

Table 4.67

Top Topics in Regional Syllabi, Ordered by Frequency of Cumulative Totals (Shaded),  
with Degrees of Difference (West  $n = 42$ ; Central  $n = 56$ ; East  $n = 12$ )

Topic	Cum West	% of West	Cum Cent	% of Cent	Cum East	% of East	Cum total	% of total	Range
Assessment (General)	39	92.9	50	89.3	9	75.0	98	89.1	17.9
Curriculum (Govt's)	35	83.3	47	83.9	9	75.0	91	82.7	8.9
Instructional planning	31	73.8	47	83.9	10	83.3	88	80.0	10.1
Approaches to instruction	29	69.0	40	58.3	7	58.3	76	69.1	13.1
Theory & research	24	57.1	37	66.1	9	75.0	70	63.6	17.9
Literature—Child. liter.	25	59.5	37	66.1	5	41.6	67	60.9	24.5
Writing (General)	17	40.5	39	69.6	7	58.3	63	57.3	29.1
Reading (General)	18	42.9	36	64.3	5	41.6	59	53.6	22.8
Writing process(es)/ Models	21	50.0	31	55.4	2	16.7	54	49.1	38.3
Resources/Materials for instruction	17	40.5	31	55.4	5	41.6	53	48.2	14.9
Speaking (General)	17	40.5	35	62.5	1	8.3	53	48.2	54.2
Differentiated instruction—Ability	26	61.9	24	42.9	2	16.7	52	47.3	45.2
Lesson planning	28	66.7	21	37.5	3	25.0	52	47.3	41.7
Spelling (General)	17	40.5	27	48.2	5	41.6	49	44.5	7.7
Reflection/Reflexivity	16	38.1	25	44.6	7	58.3	48	43.6	20.2
Strategies-based instruction	11	26.2	30	53.6	5	41.6	46	41.8	27.4
Emergent literacy	16	38.1	25	44.6	4	33.3	45	40.9	11.3
Response to literature	19	45.2	24	42.9	2	16.7	45	40.9	28.5
Grammar	10	23.8	30	53.6	4	33.3	44	40.0	29.8
Integration of subject domains	10	23.8	31	55.4	3	25.0	44	40.0	31.6

*Top topics by language.* As was the case for regional distinctions, the language distinctions concerning topic, as suggested by the data presented in Table 4.68, were also quite variable, with less of a visible pattern. Within the topics of instructional planning and approaches to instruction, the French syllabi were much more cohesive, with a cumulative percentage of 100.0 percent (albeit in each case the cumulative total was made up of both listed and mentioned items). The cohesiveness of the French syllabi was not consistent across five topics. It is unclear why some topics would be so cohesive and others would not, though it may be that for some reason(s) the French instructors in this study shared similar values about planning and approaches to instruction, topics that are similar in intent. Although French instructors valued teaching about these two topics, they may well have advocated views different from one another concerning both instructional planning and instructional approaches.

These two topics show instances where the cumulative French totals were greater than those found in the English syllabi. Two other topics in which French choices surpassed English, lesson planning and strategies-based instruction, are similar in intent to the first two, being organizational and logistical. Most of the French syllabi in the study (13 of 16, or 81.3%) were from Quebec, so perhaps the emphasis on these topics reflects provincial government mandates or intents. The French syllabi were also higher in the topic of resources/materials for instruction. This focus makes sense as French materials are considerably less accessible: English instructors have materials (e.g., books,

Table 4.68

Top Topics in English and French Syllabi, Ordered by Frequency of Cumulative Totals (Shaded Column), with Degrees of Difference

Topic	Cum English	% of English	Cum French	% of French	Cum total	% of total (Eng %-Fr %)	Range
Assessment (General)	85	90.4	13	81.3	98	89.1	9.1
Curriculum (Govt's)	80	85.1	11	68.8	91	82.7	16.3
Instructional planning	72	76.6	16	100.0	88	80.0	-23.4
Approaches to instruction	60	63.8	16	100.0	76	69.1	-36.2
Theory & research	62	66.0	8	50.0	70	63.6	16.0
Literature-Child. liter.	62	66.0	5	31.3	67	60.9	34.7
Writing (General)	55	58.5	8	50.0	63	57.3	8.5
Reading (General)	56	59.6	3	18.8	59	53.6	40.8
Writing process(es)/ Models	48	51.1	6	37.5	54	49.1	13.6
Resources/Materials for instruction	41	43.6	12	75.0	53	48.2	-31.4
Speaking (General)	44	46.8	9	56.3	53	48.2	-9.5
Differentiated instruction-Ability	44	46.8	8	50.0	52	47.3	3.2
Lesson planning	42	44.7	10	62.5	52	47.3	-17.8
Spelling (General)	43	45.7	6	37.5	49	44.5	8.2
Reflection/Reflexivity	42	44.8	6	37.5	48	43.6	7.3
Strategies-based instruction	36	38.3	10	62.5	46	41.8	-24.2
Emergent literacy	42	44.7	3	18.8	45	40.9	25.9
Response to literature	45	47.9	0	0	45	40.9	47.9
Grammar	35	37.2	9	56.3	44	40.0	-19.1
Integration of subject domains	35	37.2	6	37.5	44	40.0	-0.3

audiovisual materials, instructional aids, professional books) available from across the entire country, and also from the United States as well as Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, whereas the sources for French materials, though potentially as vast geographically, are much smaller in terms of material output.

A focus on grammar as a key topic in the French syllabi is not surprising. This topic encompasses many areas of linguistic study (e.g., noun forms, verb forms, verb tenses, agreement of nouns and verbs, and agreement of nouns and adjectives, sentence types, clauses), all of which may contribute to students' improvement in language mastery. Sometimes, too, included under the heading of grammar is instruction which might otherwise be called spelling or vocabulary study.

A focus on speaking, a topic in which the French syllabi evidenced almost 10 percent more than the English syllabi (9.5%), is also understandable in that speaking is foundational for other language work, especially writing, and is also one key way for children to demonstrate many aspects of their knowledge and understanding about language. Speaking, as a foundation, is an important element for all teachers, but all the more so for those teaching in francophone contexts. Schools serve as one of the very few institutions actively advocating standards for language use, and where a group is striving to preserve its language, maintaining standards becomes increasingly critical.

It is unclear why the French syllabi evidenced no topic that referred to response to literature. I suggest it may be because the foci in elementary French instruction are oral language and the correctness of written language, also related to the need to preserve language standards. Where literature is studied, the value may more often be

conceptualized as inherently in the text and not in idiosyncratic interpretations made by the reader. In relation to this, children's literature also ranked fairly low as a topic in the French syllabi (31.3%). Perhaps literature for the very youngest students serves more as a model of correct language usage and vocabulary than it does as a vehicle for genuine personal response. Such focus and purpose, however, may be equally true in anglophone contexts.

### *Listing of Modes as Topics*

The modes of language, the major ways in which human beings share meaning (through listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing), are important organizers for teachers of language arts. Teachers can attend to instruction in each mode of language to help ensure that they are engaging children in a comprehensive language arts programs. Because of the importance of modes, one would expect that explicit attention to them would also be a feature of preservice methods courses in language arts. Table 4.69 includes the six major modes of language as its major divisions. Each mode is listed at the top of its section indicating how, in its most generic fashion, it was represented in the analyzed syllabi. Under each general mode are other topics which can be related specifically to that mode.

In terms of topics listed, the six general modes were represented as: listening, 36.4 percent; speaking, 46.4 percent; reading, 49.1 percent; writing, 46.4 percent; *Viewing*, 10.0 percent; and *Representing*, 8.2 percent. Clearly, the first four modes were the most widely represented in the syllabi. This makes sense as these are the traditional modes, designated since the 1930s (Walker, 1990) to comprise the school subject of language arts

Table 4.69

## Topics Related to the Six Modes of Language, Grouped by Modes

Topic	List	% Ment	% Cum	% Not	%N/A	% Total	%
Listening (General)	40	36.4	3 2.7 43 39.1	63 57.3	4 3.6	110	100.0
Listening–Aesthetic	0	0	0 0 0 0	106 96.4	4 3.6	110	100.0
Listening–Efferent	1	0.9	1 0.9 2 1.8	104 94.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reading aloud (by teacher)	10	9.1	12 10.9 22 20.0	84 76.4	4 3.6	110	100.0
Critical listening	0	0	0 0 0 0	106 96.4	4 3.6	110	100.0
Speaking (General)	51	46.4	2 1.8 53 48.2	53 48.2	4 3.6	110	100.0
Speaking–Formal presentations	6	5.5	6 5.5 12 10.9	94 85.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Speaking–Informal/ Oral lang. for lng.	13	11.8	11 10.0 24 21.8	82 74.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reading (General)	54	49.1	5 4.5 59 53.6	47 42.7	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reading process(es)/ Models	31	28.2	8 7.3 39 35.5	66 60.0	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reading aloud (by children)	1	0.9	8 7.3 9 8.2	97 88.2	4 3.6	110	100.0
Phonics instruction	12	10.9	16 14.5 28 25.5	78 70.9	4 3.6	110	100.0
Comprehension/ Comp. strategies	20	18.2	7 6.4 27 24.5	79 71.8	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reader's workshop/ Independent reading	17	15.5	2 1.8 19 17.3	87 79.1	4 3.6	110	100.0
Guided reading *	16	14.5	0 0 16 14.5	90 81.8	4 3.6	110	100.0
Content area reading	18	16.4	1 0.9 19 17.3	87 79.1	4 3.6	110	100.0
Informational/ Expository reading	3	2.7	2 1.8 5 4.5	101 91.8	4 3.6	110	100.0
Critical reading	7	6.4	2 1.8 9 8.2	97 88.2	4 3.6	110	100.0

continued . . .

Table 4.69

Topics Related to the Six Modes of Language, Grouped by Modes

Topic	List	% Ment	% Cum	% Not	% N/A	% Total	%
Writing (General)	51	46.4	12 10.9 63 57.3	43 39.1	4 3.6	110	100.0
Writing process(es)/ Models	52	47.3	2 1.8 54 49.1	52 47.3	4 3.6	110	100.0
Writer's workshop	22	20.0	4 3.6 26 23.6	80 72.7	4 3.6	110	100.0
Interactive writing	1	0.9	6 5.5 7 6.4	99 90.0	4 3.6	110	100.0
Stages of writing dev't/ Continuum	26	23.6	9 8.2 35 31.8	71 64.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Writing to learn	9	8.2	5 4.5 14 12.7	92 83.6	4 3.6	110	100.0
Viewing (General)	11	10.0	12 10.9 23 20.9	83 75.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Visual literacy	3	2.7	6 5.5 9 8.2	97 88.2	4 3.6	110	100.0
Critical viewing	5	4.5	3 2.7 8 7.3	98 89.1	4 3.6	110	100.0
Media literacy	6	5.5	9 8.2 15 13.6	91 82.7	4 3.6	110	100.0
Representing (General)	9	8.2	6 5.5 15 13.6	91 82.7	4 3.6	110	100.0
Drama/Dramatic activity	25	22.7	6 5.5 31 28.2	75 68.2	4 3.6	110	100.0
Puppetry/ Roleplaying *	15	13.6	0 0 15 15.5	91 82.7	4 3.6	110	100.0
Language modes/ Strands	11	10.0	13 11.8 24 21.8	82 74.5	4 3.6	110	100.0
Language processes/ Processing	13	11.8	7 6.4 20 18.2	86 78.2	4 3.6	110	100.0
Integration of language modes	30	27.3	9 8.2 39 35.5	67 60.9	4 3.6	110	100.0
Reciprocity of modes	26	23.6	10 9.1 36 32.7	70 63.6	4 3.6	110	100.0
Critical literacy	0	0	3 2.7 3 2.7	103 93.6	4 3.6	110	100.0

\* Marked items indicate items that were not listed as part of the Main Coding Instrument but which were written in as "Other" and which were present in 10 or more of the syllabi.

and long established as key elements of LA C&I courses.

Findings show that listening is distinctly lower than the other three traditional modes. This is likely attributable in part to the fact that, within the present study, mandatory C&I courses existed in the individual modes of reading and writing but not in listening. Cross-tabulations revealed that the topic of listening was neither listed nor mentioned in courses designated as reading or writing C&I courses. Reading and writing are more popular across our culture as school subjects because they involve skills that are much less readily learned in the home. They usually require focussed instruction, whereas speaking and listening are considered (rightly or wrongly) to be easier to learn, initially requiring only models and opportunities for practice. Also, reading and writing create products, outputs that are more readily measurable than the results of speaking or listening, especially when reading is measured via paper and pencil tests. There are courses in oracy, the combination of speaking and listening, but these tend to focus on language development, in part because spoken language is output (and thus more easily measurable) and also because spoken language is the foundation for reading and writing. Listening, too, could be considered as output if measured by paper and pencil methods, as it sometimes is, and success at listening, too, is fundamental to success in reading and writing. Often, too, listening is taken for granted by parents, children, and teachers. When listening comprehension is lacking, it may be mistaken for a hearing problem or inattentiveness. In short, listening is a mode that is sometimes misunderstood and therefore neglected as an area of overt instruction, both in the home and in school. It appears that, by extension, listening is also a mode that is somewhat neglected in

preservice LA C&I courses.

More striking yet is the apparent lack of attention paid to the modes of viewing and representing; however, this apparent lack makes sense in that these modes were not yet firmly established at the time of the present study. Table 4.33, discussed earlier, indicated that of the 57 syllabi representing comprehensive LA C&I courses, 41 of the 110 syllabi (37.3 %) addressed all six modes, while 16 (14.5%) addressed the older conceptualization of LA as comprised of only four modes. To balance the low rankings for general viewing and representing, I also considered *Visual literacy*, *Critical viewing*, and *Media literacy* as part of the viewing mode. With this tactic, the mode of viewing appeared as overtly listed in 25 out of 110 syllabi (22.7%). Similarly, when *Drama/ Dramatic activity* and *Puppetry/Roleplaying* were considered as major facets of representing, the representation mode was overtly listed in 49 out of 110 syllabi (44.5%). The sum of the cumulative figures indicated therefore that viewing was featured in 55 out of 110 syllabi (50.0%) and representing was featured in 61 (55.5%). To examine the data in this way is somewhat contrived, as the topical categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive; nonetheless, I think that there is some validity in looking at the data this way because, unlike the term *drama*, which was highly established, the new terminology within the modes was not previously highly established. Some specific topics intended as aspects of these two modes are nonetheless clearly evident.

My attempt to break listening into its various types, *Aesthetic listening*, *Efferent listening*, and *Critical listening*, did not yield useful results. If, however, as in the modes of viewing and representing, one were to consider a teacher's *Reading aloud* to children

as a key aspect of listening instruction, then listening as a mode of language could be accounted for in 50 of the 110 syllabi (45.5%). This is a tempting interpretation, which appears to bring listening to a topical level almost equivalent to the other modes. The abundance of subtopics listed under both sections of reading and writing (e.g., *Comprehension, Content area reading, Guided reading, Phonics instruction, Writer's workshop, Stages of writing development*) place these two modes far in front of the other four, leaving no doubt that, within the present study, the modes of reading and writing dominated the realm of language arts.

Finally, within the entire area of topics related to modes of instruction, I was especially interested in all the items labelled as "critical." Within any mode, the addition of the word "critical" suggests higher-order thinking, functioning in a mode in a way that requires the making of complex judgements such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation based on some criteria given to or already held by the person engaged in the mode. *Critical listening* was not in evidence at all. *Critical reading* was listed as a topic in 7 of the 110 syllabi (6.4%). *Critical viewing* was listed in 5 of the 110 syllabi (4.5%). To some degree this matches the rankings of the modes themselves. *Critical literacy* was not overtly listed.

If one considers any relationship between critical thinking and any other facets of language arts labelled or conceptualized as "critical," then the low rankings clearly match expectations. Pedagogical orientation toward the *critical/social* was evidenced in only 2 of 110 syllabi, or 1.8 percent (see Table 4.40), and even when the *tie* scores for syllabi were added in, this addition accounted for only 2.5 of 110 syllabi, or 2.3 percent (see

Table 4.41). Similarly, a postmodern orientation, which assumes a critical stance, was evidenced in only 6 of the 110 syllabi (5.5%; see Table 4.39). *Inquiry approach* as a topic was evidenced in 17 of the 110 syllabi (15.5%; see Appendix H) but it seemed to me that inquiry was considered not as a stance by which one approaches learning and/or teaching, not as critical inquiry, but as an activity, akin to children's conducting prescribed library research more than to their application of self-regulated investigations (or choices of established investigative strategies) for exploring topics of genuine personal interest.

It is possible, as with other topics, that "critical" variations of topics were subsumed under general topic labels and not presented as discrete topics. Higher-order thinking may well have been discussed in several other areas, among them response to literature, writer's workshop, and strategies-based instruction; however, topics related to critical thinking were not included overtly in the syllabi very often.

#### ***Listing of Types of Assessment as Topics***

Assessment is integral to teaching and I surely expected it to be a major topic, as it was. I was curious to see if anything beyond a general attention to assessment was discernible, and I thus included many subcategories of assessment in the Main Coding Instrument. These categories and their incidence in the syllabi are available in Table 4.70.

*Observation* was the most often named type of assessment, appearing in 21 of the 110 syllabi (19.1%). I thought perhaps that observation would characterize early years programs in particular; however, the term appeared quite evenly across all levels of instruction. I consider the incidence of observation to signal clearly that assessment in language arts, at least in terms of instructors' attentions, is moving beyond testing.

Testing itself was not a topic on the MCI, nor did it appear on syllabi except insofar as *Standards tests* and *Standardized testing* were concerned. Each of these was mentioned, but the incidence was low. *Miscue analysis* was a popular topic across all modes of courses, not only the reading courses. Also popular across all modes were *Reporting* and

Table 4.70

Topics Concerning Assessment, Ordered by Frequency of Topics Listed

Topic	List	% Ment	% Cum	% Not	% N/A	% Total	%
Assessment (General)	92	83.6	6 5.5	98 89.1	8 7.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Observation	21	19.1	12 10.9	33 30.0	73 66.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Miscue analysis	12	10.9	9 8.2	21 19.1	85 77.3	4 3.6	110 100.0
Reporting	12	10.9	13 11.8	25 22.7	81 73.6	4 3.6	110 100.0
Student portfolios	11	10.0	7 6.4	18 16.4	88 80.0	4 3.6	110 100.0
Record keeping	8	7.3	3 2.7	11 10.0	95 86.4	4 3.6	110 100.0
Error analysis	8	7.3	9 8.2	17 15.5	89 80.9	4 3.6	110 100.0
Rubric writing	5	4.5	1 0.9	6 5.5	100 90.9	4 3.6	110 100.0
Conferencing	4	3.6	11 10.0	15 13.6	91 82.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Holistic scoring/ GIM*	4	3.6	0 0	4 3.6	102 92.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Authentic/Perf-based	3	2.7	4 3.6	7 6.4	99 90.0	4 3.6	110 100.0
Diagnostic	3	2.7	9 8.2	12 10.9	94 85.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Informal reading inventory	3	2.7	1 0.9	4 3.6	102 92.7	4 3.6	110 100.0
Standardized test	3	2.7	0 0	3 2.7	103 93.6	4 3.6	110 100.0
Analytic trait scoring	2	1.8	0 0	2 1.8	104 94.5	4 3.6	110 100.0
Standards testing	2	1.8	1 0.9	3 2.7	103 93.6	4 3.6	110 100.0
Self-assessment	1	0.9	8 7.3	9 8.2	97 88.2	4 3.6	110 100.0

\* General Impression Marking

*Student portfolios.* The other types of assessment listed in Table 4.70 received little attention. I expect this is not because of their lack of importance, but because they are too specific to be included in a syllabus in a course not specifically geared toward assessment.

### ***Summary of Topics Information***

Some topics were mentioned very often, but these tended to be very general topics, including those synonymous with “curriculum and instruction” itself. Many topics were mentioned very little, whether as a true reflection of their lack of importance or because they were in actuality taught under more general topic headings or embedded in programs in alternate ways. It is perhaps more the nature of writing a syllabus than the desire to include or exclude specific items that determines much of what ultimately ends up being a part of the final, written document. Some topics were certainly deemed important by instructors, whether across the field or idiosyncratically, and some were much less important.

While the instrument in this study is a rough gauge, it does not fully account for enacted possibilities. One instructor, for example, appeared formally to cover very few topics according to what was listed in the syllabus, but instead included an assignment in which pairs of students were to report to the class on a topic of their own interest. Students were responsible for planning and running a whole-class workshop and providing handouts to classmates. This assignment suggests strongly that the fifteen topics thus treated would have been looked at in depth, however, there was no notation of what those topics would have been. Key topics, such as introductory topics, are likely presented by instructors, with students taking responsibility for and having choices of

topics such as specific instructional strategies, topics that are too numerous to be covered by any one course but which could be useful to prospective teachers.

The data would surely have been different if I had been analyzing instructors' notes, or students' notebooks, or every handout distributed throughout a course, compared to a syllabus and a few supplementary materials. Different methods would possibly have yielded different topics. Nonetheless, a look at topics through the vehicle of syllabi does provide a good indication of the topics instructors in the field consider to be most important, important enough that they are purposefully documented.

The eight cumulative top topics evidenced in over half of the syllabi included: general assessment, government curriculum, instructional planning, approaches to instruction, theory and research, and children's literature, as well as the general modes of writing and reading. The cumulative presentation of topics indicated that there were 20 topics each included in at least two fifths (40%) or more of the syllabi, including the eight listed above. These findings indicate some definite commonalities across the collection of national syllabi. This set of commonalities, nonetheless, is small in comparison to the 147 possible topics listed in the Main Coding Instrument (see Appendix E, pages 18-23).

Writing and reading were topically the dominant modes, and viewing and representing were the subordinate modes. There was very little evidence of critical thinking as an explicit topic in any mode. General assessment was the very most popular topic in the present study, with related topics being: observation, miscue analysis, reporting, and student portfolios, among others. These items indicate an intention on the part of instructors to expose preservice teachers to a wide array of assessment methods.

### ***Inter-Rater Reliability of Topics Section***

The topics section was the area in which inter-rater reliability in this study was highest, with an overall agreement of 83 percent. Unlike the orientations section or the class activities section, the difference here between English and French syllabi, at 82 percent and 86 percent respectively, was considerably smaller. I suspect that the reason for the higher reliability resides in the fact that the type of coding required in the topics section was much more straightforward. A topic was present or it was not. However, I did attempt a distinction between whether or not a topic was fully *listed* or merely *mentioned*. Had I collapsed these two choices and instead compared “yes” versus “no” for presence of the topics, I strongly expect the reliability would have been quite a bit higher, but I did not analyze the reliability results in this manner.

### ***Results Concerning Assessment***

It is a common expectation that, regardless of the instructional contexts, instructors evaluate students. They base their evaluative judgments on many aspects of students’ performance. In preservice teacher education it is a common expectation that evaluation will be based on a variety of measures. It is also expected that the nature of the assessments and their relative weightings toward final evaluation will be stated in the syllabus. The following discussion responds to the research question concerning assessment posed at the beginning of the study: What *assessment activities* are used by instructors? Across the sample, with what frequency are the various assessment activities used and to what degree are they represented as portions of students’ final grades?

Although those were the main concerns, I also asked: To what degree do the assignments provide for *student choice*? By what *criteria* are assignments graded?

Assessment and evaluation are always important to students whether in elementary, secondary, or tertiary education. In preservice teacher education, assessment concerns become all the more critical because instructors serve as models. By their actions they are not only gauging the degree of students' understandings, they are also demonstrating forms of assessment that are acceptable (or, if the instructor is a model of poor practice, perhaps, no longer acceptable) in light of current theory and research. An activity was considered an assignment if it was intended to be graded.

In this part of the chapter I first discuss specific assessment activities and their weightings. This is followed by a discussion of assessment criteria that instructors claimed would be used to gauge the merit of students' work. Last is a discussion of some other aspects of assessment and the inter-rater reliability of the assessment section of the Main Coding Instrument.

### ***Assessment Activities***

Table 4.71 provides a listing of the assignments contained in course syllabi, along with their weightings. The most popular type of assignment was *Presentation*, at the top of the table, which was present in 67 of the 110 syllabi (60.9%). (This total was derived by adding the data across the first six columns.) Of these 67 syllabi, 35 (52.2%, or 31.8% of the entire set of 110 syllabi) described presentations to be worth somewhere between one and 20 percent of the course grade, while only 2 (3.0%, or 1.8% of the entire set of 110 syllabi) described them as being worth about half the total grade, somewhere between

41 and 60 percent. In a category called *Some* 6 syllabi (9.0%, or 5.5% of the entire set of 110 syllabi) were included; within these syllabi some part of the final grade definitely required that students engaged in presentations, but the exact grade they would receive was not stated clearly. A similar classification, labelled as *Ass%Unc*, meant, in essence, that the assignment percentage was unclear, that although the activity was required, the exact grade students would receive was not stated clearly. This latter category, although like the category *some*, was intended for situations in which the activity was part of a larger one, though the weighting of the particular part was unclear.

For presentation as an assignment, 6 syllabi of the 67 (9.0%, or 5.5% of the 110 syllabi) evidenced *some* and 24 syllabi of 67 (35.8%, or 21.8% of 110) evidenced *assignment percentage unclear*. For practical purposes, one might consider the two categories together: 30 syllabi (44.8% of 67, or 27.3% of 110) did not provide definitive weightings. For example, a preservice teacher might have been expected to review a children's book and to present the book to the class. The presentation was to be part of the assignment, and may have been worth a specific number of marks, albeit they were unstated, or the presentation may simply have had to be done, marks notwithstanding.

The data in Table 4.71 also show one syllabus of the 110 (0.9%) in which grading was not applicable. The course was designated as a pass/fail course with no detail provided regarding the basis on which the decision would be made. Such discussion was apparently part of the overall program and not included in the LA syllabus. (Other pass/fail situations that were listed required assignments.)

Table 4.71

Instructors' Assignments with Ranges of Weightings, Ordered by Highest Presence  
(Total) of Assignment Activity

Activity	1-20	21-40	41-60	61-100	Some Ass%	%Unc	N/A	None	Total
Presentation	35	0	2	0	6	24	1	42	110
	31.8	0	1.8	0	5.5	21.8	0.9	38.2	100.0
In-class activity	24	4	0	0	8	25	1	48	110
	21.8	3.6	0	0	7.3	22.7	0.9	43.6	100.0
Group project	23	14	9	0	9	4	1	50	110
	20.9	12.7	8.2	0	8.2	3.6	0.9	45.5	100.0
End-term exam	12	40	2	0	4	0	1	51	110
	10.9	36.4	1.8	0	3.6	0	0.9	46.4	100.0
Journal/Logbook	19	6	0	0	3	17	1	64	110
	17.3	5.5	0	0	2.7	15.5	0.9	58.2	100.0
Unit Plan	7	15	2	0	16	3	1	66	110
	6.4	13.6	1.8	0	14.5	2.7	0.9	60.0	100.0
Reflection on practice	4	6	0	0	6	23	1	70	110
	3.6	5.5	0	0	5.5	20.9	0.9	63.6	100.0
Assessment of products	10	15	0	0	4	8	1	72	110
	9.1	13.6	0	0	3.6	7.3	0.9	65.5	100.0
Lesson plan	11	5	2	1	4	14	1	72	110
	10.0	4.5	1.8	0.9	3.6	12.7	0.9	65.5	100.0
Participation (General)	25	1	0	0	4	7	1	72	110
	22.7	0.9	0	0	3.6	6.4	0.9	65.5	100.0
Test/Quiz	7	17	0	0	3	3	1	79	110
	6.4	15.5	0	0	2.7	2.7	0.9	71.8	100.0
Portfolio	6	7	0	2	11	3	1	80	110
	5.5	6.4	0	1.8	10.0	2.7	0.9	72.7	100.0
Practicum work	1	1	9	0	6	12	1	80	110
	0.9	0.9	8.2	0	5.5	10.9	0.9	72.7	100.0
Professional liter.-based	10	1	0	0	2	16	1	80	110
	9.1	0.9	0	0	1.8	14.5	0.9	72.7	100.0
Case study	11	3	1	0	6	2	1	86	110
	10.0	2.7	0.9	0	5.5	1.8	0.9	78.2	100.0
Textbook-based	5	0	0	0	0	16	1	88	110
	4.5	0	0	0	0	14.5	0.9	80.0	100.0

continued . . .

Table 4.71

Instructors' Assignments with Ranges of Weightings, Ordered by Highest Presence  
(Total) of Assignment Activity

Activity	1-20	21-40	41-60	61-100	Some Ass%	%Unc	N/A	None	Total
Personal writing	5	8	0	0	0	5	1	91	110
	4.5	7.3	0	0	0	4.5	0.9	82.7	100.0
Book response	6	4	2	0	0	2	1	95	110
Ch/YA lit*	5.5	3.6	1.8	0	0	1.8	0.9	86.4	100.0
Attendance/ Punctuality	1	0	0	0	2	10	1	96	110
	0.9	0	0	0	1.8	9.1	0.9	87.3	100.0
Term/Topic paper	5	5	1	0	2	0	1	96	110
	4.5	4.5	0.9	0	1.8	0	0.9	87.3	100.0
Literacy history	4	3	0	0	1	4	1	97	110
	3.6	2.7	0	0	0.9	3.6	0.9	88.2	100.0
Making inst materials	1	0	5	0	4	2	1	97	110
	0.9	0	4.5	0	3.6	1.8	0.9	88.2	100.0
Teaching kit	1	4	1	0	1	3	1	99	110
	0.9	3.6	0.9	0	0.9	2.7	0.9	90.0	100.0
Theme plan	3	6	0	0	1	0	1	99	110
	2.7	5.5	0	0	0.9	0	0.9	90.0	100.0
Instruct. tech. project	3	0	0	0	3	3	1	100	110
	2.7	0	0	0	2.7	2.7	0.9	90.9	100.0
Materials/Prog evaluation*	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	102	110
	0	0	0	6.4	0	0	0.9	92.7	100.0
Management plan	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	103	110
	1.8	0	0	0	1.8	1.8	0.9	93.6	100.0
Novel study unit*	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	104	110
	0	1.8	0	0	2.7	0	0.9	94.5	100.0
Stud.-initiated project	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	105	110
	0.9	0	0	0	0.9	1.8	0.9	95.5	100.0
Skills list	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	107	110
	0	0.9	0	0	0	0.9	0.9	97.3	100.0
Scope & seq chart	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	109	110
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9	99.1	100.0

\* Marked items indicate items which were not listed as part of the Main Coding Instrument but which were written in as "Other" and which were present in five or more of the syllabi.

Last, the table shows the category *None*, indicating the number of syllabi for which presentations were not required at all for a grade or any portion of a grade, with 42 of the 110 syllabi (38.2%) being so designated. All in all, this means that nearly two thirds of the courses represented by the syllabi in the present study required students to make presentations as assignments (or parts of assignments). This was the most frequent assignment activity of all, although, for the most part, the presentations for which weightings were given were not weighted highly.

The second most frequent assessment activity was labelled as *In-class activity*. This means that students do something during class for which they receive a grade. Often, these might be presentations but other activities might include evaluating materials from reading programs, reviewing samples of children's writing, or sharing personal literacy histories informally in small groups. While one might assume that assignments are completed outside of class, 61 of the 110 syllabi (55.5%) contained some type of in-class activity for marks. Like presentations (or perhaps because they in fact *were* presentations) most of these in-class assignments were weighted fairly low or the weighting was unclear. More than half of the syllabi (59 of 110, or 53.6%) also involved group projects for marks, with the value ranging considerably across the possible spectrum of weightings.

If there were any surprises in this data table, the biggest, at first glance, might be in the assessment activity labelled *End-term exam*. This activity accounted for examinations given at the end of term one, term two, or the entire course. These summative assessments were evident in 58 of the 110 syllabi (52.7%). Less comprehensive tests or quizzes were also in evidence in 30 of the 110 syllabi (27.3%).

The unexpectedness of seeing so much evidence of exams, quizzes and tests in language arts syllabi comes from my juxtaposing this data with what is known in the field concerning authentic assessment (as discussed previously in the section on classroom activities). While instructors of C&I in the present study recognized and employed a plethora of types of assignments, as evidenced by the 30 implemented types listed in Table 4.71 and the 18 additional assignments included as *Other* during coding, many assignments were idiosyncratic to instructors. (Compare the tabulations in columns one and two [1-20 and 21-40] to the low number of representations in columns three and four [41-60 and 61-100].)

The popularity of presentations as assignments was not unexpected. Presentations are valuable because they allow for multiple voices, moving the focus from the instructor to the students. Besides adding variety, students' presenting to students often allows for greater accessibility of concepts. Students investigating concepts for presentation do so with a real purpose and a real audience in mind. Thus the task is highly authentic. In-class activities allow for immediacy, letting the instructor see the students "in action" as teachers. These activities can showcase genuine abilities and knowledge, not merely those memorized short-term for tests and then forgotten. Group projects offer opportunities for students to solve problems together, to be creative as they enhance each others' learning and learn to work with others at professionally-oriented tasks. By contrast, exams and tests are usually written individually, in silence, focussing on material selected by the instructor and not the students.

What reasons would instructors have for such outdated assessment techniques?

One strong reason might be that not all instructors malign testing. Many instructors, whether traditionalists who learned the value of testing in decades past, neophytes who learned their value from older mentors, or those of any age whose personal value systems align with observable, quantifiable assessments, believe that well constructed tests can serve their purposes and can serve their students well. Tests can be valid and reliable as well as relatively efficient. While not measuring all types of ability, tests can measure some ways of learning. In the syllabi reviewed, no instructor used exams to count for more than half of a course grade. In contrast, there were only two syllabi in the entire study that showed only one type of assessment: These two syllabi used portfolio assessment to account for 100 percent of the course grade. Even in these cases, the portfolios likely consisted of a variety of items.

While examinations and tests may have their positive aspects, they also have some negative characteristics. In addition to those mentioned earlier, tests may serve as false motivators. Students may attend classes if they believe the content will be examined, and they may read textual material if they believe it will be examined. They may study hard to remain on a dean's honour list, to retain a scholarship, or to strive for a gold medal. In many ways, though, these are extrinsic goals. Furthermore, though such behaviours may be important in a greater academic milieu, they do not optimally reflect the learning needed for day-to-day teaching. There is so much content and there are so many pedagogical processes and strategies that memorizing everything is not possible. One could argue that such memorization is not necessarily desirable either, that the ability to locate information or strategic procedures and the ability to apply them would be much

more relevant to elementary classrooms. Merely counting the number of instructors who use exams as assessment devices tells nothing about the nature of those exams. While some may be poorly constructed multiple choice or matching questions based on test banks in teachers' guides of popular C&I texts, others might be open book examinations requiring location and application of key information in simulated but plausible contexts, with time constraints paralleling the very real constraints of daily classroom teaching.

While the few assessment activities just discussed were noteworthy because of the frequency of their use, others were noteworthy because of the relatively low incidence of their use. The fact that *Skills list* as an assignment was present in only 2 of the 110 syllabi (1.8%) and *Scope and sequence chart* was not present at all indicates that in language arts education the predominance of a developmental skills model of instruction is becoming a thing of the past, at least as evidenced in the present study. Traditional plans for *Novel study units*, *Management plans* and *Materials evaluation* (especially the assessment of materials from published reading programs), all of which can be traced to a teacher-directed, skills-based, or content-based approach to language arts instruction, were all in evidence quite rarely. *Instructional technology project* might be the one type of assignment whose incidence would increase in future years. Its presence in less than 10 percent of the syllabi makes sense when computer-related in-class activity was in evidence in fewer than 20 percent of the syllabi (see Table 4.60). It also makes sense in light of the curious data presented in Table 4.72 that shows that although 61 of 110 syllabi (55.5%) were written by instructors who included an e-mail address in both their

Table 4.72

## Cross-Tabulation of Instructors Including E-Mail Addresses in Surveys and in Syllabi

E-mail address in survey	E-mail in syllabus yes	E-mail in syllabus no	Total
E-mail in survey yes	61	31	92
E-mail in survey no	2	16	18
Total	63	47	110

syllabus and in their survey for the present study, 18 syllabi (16.4%) were written by instructors who included one in neither location. The use of e-mail is one small marker of the presence of computer technology in everyday life, and while readers of this sentence likely take e-mail for granted, fewer would have done so even as recently as 1998.

The low incidence of *Student-initiated project*, evident in only 4 of the 110 syllabi (3.6%) seems related to the figures in Table 4.73 which show the amount of negotiation available in the syllabi. Only 2 of the 110 syllabi (1.8%) offered a large degree of choice, and most of that was in assignments, a choice of which assignments to do and a choice of topics to cover within assignments. While nearly two thirds of the syllabi evidenced *Some* degree of choice, choice was largely related to assignment topics. Choice concerning class activities, topics to be covered in class, and the types of assignments in which students were to engage were very rarely evidenced.

All in all, it appears that LA C&I courses are highly prescriptive across Canada. I suggest that there may be two major reasons for this: One reason is that many instructors may not trust preservice teachers to know what they need to learn, and the other is that

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Table 4.73

Presence of Negotiation (Choice of Topics/Assignments/Activities)

Negotiation	Number of syllabi	Percentage
Most	2	1.8
Some	43	39.1
None	62	56.4
Unclear	3	2.7
Total	110	100.0

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helping preservice teachers come to know what they need to know is a time-consuming process, a luxury ill afforded given the usual paucity of contact hours for learning to teach what could be considered the most important school subject. Many instructors may fear that as neophyte teachers their students would want only a bag of tricks to entertain children (and thereby allay classroom management problems), but that preservice teachers would never ask to learn about theory and research, and would not even know to ask about such constructs as metacognition or scaffolding or language systems or the reciprocity of modes.

***Assessment Criteria***

Table 4.74 provides the frequency with which instructors included various criteria for the assessment of assignments. The two most common criteria involved *Subject matter knowledge* and *Pedagogical knowledge*. An example of the former within elementary language arts would be knowing the definitions of various stylistic devices such as alliteration, simile, metaphor, and hyperbole, and being able to identify or create

Table 4.74

## Instructors' Criteria for Assessment of Assignments, Ordered by Highest Presence of Criteria

Assessment criteria items	Yes	No	Unclear	N/A	Total
Subject matter knowledge	72 65.5	10 9.1	4 3.6	24 21.8	110 100.0
Pedagogical knowledge	70 63.6	10 9.1	6 5.5	24 21.8	110 100.0
Insight/Critical thinking	65 59.1	20 18.2	1 0.9	24 21.8	110 100.0
Organization–Practical/ Aesthetic	60 54.5	26 23.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Expression/Clarity	56 50.9	29 26.4	1 0.9	24 21.8	110 100.0
Creativity/Originality	46 41.8	39 35.5	1 0.9	24 21.8	110 100.0
Organization–Conceptual	46 41.8	39 35.5	1 0.9	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Writing (Composition)	42 38.2	44 40.0	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills (General)	35 31.8	46 41.8	5 4.5	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Spelling	35 31.8	47 42.7	4 3.6	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills--Grammar/Usage	33 30.0	50 45.5	3 2.7	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Mechanics	28 25.5	53 48.2	5 4.5	24 21.8	110 100.0
Problem-solving ability	16 14.5	70 63.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Presence/Accuracy of support material*	16 14.5	70 63.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Presence/Accuracy of bibliography*	9 8.2	77 70.0	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0

continued . . .

Table 4.74

## Instructors' Criteria for Assessment of Assignments, Ordered by Highest Presence of Criteria

Assessment criteria items	Yes	No	Unclear	N/A	Total
Skills–Style manual use	8 7.3	78 70.9	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Speaking	6 5.5	75 68.2	5 4.5	24 21.8	110 100.0
Risktaking*	5 4.5	81 73.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Depth/Growth in understanding*	5 4.5	81 73.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Professional work/Prof. presentation*	5 4.5	81 73.6	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Reading	3 2.7	82 74.5	1 0.9	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Penmanship	2 1.8	84 76.4	0 0	24 21.8	110 100.0
Skills–Technology	0 0	84 76.4	2 1.8	24 21.8	110 100.0

\* Marked items indicate items which were not listed as part of the Main Coding Instrument but which were written in as “Other” and which were present in five or more of the syllabi.

examples of them. An example of the latter would be knowing viable ways of teaching the general idea of stylistic devices and the specific devices themselves, knowing how to introduce the notion, how and when to expand it, how to help children apply it meaningfully in a variety of contexts, as well as knowing which specific devices were better introduced to younger or less able learners, and which were better left for older or more able learners. Subject matter knowledge, evidenced in 72 of the 110 syllabi (65.5%)

in the present study, required the preservice teachers to demonstrate knowledge about language arts. Pedagogical knowledge, evidenced in 70 of the 110 syllabi (63.6%), required them to demonstrate knowledge about teaching. Neither of these findings as top criteria is surprising in a course explicitly devoted to the teaching of language arts.

The third most common criteria item in evidence was *Insight/Critical thinking*, mentioned in 65 of the 110 syllabi (59.1%). This attribute, important for academic success, is, like the two which precede it, vital for professional success in teaching. In general, the items are listed in an order which reflects their significance in the professional arena.

There are, of course, a few exceptions worth discussing, exceptions to my expectations. One exception was *Skills–Technology*, at the very bottom of Table 4.74, not explicitly included at all. Technological expertise is essential for teachers of today and tomorrow. Because it is not in evidence here, I expect this skill would have been assessed in a separate technology course in many programs, because technology is related to all types of teaching and not just language arts. Worth noting, too, is the relatively high importance given to writing assignments in contrast to any other modes. Preservice teachers' *Skills–Speaking* were monitored directly, according to the syllabi in the present study, in only 6 of the 110 syllabi (5.5%) and preservice teachers' *Skills–Reading* were monitored in only 3 of the 110 syllabi (2.7%). Some might argue that whether teacher candidates come to teacher education directly from high school or after a first degree, they come with speaking and reading skills. While to some extent this is true, the same expectation should apply to writing. Writing predominates in part because a paper is

relatively easy to assess. Furthermore, writing is an important vehicle for precision in thinking and for providing evidence of and support for that precision. Nonetheless, in a profession where one must “think on one’s feet” and present material both orally and visually to many types of learners, more evidence of using assessment of modes beyond writing would not have been an unreasonable expectation.

Of key importance is the ability of preservice teachers to read aloud, in part because they often transmit information this way, but also because, especially at the elementary level, they are expected to model oral reading and use the daily reading of literature to motivate children’s interests. It seems these tasks would be ineffectively rendered in instances in which a teacher were not skilled at reading orally, yet such a skill was virtually ignored in LA C&I courses in the present study. Perhaps, as with other facets within the study, the in-school practicum was the site for such learning and its assessment.

If one’s orientation to teacher education were practical in nature, then the emphasis on *Presence/Accuracy of bibliography* and *Skills–Style manual use* (at 8.2% and 7.3% respectively) over and above speaking and reading (and, as well, representing, which was not included in the MCI nor evidenced at all in the syllabi) might seem misplaced. If one’s orientation were academic or technological in nature, then such imprecise criteria as *Depth/Growth in understanding* might seem weak or improper insofar as the associated evaluation would be strongly subjective. Others might argue that given the subjective nature of teaching, such judgements would be highly in order. What could make more sense than the gauging of factors relating to a preservice teacher by an

instructor with experience who is charged by the university to make such judgements? Nonetheless, very little that could be called subjective appeared overtly in the criteria stated in the syllabi. This absence may reflect concern about grounds for academic appeals more than sound instructional practices.

Table 4.74 shows clearly that 24 of the 110 syllabi (21.8%) did not provide any grading criteria whatsoever. While it is not unlikely that the majority of the instructors of these syllabi provided objective criteria on handout sheets along with assignment details, and reviewed them orally as well, it is possible that some instructors purposefully used subjective assessment methods without fixed criteria.

One interesting occurrence was a situation in a French-language teacher education program in which courses to improve French were considered mandatory in the education programs of some students. The courses were mandatory for those who did not have high abilities from their secondary school course work, but not for all. I found it interesting that in general the ability to prove language competence by means of a controlled method was highly important in several francophone institutions. My colleagues and I have also struggled with the written and oral English competence of teacher candidates in relation to their future teaching in English contexts. I recognize, however, that the francophone mandate is more critical. The identity of many Canadians as francophones and the distinctiveness of Quebec as well as francophone minority cultures are intimately linked to language, and therefore having teachers who are highly skilled models of the French language is acutely important for cultural and linguistic survival.

### *Summary of Assessment Information*

Presentations, in-class activities, group projects, and end-of-term exams were the most popular activities used for assessment by instructors. These assignments were each evidenced in over half the syllabi in the present study. Across the spectrum of expectations, most assignments accounted for only a portion of the final grade, usually 1-20 percent or 21-40 percent. In many instances assignments contained a number of facets (e.g., a case study presented in class and written about in a journal; a lesson plan supported by professional literature and followed, after implementation, by a reflection on practice), so that gauging a specific weighting of grades was not possible. In some syllabi with such assignments, point breakdowns were not provided, and in others, I expect that assignments were marked holistically. All in all, preservice teachers experienced a variety of assignments which served to assess several aspects of their learning and (whether by intent or not) to model assessment and evaluation practices.

Very little evidence in the syllabi was found to indicate either choice or negotiation of assessment activities, though choice of topics within the assessment activities was widely available. In terms of criteria for assessment, almost two thirds of the syllabi included subject matter knowledge and almost two thirds included pedagogical knowledge. The criteria item concerning insight/critical thinking was also popular. The presence of criteria related to writing was higher than that of any other mode, although some criteria, such as the most popular ones, could be applicable, too, to performance in oral presentations. Criteria tended to be objective rather than subjective.

### ***Inter-Rater Reliability of Assessment Section***

The overall results for the inter-rater reliability of the assessment section of the present study was 77 percent. Results in the assessment section for English and French were very close, with English at 78 percent and French at 76 percent. This was the only section of the reliability data in which French results were lower. The inter-rater reliability of the section concerning assessment criteria was only 61 percent, whereas the reliability of other aspects of assessment (primarily assessment activities) was 85 percent.

### **Summary of Results**

The present study covers a great deal of territory. The intent was to receive an instructor survey and course syllabus for every mandatory, preservice course in elementary curriculum and instruction in language arts. The actual rate of return was reported by means of two measures: The initial rate of return from department heads of qualifying institutions was 86.7 percent, and the subsequent rate of return from instructors was 42.0 percent for expected syllabi and 46.1 percent for expected surveys. Results for demographic information suggest that in spite of a relatively low rate of return, the instructors and the syllabi in the study represent the nation's demographics quite well in terms of gender, language, and regional, provincial and institutional representation.

The profile of a typical instructor as well as the profile of a typical course within the present study were suggested by the data: The instructor is female, works full time, and teaches in English at the rank of associate professor. She teaches a stand-alone curriculum and instruction course involving about 35 preservice teachers in a class

designed to cover instruction in all six modes of language for children from kindergarten to grade 6.

Three different sets of instructors' orientations were investigated. Within the theoretical approaches to language acquisition, the predominant orientation was overwhelmingly the cognitive interactionist approach. Within the instructional language arts/literacy orientations toward the teaching of children, the predominant orientation was overwhelmingly the process orientation. Within the pedagogical orientations to the instructors' own teaching, the predominant orientation was the technological, followed closely by the personal and the practical. The academic and the critical/social orientations were scarcely evident. Results for orientations showed somewhat parallel results for theoretical approach to language acquisition and language arts/literacy orientation, not surprisingly, as to some degree there are historical developments at play here. The product era in instruction was at its zenith in the heyday of behaviourist psychology, while cognitive psychology heralded the entire process movement in education. There are also some parallels between overall language arts/literacy orientations and overall pedagogical orientations.

In terms of textual materials, over 90 percent of the syllabi required preservice teachers to use textual materials. Among those materials were: textbooks (required in 45 of the 110 syllabi, 40.9%); monographs (required in 72 of the 110 syllabi, 65.5%); government documents (required in 82 of the 110 syllabi, 74.5%), packages of reading material, usually articles (required in 21 of the 110 syllabi, 19.1%) or individual articles (required in 46 of the 110 syllabi, 41.8%); and children's literature (required in 51 of the

110 syllabi, 46.4%). Some syllabi required only one item of a particular type, while others required several. The most commonly evidenced books and articles included a mixture of Canadian and American materials, with the most popular English books published in Canada. Similarly, all top French books were published in Quebec. The relatively low incidence of non-print materials paralleled the low attention given to the modes of listening, viewing and representing relative to other modes.

Lectures, presentations, demonstrations and discussions were the dominant in-class activities in preservice classrooms. Lecturing was included in 85 of the 110 syllabi (77.3%); presentations were included in 71 (64.5%); demonstrations and general discussions were each included in 70 (63.6%). Homogeneity seemed to be the hallmark associated with class activities.

The topics section reflects a plethora of popular topics, but few areas of consistency across the nation. Assessment, government curriculum, instructional planning, and approaches to instruction, all general and all expected, were the dominant topics followed closely by theory and research, children's literature, and instructional resources. Reading and writing were the modes of language most in evidence, while representing per se was the mode least in evidence.

Findings related to the assessment section, the last area of interest, in many ways parallel findings related to the in-class activities section, not surprisingly because the things preservice teachers were asked to do for assessment were also activities. The main types of assessment activities were presentations, various in-class activities, group projects, and exams, each in evidence in half the syllabi or more. Subject matter

knowledge and pedagogical knowledge were the main criteria used in assessment.

The overall inter-rater reliability for coding was 79 percent, 78 percent for the English syllabi and 81 percent for the French syllabi. Within the various sections of the study for which inter-rater reliability was sought, results ranged from a low of 42 percent for theoretical approaches to language acquisition, to a high of 86 percent for the topics section within the French syllabi.