PLANNING PURPOSEFUL IMAGINATIVE ACTIVITIES

IN

CREATIVE CONTEXTS

FOR

CHILDREN'S LITERACY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Although children in primary schools in England are required to write imaginatively in order to gain optimum marks in statutory tests, an emphasis is often placed on revising decontextualised genre features, grammar and spelling. I wondered whether there was a place for creativity and imagination within the apparent constraints of a curriculum for English that had become defined by objectives and teaching procedures imposed by national strategies to raise literacy standards. Using a definition of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity, I set out to explore how teachers could interpret the objectives imaginatively and plan meaningful contexts for literacy, even in a climate of changing curriculum emphases. My thesis reports on three cycles of reflective, collaborative action research focused on literacy planning, in order to theorise meanings in relation to my values, understanding and practice.

As a result of the research, approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts are exemplified. Evidence from an analysis of literacy plans for children in classrooms across the primary phase shows that teachers use their professional imaginations to plan their provision for children to read and write imaginatively – their statutory national curriculum entitlement (DfEE, 2000). We found that children's literacy improves when they dwell in possible worlds as, for example, curators, custodians or concerned villagers, using the powerful resource of their own, and collective, imaginations. In addition, an analysis of drawings revealed evidence of the effort and effect of children's somatic and affective imaginations.

The work is underpinned by theories of: aesthetic appreciation and representation; child-centred, holistic pedagogy; inclusive creative processes; and the imagination as a resource for creating meaning. My ideas have been challenged and developed by academics such as Pat D'Arcy on literacy, Robert Sternberg on creativity, and Ken Robinson on imagination, in particular.

As a result of the research, two conceptual tools for planning were developed and tested. They are underpinned by theory and professional experience and have been used effectively in schools during and beyond the research project. Components of the creative process were identified as **m**otivating ideas, **a**ssociating ideas, **g**enerating ideas, **i**nnovating ideas and **c**ommunicating ideas, and became the *MAGIC planning tool.* Components of the imagination's repertoire were identified as **a**uditory, **k**inaesthetic, **t**actile, **e**motional and **v**isual, and became the *AKTEV imagination repertoire*. These represent the living education theories that have transformed my practice, and are offered as a contribution to the field of primary English education.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

My thesis presents findings from an action research enquiry in which I examined the role of the imagination in creating meaning. This professional enquiry was situated within the continuing discourse regarding creativity in education and the changing curriculum emphases brought about by national strategies to raise standards of attainment in literacy in England. The notion of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity was adapted for the purposes of this research from definitions in the report to government, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (NACCCE, 1999) .

At the time of the research, I was tasked with supporting colleagues in my local authority (LA) with planning from the primary national strategy's framework of objectives. I wondered whether there was a place for creativity and imagination within a curriculum for English that had become constrained by objectives and teaching procedures imposed by the strategy. This gave rise to the overarching research question, which was: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* With this pragmatic focus on literacy planning, I attempted to resolve the tension between my values and my work responsibilities, improve my understanding of literacy, creativity and imagination, exemplify holistic, child-centred approaches, and champion children's statutory entitlement (DfEE, 2000) to read and write imaginatively.

My enquiry draws on an understanding of action research gained from the literature, particularly the work of Whitehead (2006) and McNiff (2006). It was a deliberate cycle of responsive, reflective and collaborative enquiry into transformative action in my field of practice. The process of writing and revising this thesis was a significant aspect of developing my living educational theories. Therefore, my thesis reports on three cycles of action and reflects on the outcomes and the literature in order to theorise meanings. My aim throughout was that my practice and understanding improved and evidence of this is provided from analysis of data.

A range of literature was consulted for theoretical perspectives on literacy, creativity and imagination. In particular, I have drawn on these theories to frame my research: D'Arcy's (1998) holistic pedagogy of creating meaning in reading and writing; Sternberg's (2003) componential models of creativity; and Robinson's (2001) ideas about the imagination. Importantly, my understanding of the significance of the imagination as an active and integral feature of the process of creating meaning in reading and writing has been challenged and developed by consulting the literature alongside the responsive, reflective and collaborative aspects of my action research.

In the first cycle of my action research, literacy objectives from the primary national strategy were analysed as data. Concepts drawn from literacy theories were used to categorise the objectives and embed them in a planning format for schools to adapt. Building on this work, I analysed teachers' literacy plans for evidence of creativity in process and provision. I found that, even within perceived curriculum constraints, teachers were able to use their professional imaginations to plan sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts. Insights arising from this analysis led to the third cycle in which I sought to discover the kinds of imagination used to create meaning by interpreting children's drawings and by categorising the kinds of purposeful imaginative activities provided by teachers.

As a result of this research, two componential models were developed to conceptualise how children's imaginative and creative capabilities can be supported in literacy. The *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* are conceptual scaffolds and practical toolkits, which aim to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for creativity and imagination in a climate of changing curriculum emphases. These represent the living educational theories that have transformed my practice, and are offered as a contribution to the field of primary literacy pedagogy. They are underpinned by theory and professional experience and have been used effectively in schools during and beyond the research project.

The sections in this chapter provide the background to the main ideas of my thesis. The context is explained in 1.1, and my professional priorities and

experience are summarised in 1.2. An important aspect of action research is the scrutiny of one's beliefs and values and these are examined in 1.3. In 1.4, some of the issues arising from my situation are discussed, and a brief overview of the research is provided in 1.5. Some of the theories that underpin the creativity, imagination and literacy dimensions of my research are reviewed briefly in 1.6, and in 1.7, the possible professional contribution to knowledge of this work is considered. An overview of the organisation of this thesis in 1.8 concludes the chapter.

1.1 The context

Primary schools in England have a statutory obligation to fulfil the requirements of the national curriculum in the learning and teaching provision they make. In English, this means giving children opportunities to respond imaginatively in different ways to what they have read and to write imaginative and interesting texts – their statutory national curriculum entitlement (DfEE, 1998, DfEE, 2000, DfES, 2003). During the period of research, national strategies to raise standards in reading and writing brought many changes to primary education and the teaching of English. The strategies included a framework of literacy learning objectives for each year group and each term, an accompanying teaching procedure known as the literacy hour, and methodologies for teaching word, sentence and text level work in a range of genres.

At the same time, imperatives from government and industry were highlighting the importance of creativity in equipping children and young people for the technological advances and unpredictable employment opportunities of the 21st century. *All Our Futures:* reflected this appetite for creativity (NACCCE, 1999).

The primary national strategies, and the literacy strategy in particular, were viewed as constraints on creativity by both teachers and taught (Maynard, 2002, Myhill, 2001). Head teachers and staff in primary schools, together with LA consultants and advisers, were facing the issue of how they could provide a rich and enjoyable curriculum for children with a balance of creative learning opportunities whilst demonstrating that standards of pupil attainment in English and mathematics were continually improving. Planning for literacy was raised as

an issue by colleagues in schools, by directors of the strategy, and by LA senior management.

Thus, it can be seen that my research took place at a time when there was a government investment in strategies to raise attainment in core subjects as well as an increasing appetite for creativity in the curriculum. There was sparse guidance for teachers who wanted to incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy plans.

1.2 My work

My main responsibility as a primary education adviser is to support improvements in learning and achievement in English and in art in LA primary schools. I do this by providing professional development courses, consultations and advice, by researching, developing and exemplifying effective approaches to learning and teaching, and organising projects. I work with children, teachers and support staff in classrooms, and advise head teachers, parents, governors, council members and LA officers on curriculum matters. My ideas about learning and teaching have evolved in response to change and through reflecting on my practice as a class teacher, deputy head teacher and curriculum adviser. To illustrate how sustained engagement with the rich languages of written texts and images can help children achieve curriculum and strategy objectives, I worked with colleagues to create printed and web-based materials (Smyth, 2002a, Smyth, 2002b, Smyth, 2003).

When the primary national strategies were introduced, I was asked to support the implementation of the literacy framework in schools (DfEE, 1998, DfES 2002). Because this changed the focus of my work, I decided to respond through research to some of the tensions and contradictions involved and enrolled in the doctoral programme with the University of Greenwich. I resolved to make this an opportunity to improve my professional understanding and practice through research. Integral to the reflective, responsive and collaborative nature of this action research was an ongoing scrutiny of my values. These are discussed next.

1.3 My ontological and epistemological values

Whitehead (1989, 2006) has explained how cycles of iterative reflection and action in a professional context can lead towards a transformation in knowledge and practice as *living educational theory*. Including '*I*' in the research account informs and validates an enquiry because the researcher has to confront the contradictions between their practice and their values, examine the narratives and discourses that have informed the explanatory principles of their work, and evaluate their living educational theory against beliefs (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). The values that inform my life have been influenced by my age, race, class, gender and sexuality and have therefore contributed to my ontological and epistemological values (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, Kincheloe, 2004).

I am committed to living a useful and productive life in education and want my work to affirm the values I place on democratic, ethical ways of working, on the power of the imagination in creating meaning, on pragmatic approaches to research, on holistic approaches to learning, and on the evolving nature of knowledge. These values are discussed next.

Democratic, ethical ways of working

I value democratic forms of decision making and am grateful for the freedoms that I can enjoy. I believe that I am accountable for my actions and their consequences in a moral sense and hope any improvements that I effect in my work are positive and empowering to teachers and children. In my research, I tried to ensure that my conduct was ethical and did not cause harm or nuisance, and that children and teachers were treated with respect.

I believe that teachers have the professional wisdom and imagination to create a curriculum that reflects the learning needs and interests of children in their care. Thus, my research was designed to empower colleagues in a collegiate community of practice (Wenger, 1999). To level the power usually perceived in the role of advisers, my colleagues identified and addressed a problem in common, agreed their roles and decided their amount of involvement.

I have evaluated my research by judging whether it empowered colleagues who were involved.

Research as professional development

I value professional development that supports self-actualisation in a community of practice and improves pedagogy and understanding over time. This favours a collegiate model of professional development in which the adviser supports the teacher who wants to improve an aspect of their practice, through appreciative, rather than critical, evaluations (Whitehead, 2006, NCSL, 2006).

I believe that enquiry, action and reflection in response to a professional situation can deepen understanding and improve practice. I identify with Dillon's (2000:10) pragmatic researcher who is motivated by an issue from practice, is driven philosophically and ethically to find possible answers, and works collaboratively to generate theories with practical applications that can be used in local settings. Therefore, I have taken a pragmatic stance to my enquiry into creativity and imagination in literacy, using action research with peer professionals (Dick, 2000, Hubbard & Power, 1999, McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Reason & Bradbury, 2001, Tripp, 2003a, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

I have evaluated my research by judging whether my action research was practical, meaningful and useful.

Evolving knowledge and understanding

I value pedagogy that offers agency to learners in the process of challenging and transforming their understanding in order to construct knowledge. I am drawn to Reason's (2003) definition of four types of knowledge, which he relates to action research: the *experiential knowing* of everyday lived experience; the *presentational knowing* of expressive representation; the *propositional knowing* that draws on possibilities as concepts, ideas and theories; and the *practical knowing* of knowledge-in-action. My learning journey of reflection, reading and thesis writing, interwoven with collaborative action shows how these four aspects of my knowing evolved in my community of practice.

I believe that understanding evolves from enquiry in context. I am drawn in some ways to Kincheloe's (2004:72) ideas: 'For the naïve thinker, education involves moulding oneself and others to the normalized past. For the critically conscious thinker, education involves engaging in the conscious improvement and transformation of self and reality'. By doing this research, 1 moved from naïvely accepting the primary strategy to question the way its procedures exercised control on teachers' professional decision-making. Because my enquiry was practical, action oriented and context specific, the personal perspectives in this thesis show that I deliberately engaged in exploring possibilities in different ways in order to improve my understanding. However, I recognise that my knowledge is under construction and therefore provisional.

I have evaluated my research by judging whether my understanding has been challenged and transformed.

The power of the imagination in creating meaning

I value the imagination as a powerful personal resource that is applied to creating meaning. Reason (2003:10) suggests that through action research, we 'create practical knowledge about our world [and] also shape that world with our imagination'. I believe that reading and writing are creative endeavours that rely upon the imagination. Vygotsky (1978, 1998) considered the imagination to be a higher-order mental function and was interested in the connection between imagined experience and aesthetic reactions to literature. Theories of imaginative aesthetic response are strong influences on my practice and understanding, and underpin the development of my living educational theories in this study.

I value creativity as purposeful imaginative activity in both learning and teaching. In my work, I want to advocate children's entitlement to a literacy curriculum that provides opportunities for exploring possibilities, and for imaginative appreciation and representation, in their endeavours to create meaning. My ideas about creativity have been challenged and developed by the work of Craft, Sternberg and Robinson in particular.

I believe that creativity and imagination can be nurtured in a curriculum that enables learners to reach beyond what they already understand and can do, by

engaging them in thinking and developing ideas, exploring possibilities, trying things out, making decisions, working independently and celebrating success. I have an inclusive view of creativity and am drawn to Maslow's (1987) assertion that creativity has much to do with well-being and self-actualisation.

I have evaluated my research by judging whether I have found a way to help teachers plan purposeful imaginative activities in a creative process for literacy.

Child-centred, holistic approaches to literacy

I value child-centred, thematic approaches to learning with an emphasis on practical doing in order to understand. My pedagogy has its roots in the report from Plowden (1967) and ideas from theorists such as Dewey (1934) and Vygotsky (1978). In my work, I tend to develop ideas by gathering information purposefully from an eclectic range of sources before narrowing my focus to plan activities that integrate the sensory and affective dimensions of learning.

I believe in the holistic nature of reading and writing as articulated by D'Arcy (1989), Bearne (2000) and Barrs (2001). From theories of aesthetic appreciation and representation, I have become fascinated by the potential of the image as text (Benton, 1992, Benton & Fox, 1988, Iser, 1978, Rosenblatt, 1986). From Arnheim (1969), Kress (2000), Efland (2002) and Eide (2004), I have begun to understand more about the multimodality and multiplicity of literacies. Golomb's (1992, 2002) work on pictorial representation and Perkin's (1994) strategies for reading visual texts have offered insights into finding a way to appreciate and interpret the imaginative effort and effect in the narratives of children's drawings.

I have evaluated my research by judging whether I have exemplified child-centred, holistic approaches to planning for, and interpreting children's endeavours to create meaning.

Summary of values and beliefs

The values and beliefs examined above are the explanatory principles for my action research. A summary of these is presented in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 A Summary of my values and beliefs

Values	Beliefs
Democratic, ethical ways of working	That I respect the professional wisdom of colleagues, I am accountable for my actions, and I should be useful and productive in my work
Research as professional development	That enquiry, action and reflection in response to a professional situation can deepen understanding and improve practice.
Evolving knowledge and understanding	That understanding is constructed through a process of enquiry in context and my knowledge is provisional.
Child-centred, holistic approaches to learning	That a rich, connected literacy curriculum with opportunities for purposeful imaginative activities can engage and support children's endeavours to create meaning.
The power of imagination in creating meaning	That the imagination is a powerful resource for children and teachers and should be positively nurtured.

Table 3.5 adds success criteria to these values and beliefs to show how I have evaluated my research.

1.4 Research questions

The central question driving this research resulted from reflecting on my practice and considering some of the contradictions between my situation, my understanding and my values. I wanted to find out:

How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?

Reflecting on aspects of my situation brought issues to the surface, recorded in the journal that I kept throughout my research. The national strategies imposed a cascade model of training at odds with the value I placed on professional development as research in a community of practice that respects teachers' professional wisdom, creativity and imagination. Colleagues had to plan from a vast list of objectives every week. 1 was concerned that the literacy framework had superseded the primary curriculum for English and how, if I was expected to assist in its implementation, I could remain true to the value I placed on child-centred, holistic and imaginative approaches to reading and writing. Whilst I

embraced the notion of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity, I needed to understand more about what that meant, and how it could contribute to literacy planning. These deliberations gave rise to three supplementary research questions:

- *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?*
- *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning?*
- *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?*

These questions propelled my action research.

1.5 Research outline

Chapter three explains why action research suited the purpose of my enquiry, chapters four, five and six report on the research and analysis, and chapter seven explains how meanings were theorised. A brief overview of purpose, participants and method is provided here.

Purpose

The purpose of my research was to find a way to exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

Participants

The community of practice formed around my research included peer professionals in the local authority. Their involvement created a purposive sample of one literacy consultant (LC) and seven teachers who were assisting in the implementation of the national strategy as leading literacy practitioners (LLPs). They were invited to take part because they were an established group with acknowledged expertise and their contributions reflect the issues faced across the primary phase in planning for literacy. In addition, delegates on my courses, and my supervisors and fellow students on the doctoral programme have helped to develop the living educational theories emerging from the study.

Method

Because of the responsive, reflective and collaborative nature of this enquiry, its cyclical nature and its potentially transformative properties in terms of improving my professional understanding and practice, it developed as action research (Dick, 2000, McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Reason & Bradbury, 2001, Schon, 1983, Tripp, 2003b, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, Winter et al., 1999). Whitehead's work on living education theories has framed perspectives on the struggles and benefits of this way of working. Reason (2001:1) defines action research as a 'participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes'.

A pragmatic, multi-layered approach was chosen to seek answers to the research questions in three cycles of action research. Each cycle included phases of reflection, planning, action and evaluation.

The first research cycle addressed the research question: *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?* I worked with LC to identify concepts for reading and writing, which we used to categorise all the literacy learning objectives from the primary national strategy (DfEE, 1998). Chapter Four shows that the literacy objectives could be organised holistically in a planning format for all primary year groups and all terms.

The second research cycle addressed the research question: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning.* Phases of a creative process were identified through reflective analysis, literature search and pilot study as motivating ideas, associating ideas, generating ideas, innovating ideas and communicating ideas. These were developed as components of a planning tool labelled MAGIC. I analysed the plans created by the LLPs who applied the *MAGIC planning tool* to plan meaningful creative contexts for literacy in modules of different durations across the primary years. Chapter Five presents evidence of teachers applying their professional imaginations to interpret the literacy objectives and plan for creativity in reading and writing.

The third research cycle addressed the research question: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create*

meaning? The research challenged my understanding of the role of the imagination in learning and teaching and my practice in promoting it. During the second cycle, components of the imagination's repertoire were identified as *auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional* and *visual* and labelled AKTEV. The *AKTEV imagination repertoire* was used to classify purposeful imaginative activities as a resource for literacy and as an interpretive lens with which I analysed children's narrative drawings. Chapter Six presents evidence of the *AKTEV imagination repertoire.*

1.6 Theoretical frameworks

I consulted an eclectic range of literature for theoretical perspectives on literacy, creativity and the imagination. These are discussed in Chapter Two, but some key theories that frame the literacy, creativity and imagination dimensions of my enquiry are reviewed briefly next.

Literacy dimension

Theories of aesthetic appreciation and representation underpin my research. D'Arcy's (1989) work on the way children make sense and shape meaning has influenced the holistic approach to reading and writing adopted in my research. Her exemplification of aesthetic response theory illustrates the imaginative transactions engaged in by readers of visual as well as printed texts (D'Arcy, 1989, D'Arcy, 1998, D'Arcy, 1999, D'Arcy, 2000).

Creativity dimension

Sternberg's (1995, 1996, 1999, 2003) definitions of creativity and his confluence model emphasise that creativity requires the convergence of distinct yet inter-related components. His persistence in identifying these contributory components has led to his influential theories of leadership and pedagogy. These ideas have significantly informed the emerging confluence of my own living educational theories and the componential models I offer in this thesis (Lincoln, 2000, Sternberg, 2003, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Imagination dimension

Intrinsic to this research is the notion of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity (NACCCE, 1999, Roberts, 2006). Robinson's (1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2004) extensive work on creativity, and the emphasis he gives to the imagination, have set the enquiry in motion and influenced my view of the aesthetic imagination as an ingredient of the creative meaning making.

These theories have challenged and developed my ideas about creativity and imagination in literacy and significantly informed my professional practice and living educational theories.

1.7 Contribution to the profession

From the research, the *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* are offered as my living educational theories and as a contribution to the field of literacy teaching in primary schools. These models address contemporary issues relating to the role of creativity and imagination in developing children's literacy in a time of changing curriculum emphases. They are informed by cycles of responsive, collaborative and reflective action research and are underpinned by substantive theories from the field.

The *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* have been developed and tested as conceptual scaffolds and practical toolkits to support teachers with planning their provision for creativity and imagination in literacy. Evidence shows that teachers were empowered by the *MAGIC planning tool* to plan how they would teach literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts. The *AKTEV imagination repertoire* model has been shown to enrich and extend children's endeavours to create meaning by engaging them in auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual efforts of imagination. It also provides teachers with a tool for interpreting children's imaginative ideas.

1.8 Writing up the thesis

Looking for ways to overcome the difficulties of reporting my research, I was drawn to the analogy of the action research report and the quilt. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4-6) describe the researcher as a *bricoleur*, or quiltmaker, who

pieces together layers of interpretation and overlapping perspectives to construct emerging theories, thus adding richness and depth to the research account.

Burchell and Dyson (2000) suggest that narratives can aid reflection and interpretation, providing insights for both writers and readers. From the notion of research reports as quilts, my thesis is layered with the narrative of the evolving theories in the action research cycles. Deliberately pieced together within the chapters are details of what happened, how meanings were theorised from analysing data and interpreting outcomes, perspectives gained from literature searches, and my reflections on all of these. The chapters provide a literature review, a methodology overview, details of the three research cycles, a discussion of findings, and conclusions drawn from the work. An overview of the chapters is given in the next section.

1.9 Chapter overview

Chapter Two examines a range of theoretical perspectives on literacy, on creativity and on imagination. These perspectives have helped to contextualize and prompt the direction of my action research. Reflecting on the literature before, during and after work in the field, was an important aspect of the enquiry.

Chapter Three presents the research method. It explains why the focus selected for my research was to discover how teachers plan their provision for children's statutory national curriculum entitlement, which is to read and write imaginatively, why a pragmatic stance was taken, why the action research methodology was chosen, and how the cycles of reflection and action were planned.

Chapter Four presents the first cycle of action research in which the primary national strategy objectives were analysed according to literacy concepts to create a holistic planning format to promote children's imaginative meaning-making.

Chapter Five presents the second cycle of action research in which literacy plans created by teachers with the *MAGIC planning tool* were analysed for evidence that creativity and imagination could be incorporated into their provision.

Chapter Six, presents the third cycle of action research in which the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* model was used to analyse the kinds of imagination used to create meaning.

Chapter Seven evaluates The *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* as living educational theories that mirror my values, and further strengthens each component with reference to the literature.

Chapter Eight discusses the possible contribution to the field of English teaching offered by MAGIC and AKTEV, and their impact on my professional practice and understanding. Some recommendations for future work are also given.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter highlights what the literature has to say about literacy, creativity and the imagination. Although there is a large volume of literature on creativity in general, there is little on the role of creativity and imagination in teaching reading and writing in primary schools. Therefore, the literature selected for review represents an eclectic range of perspectives on literacy, creativity and imagination that have challenged and developed my understanding and underpin my living educational theories.

A brief overview of changes in the way that reading and writing are taught contextualises the research in 2.1. Perspectives on creativity are summarised in 2.2 using themes adapted from Mooney's (1962) personality, process, provision and product as an organisational framework. Some key theories on the somatic, affective, productive, aesthetic and suppositional conceptions of the imagination are summarised in 2.3. A reflective discussion in 2.4 concludes the chapter by linking themes from the review to the purpose of my research, which was to find a way to exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

2.1 Literacy

My research focused on teachers planning for literacy and how creativity in this regard was affected by government strategies to raise standards in basic skills. This section begins with a brief overview of changes to the primary English curriculum in England, including the national strategies, to preface a review of some approaches to teaching reading and writing.

Some changes to the English curriculum

The Education Reform Act 1988 (OPSI, 1988), and its subsequent amendments, requires that all pupils in state schools must be taught a basic curriculum of religious education and the national curriculum. The original national curriculum aimed at breadth of study across English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art and design, music, design technology, physical education and information technology (DES, 1990). Its purpose was to ensure a basic curriculum

entitlement for all, but it was controversial. It was seen by some as a control mechanism imposed by government to take away the professional freedoms of schools and teachers (Gillard, 1988). It was driven by the economic imperative of equipping pupils with the knowledge and skills needed for productive employment and favoured English, mathematics and science as 'core subjects', and introducing standardised tests (SATs) to assess attainment.

In English SATs, children aged 7, 11 and 14 are assessed on their reading comprehension and written composition. Pupil attainment is reported to parents and the percentages of children achieving these levels in each school are published each year in the press as 'league tables'. Scores are used by Ofsted as an indicator of concern, by government to allocate funding and by local authorities to prioritise support.

Reports to government by Kingman (Kingman, 1988) and Cox (Cox, 1991) informed the national curriculum for English and its amendments, blaming creative approaches for falling standards. They advocated explicit teaching of grammatical structures and Standard English. Intensive training programmes were set up to increase teachers' English subject knowledge.

The national literacy strategy (NLS) was introduced to raise standards in reading and writing in primary schools across the nation (DfEE, 1998). An immense engine of curriculum change, it was driven by the forceful power of pledges from a new government and carried forward by local authority targets, new Ofsted criteria, and training programmes. It was the largest and most ambitious educational project in the world (Fullan, 2000). The curriculum was dismantled and an ambitious framework of objectives for fiction, non-fiction and poetry spanned the primary years. Targets were set for teachers, schools, literacy consultants, local authorities and strategy directors, and the strategy was the focus of professional development and inspection. Implementation of the NLS was accompanied by prescriptive procedures such as the 'literacy hour': this was influenced by the 'genre' approach in which the linguistic and structural features of each genre were explicitly taught in a specific sequence of direct, whole-class teaching followed by independent work (Cope & Kalantiz, 1993, Wray & Lewis, 1997). Manuals for teaching were produced with an emphasis on genres, grammar and phonics. The strategy became the English curriculum in most primary schools

(Maynard, 2002, Myhill, 2001). Over half of the school day and usually all the mornings of a school week are taken up with literacy and numeracy lessons (Myhill, 2001).

Inflexible 'literacy hours' have resulted in the mechanistic use of published programmes, writing-frames and worksheets and consequently, learning was often scattered and disconnected (Wray et al., 2002). Teaching became 'delivery' of multiple objectives in a single lesson to ensure content coverage, so that children were taught decontextualised skills through decontextualised activities (Allen, 2002, Frater, 1998, Frater, 2002, Smith & Hardman, 2000b, Wray et al., 2002). Maynard (2002) found that most literacy lessons were about analysing and recognising supposed genre features. Even when component linguistic features associated with a genre have been taught, children find that incorporating these into a piece of writing, together with their own ideas, is very demanding (Wray et al., 2002). Reports show that an emphasis on basic skills, class targets, and published league tables exert a pressure on schools, squeezing subjects into tight bands of timetable and jeopardising creativity in teachers and taught (NFER, 1998; QCA, 2002; Ofsted, 2003). Intensive revision, test practice and the timed conditions of literacy sessions can be stressful and ineffective (Higgins, 2002, Maynard, 2002). The Effective Teaching Research Project, sponsored by the Teacher Training Agency, acknowledged the detrimental effects of literacy teaching that is not fully contextualised, and the negative impact this can have on pupil motivation towards literacy learning (Medwell et al., 1998).

Bailey (2002:26) suggests that the strategy has led to the 'anxious literalism' of teaching discrete skills at the expense of the writing process and reading for meaning and enjoyment, commenting that the link between research and practice is fragile. D'Arcy (1999), Kimbell (2000), Pullman (2003) and others voiced their alarm at the impoverished reading and writing experiences received by children in schools as result of the strategy. The next section reviews some approaches to reading and writing that informed my response to these challenges.

Creating meaning in reading and writing

Extensive work on learning through language by D'Arcy, and others, has shown that when children are asked to consider the possibilities of linguistic choices and

their effects on the reader in a contextualised thinking process, crafting writing is embedded in creating meaning (D'Arcy, 1989, D'Arcy, 1999a, D'Arcy, 1999b, D'Arcy, 2000, Higgins, 2002, Myhill, 2001). Much of the recent discourse on literacy has focused on underachievement in writing, particularly by boys (DfES, 2002, Maynard, 2002, Ofsted, 1998, Pickering, 1997, QCA, 1998, Smith & Hardman, 2000a). Children like to choose and use their own ideas, or the immediacy of structuring their ideas in the shorter forms inspired by poetry, comics, posters and computers (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Barrs & Pidgeon, 2002, Higgins, 2002, Kress, 2000, Maynard, 2002, Riley & Reedy, 2000). An over-emphasis on grammar and formulaic genre structures can impede motivation and result in writing that is assessable but dull (Myhill, 2001). However, many teachers find it difficult to reconcile this with their perceived obligation to teach the skills of writing demanded by the strategy (Maynard, 2002). Drafting is often used as proof-reading rather than an opportunity to shape meaning and explore the possibilities of language (Myhill, 2001)

Effective teachers of reading and writing tend to emphasise the importance of meaning, understand how to relate content to objectives within meaningful contexts and recognize that the technical aspects of written texts are a means to an end (D'Arcy, 2000, Frater, 2002, Wray et al., 2002). Teachers who feel that they own the literacy framework use it flexibly, approaching objectives within the context of a whole text, adapting their teaching to maximize its impact, and fostering a motivational writing culture in their classrooms (Barrs & Pidgeon, 2002, Frater, 2002). Literacy consultants have found that children's engagement, motivation and achievement in literacy is influenced by the oral, visual and physical elements of imaginative learning in the supportive community of the classroom (Bearne & Watson, 2000).

Talk is a vital element in D'Arcy's (1989) approaches to making sense and shaping meaning in reading and writing. Incorporating time for talk into literacy sessions allows children to formulate and articulate their ideas before, during and after writing (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Higgins, 2002). Drama is a key strategy, not only in providing the impetus to write, but as part of the writing process to help children organise and develop their ideas (Frater, 2002, Grainger et al., 2005, Heathcote & Bolton, 1995, Maynard, 2002, Neelands & Goode, 2001, Pickering,

1997). Discussion, drama, speaking and listening are now four of the twelve strands in the revised literacy framework (DfES, 2007).

Visual learning has substantial motivational impact on literacy development. Children using diagrams, graphics and drawing to rehearse and present their ideas; exploring a film director's use of sound, movement and colour, and creating posters, poems and picture books, can motivate children to add a dramatic dimension of language to their writing (Bowkett, 2005, Burn & Parker, 2001, Higgins, 2002, Kress, 2000).

Experiencing emotionally powerful texts with engaging narratives is a key factor in the development of literacy: hearing literature read aloud and traditional tales told regularly, allows pupils to hear poeticised language which is memorable, contains powerful rhythms and has strong narrative structure (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Grainger et al., 2005). Taking part in simulations, role play and drama were noted as effective strategies in raising standards in literacy in the 30 successful primary schools reviewed by HMI (Ofsted, 2002a). Effective drama strategies include Heathcote's 'mantle of expert' to provide children with a convincing context for their reading, writing and talk (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995).

Theories of aesthetic response show that in the act of reading, transaction with a text evokes powerful cognitive and affective responses in the reader, taking reading beyond the level of comprehension exercises to create a unique, imaginative reformulation of an existing reality (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Benton & Fox, 1988, D'Arcy, 1998, Iser, 1978, Meek, 1978, Rosenblatt, 1978, Rosenblatt, 1986). Iser (1978) claims that in the act of writing, five perspectives are applied to create the meaning of the text - narrator, characters, plot, setting and the 'implied reader' imagined by the author. The imagination is brought into play by the reader who decides to go along with the author's implied intentions by filling in the gaps between the blanks and what is explicitly stated in the text. This creative understanding requires a mindset of Coleridge's willing suspension of disbelief (in Corrigan, 1979). Robeck (1990) explains that creative readers are co-participants in creating texts. Because personal creative viewpoints are brought to the text, readers deliberately seek emotional and intrapersonal meanings and inevitably have different imaginative interpretations of the text's meaning.

D'Arcy's (1989, 1998) research builds on theories of aesthetic response to show that responding appreciatively to a child's writing engages both teacher and learner in personally meaningful dialogue about creating meaning. A curriculum for creative writers should provide opportunities to learn from other writers and readers, to immerse imaginatively in the stories of others, and for 'small inspirations', the strings of associations and analogies that arise in the process of creating meaning (Weisberg, 1993:252-55).

Theories of aesthetic appreciation and representation frame the literacy dimension of my research, drawing on D'Arcy's work in particular for approaches that teachers could provide for children to create meaning in their own texts and from the texts of others. The next section examines some perspectives creativity and its role in the process of creating meaning.

2.2 Creativity

Of the literature on the complex phenomenon of creativity, much of it dwells on problem-solving approaches to developing novel products and identifying characteristics of gifted individuals. However, Sternberg (2003) suggests that creativity requires the confluence of contributory and interactive components: motivation; a supportive environment; knowledge; thinking styles; personality; and intellectual abilities (the synthetic ability to go beyond conventional thinking, the analytic ability to recognize ideas worth pursuing, and the practical ability to persuade). Perspectives on creativity are organised in this section under the headings of person, provision, product and process.

The person who creates

All Our Futures advises educators 'to encourage young people to believe in their creative potential, to engage their sense of possibility and to give them the confidence to try' (NACCCE, 1999:90). There is an enduring conflict of opinion between those who maintain that everyone has creative potential and those who attribute creativity to a particular few. Creativity is viewed in the literature as either the elite creativity shown by exceptional individuals (Gardner, 1993, Gardner, 1999, Tusa, 2003), or as the 'ordinary', 'democratic' and 'little-c' creativity, which can be shown by everyone (Craft, 2000, Robinson, 2001b, Stein,

1974). Because I value an inclusive notion of creativity, I searched the literature for insight into the kinds of creative dispositions that could be positively nurtured.

Craft (2002) sees little-c-creativity as life-wide creativity, the capacity to see opportunities as well as overcome obstacles. She embraces creativity as 'possibility-thinking', which encompasses self-actualisation through play and imaginative explorations (Craft, 2002, Craft et al., 2005). Duffy (1998) suggests that play and creativity share many characteristics, as both involve the ability to cope with uncertainty, explore new ideas, and look at a problem in a variety of ways.

Studies that have attempted to define the characteristics of creativity have often profiled eminent individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their fields (Eisenman, 1997, Gardner, 1993, Gardner, 2005, Getzels & Cziksentmihalyi, 1976, MacKinnon, 1975, Shaw & Runco, 1994, Simonton, 1984, Tusa, 1999). Gardner's stance is that truly creative people are those who make a significant, world-changing difference and an enduring contribution to a particular domain (Gardner, 1993, Gardner, 1999). From his interviews with artists, Tusa (1999) has argued that not everyone is creative - that creation is an exceptional act and that striving for perfection sets it and those who engage in it aside. Galton's study of giftedness in the nineteenth century led to research and interventions for the top 1% of the population in measures of creative achievement and intelligence. Renzulli has since proposed that the talent pool of 15-20% of the population with above average intelligence has the most aptitude for creative production with their gifted behaviours (Dust, 1999). These studies argue that creativity is hierarchical, paradigm shifting and genetic, that only a few exceptional geniuses are creative, and that creativity is an indicator of rare intelligence.

However, other researchers have recognised that exceptional creative accomplishment is the product of years of learning, persistence and determination, deliberate practice and experience in representing ideas (Brickman, 1999, Chenfeld, 2002, Ericsson & Charness, 1994, Li, 1996, Weisberg, 1993). Creative thinkers are usually self-motivated, enjoy challenge and ambiguity, are comfortable with multiple perspectives, and often address the same problem across a series of works, even if these efforts are not successful (Amabile, 2001,

Dacey & Lennon, 1998, Lindstrom, 1997, Naglieri, 2001). They can orchestrate diverse and multimodal information involving complex coordination of visual, spatial, verbal and sensory areas of the brain (Eide & Eide, 2004).

Creative aptitudes have been identified as leadership qualities (Barron, 1998, Feist, 1999, Lindstrom, 1997, Sternberg, 2005). In his investment model, Sternberg (1996) sees creativity in leadership as decision, disposition and persuasion. In his propulsion model, he identifies different ways that leaders propel ideas: replicators, redefiners and incrementers can be seen as those that accept a current idea and extend it further, redirectors and reinitiators are those that reject an idea and replace it with others, and synthesisers integrate two opposing ideas into one (Sternberg, 2005, Sternberg et al., 2002). Creative leaders redefine and reformulate problems they cannot solve and analyse the quality of solutions produced; they convince others of the value of their ideas, recognise the limits of their own expertise, have perseverance and resilience, tolerate a period of ambiguity, know what risks are worth taking and often defy the crowd. Sternberg's theories are built on his WICs definition of creativity as the skills and dispositions needed for generating ideas and products that are relatively novel, high in quality, and appropriate to the task at hand (Sternberg, 2003).

Guilford (1950) claimed that fluency, flexibility, and originality were the three overarching factors of creativity. He made a distinction between vertical or convergent thinking and the lateral, associative or divergent thinking which leads to fluent, flexible and original creativity (Guilford, 1967). Psychometric tests that measure the fluency, flexibility and originality of thinking are often used to identify creativity and intelligence in recruitment and education (Guilford, 1967, Torrance, 1988a, Torrance, 1988b). Tests of creativity, according to Alder (2002), can be classified in four types: *instances,* such as thinking how many things can be done with a paper-clip; *semantics,* such as listing the consequences of an action; *figural classes,* such as finding sets and 'odd-one-out'; *figural units,* such as drawing objects from a given shape. Although there are numerous psychometric instruments for assessing creativity in children, no single measure can predict a child's creative potential or assess a person's creative capacity (Alder, 2002, Fishkin et al., 1998).

Torrance (1993) studied 'beyonders' - individuals with particular and remarkable creative achievement – and found that their shared characteristics were: a delight in deep thinking, a tolerance for mistakes, a passion for their work, a clear sense of purpose, an acceptance of being different, and a tendency to ignore admonitions about being well-rounded. Based on this research, Torrance advised children to pursue their interests with intensity, work to their strengths, self-evaluate, seek out mentors and teachers, and learn from others.

Studies into the psychodynamics of creativity indicate that creativity has both cognitive and affective components and that motivation and disposition affect its development (Amabile, 1996, Goleman, 1996, Russ et al., 1999, Ryhammar & Smith, 1999, Sternberg & Lubart, 1996). When individuals have the courage to go against convention, believe in their own ideas and are emotionally involved, they are capable of creative achievement (Smith & Carlsson, 1990, Schoon, 1992, Andersson & Rhyammer, 1998).

Motivation has been recognized as a key factor in fostering creativity (Amabile, 2001, Cropley, 2003, Dust, 1999, Shalley, 1991). Sternberg (2001b) proposes that creative disposition and capacity can be fostered with motivation. He suggests that people decide to be creative and are therefore motivated to develop appropriate expertise (Sternberg, 2005). Amabile (1996) explains that requirements for creativity are intrinsic motivation, cognitive ability, domain-specific knowledge and the necessary skills to process and respond to information. Motivation, knowledge, opportunity and style, together with encouragement, acceptance of one's own personality, and the courage to be different are essential to creativity (Dust, 1999). Cropley (2003) adds environment to the mix. Maslow (1987) describes creativity as a universal characteristic of self-actualizing people, involving talents, capacities, potentialities, abilities and choices.

Examples abound, in anecdote and the literature, of creative individuals who were not highly regarded by their teachers, yet nevertheless made monumental contributions to society as adults, and of gifted children who did not continue to produce creative works when they become adults. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) maintains that high skill and low challenge can lead to boredom, a dynamic that helps to explain why so many highly creative adults were considered troublesome

as schoolchildren, and, conversely, low skill and high challenge can lead to frustration, a dynamic that helps to explain the angry and destructive student.

Theories vary about how creative abilities develop (Claxton et al., 2005, Runco, 1999, Smith & Carlsson, 1983, Thomas, 2006, Torrance, 1993). Fishkin (1998) has argued that children are probably not more creative than adults, but are differently creative from adults budding, or germinal creativity produces unique ideas, but children may not yet have the ability communicate them or carry them out. Feldman (1999) asserts that creativity is a complex developmental system influenced by cognitive processes and sociocultural contexts.

Gardner (1982) suggested that preschool children have very expressive artistic creativity but that when they begin school they enter into a literal stage of development, learn conformity, and their artistic creativity appears to decline. Torrance (1968) also found evidence from his research in seven countries that children's creativity declines around age six and slumps further around age eight; he speculated that classroom expectations and peer pressure discourage students to display their creative abilities. Runco (1999) reckons that the slumps in creativity can be related to the development of cognitive processes, whilst Smith and Carlsson (1983) attribute the slumps to motivational factors, concluding that the first true stage of creativity occurs at ten to eleven years of age.

Rather than phases of development with trajectories and slumps, others view creativity as an evolutionary force (Cziko, 1998, Lumsden, 1999, Simonton, 1999). Gabora (2005) argues that creative thought evolves through a process of actualizing potential through exposure to different contexts. The context in which creativity occurs – provision - is considered next.

The provision for creativity

Mooney considered the impact of sociocultural influences on creativity as the press. In this section, some of the constraining and conducive contexts that affect creativity are discussed.

According to Sternberg (1996), the effects of culture on creativity are manifest in the concept, the process, the direction, and the extent to which creativity is nurtured. Csikszentmihalyi (1998) reckons that creativity is not about singular individuals, but of social systems making judgements about individuals and their

products. Fruitful creative endeavour requires access to social capital the intellectual, economic, cultural and institutional resources of an individual's circumstances (Simonton, 1999)(Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, Gruber & Wallace, 1999, McLaughlin, 2001, Zimmerman & Zimmerman, 2000). Shi (2004) suggests that creativity draws from the inner world of intelligence, knowledge, experience, personality and behaviour, and the outer world of social, educational and working environments. Hutchin's (1995) distributed cognition theory focuses on how objects, individuals and tools in the environment and shared representations support the development of creative ideas. Others contend that the cultural and personal values attributed to hard work and skills training define creativity (Negus & Pickering, 2004, Scruton, 1982, Tusa, 2003).

However, creativity is not always for social good: there is the socially endorsed notion of creativity, which is ethical, appropriate to purpose and acceptable to the community, and the socially disruptive forms of creativity which can revolutionise against acceptability and appropriateness in subversive ways (Banaji, 2005). In Bourdieu's (1990) view, acceptability (or not) is based on bourgeois notions of refined sensibility.

From her study of U.S. Nobel prize winners, Zuckerman (1996) has coined the phrase *evocative environments* to describe the way that individuals affect their environments as well as being creatures of them. Dynamic organisational climates such as homes, classrooms and studios are conducive to nurturing creativity (Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999). Providing an overtly positive emotional climate in the classroom contributes to creative thought and activity, and includes fostering security, self-worth and achievability without constant scrutiny (Shallcross, 1981). Relevance, ownership, control and innovation are some of the features of primary school classrooms in which creativity is fostered successfully (Woods & Jeffrey, 2003). In these creative classrooms, children can be apprenticed into understanding how to think imaginatively for creativity alongside helpful, observant professionals and peers. The Italian Reggio Emilia approach has shown how classrooms can be adapted to accommodate creativity in terms of *climate* - classroom atmosphere, and *occasions* - intense encounters for the children between their outer and inner worlds, as well as time, space and resources (Edwards & Springate, 1995). Isaksen and Treffinger (1985) have defined the dimensions of an

environment for optimum creativity: *idea time* - time to think things through; *idea support* - resources to give new ideas a try; *challenge*; *trust* feeling safe to openly offer different points of view; *playfulness* and *humour*; *absence of conflict; risk-taking*; *debate*; and *freedom* – to make choices and decisions.

Relationships between teacher and children can crush or encourage creativity in the classroom (Craft, 2000). Feuerstein (1980) highlighted the importance of respecting and cherishing the creative work of others. Fryer (1996) arrived at some essential characteristics of creative teaching in her study of 1,028 teachers in the United Kingdom. These included: commitment to deepen learners' understanding of the world; valuing creative ability and expression; adapting the curriculum to meet needs; encouraging empathy; and teaching in ways that facilitate these (Fryer, 1996). In order to function at full creative capacity, children need the freedom to pursue questions that captivate them, and to work in learning environments that offer a blend of high support and high expectations (Rea, 2001).

Nuances of attitude and the details of daily practice can be either facilitative or inhibitive of children's creative thought and expression. Fryer (1996) found that male teachers tended to view creativity in terms of original outcomes, whereas women teachers were more likely to look for depth of thought, depth of feeling and experience. Stanko (2000) claims that teachers function more creatively when they adopt the processes of creative thinking and provide genuine lines of inquiry through multi-disciplinary methods.

Teachers work in the context of meeting targets, delivering objectives with tangible, value-added outcomes, and covering their classroom walls with evidence of content being taught and learned. Their preoccupations are with products and these are considered next.

The product created

Products are often viewed as the outcome of purposeful or competitive designing and making projects. However, I searched the literature for insight into notions of novelty, originality and value of abstract as well as tangible products.

Value ascribed to a product of creative endeavour could relate to its individual, relative or historic originality and its intellectual, technological, practical,

aesthetic or affective worth (NACCCE, 1999). This worth might be measured by its statistical rarity in terms of originality, novelty, non-conformity or unusualness, or by value in terms of its usefulness and appropriateness linked to its purpose (Moss, 1966, Mumford, 2003).

Boden (1990) offers two useful categories of novelty: psychological novelty as 'P-novel', which is new to the mind in which it arose; and historical novelty as 'H-novel', which is an idea that is P-novel but has never been thought of by anyone else before. An idea that is new or unusual to the mind in which it arose is considered to be original (Alder, 2002, Craft, 2000). Heerwagen (2004) explains that two key cognitive processes are involved in creativity: *combinatorial* – in which novel combinations are produced from generating and testing familiar ideas or things; and *transformational* in which analogical reasoning and metaphors are used to transfer concepts from one domain to another. The ability to create novel mental content – an idea - is emphasized by some as the essential hallmark of intelligence (Gardner & Sternberg, 1994, Spearman, 1927).

Novelty might be shown by products that are non-conformist, non-traditional or unorthodox, that contrast with the usual, that break the mould, that are discoveries, and that are surprising in light of what was known at the time (Amabile, 1996, Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, Duffy, 1998, Sternberg, 1999, Torrance, 1988a). Proactive and reactive creativity can be applied to a familiar task and produce a novel solution, which requires transformation, modification or rejection of previously accepted ideas. Or creativity can be applied to a novel task where the identification of a novel problem leads to an appropriate novel solution (Kaufmann, 2004, Sternberg, 2001a, Unsworth, 2001). These creative outcomes seem to involve intentionally crossing, breaking, changing, challenging or pushing out perceived boundaries (Perkins, 1988).

Creativity as a product that is linked to the economy is a vision of the future that has determined government policy. For example: '...creative talent will be crucial to our individual and national economic success in the future ...' (Blair, 2001) and '...to make Britain the world's creative hub (Purnell, 2005). Creativity is seen by some researchers as the application of knowledge, skills and competencies needed by an adaptive work force to ensure the future prosperity of the nation in an unpredictable global context (Gibson, 2005, Selzer & Bentley, 1999). Robinson

(2004) has argued that our education system needs to be shaped by new patterns of work, by the accelerated impact of technologies and by new ways of living. Interest in creativity as a driver of economic well-being – creative capital - is apparent in recent educational policies of other countries: Singapore's policy of *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation* (2005) has emphasized creative problem-solving and critical thinking; Taiwan's *Creativity in Education White Paper* (2005) has declared its commitment to the vision of a *Republic of Creativity.* These examples overtly reflect reactions to and dissatisfaction with previous narrow, core curricula. A global perspective on culture as a creative product is advanced in UNESCO's *Our Creative Diversity* (2005) manifesto, to present actions that embrace the opportunity to create a full, satisfying, valuable and valued way of living together.

Appleton (2003) sees creativity is a kind of cultural energy like electricity, which flows around society and brings about economic innovation and growth. Memes, in the controversial new science of memetics refers to a unit of cultural information. Ideas, theories and concepts, as well as cultural practices such as sculpture, literature and songs, evolve through replication and natural selection, so, while one idea may become extinct, others will survive, spread and mutate through modification (Blackmore, 2000, Dawkins, 1976, Gabora, 2005).

The value of a creative product might be evaluated in different ways: either by expert validation through domain-specific criteria; through confirmation by the community of its cultural contribution; or by the iterative assessment of the individual of its provenance and process (Amabile, 1996, Amabile, 2001, Beattie, 1997, Priest, 2001, Sefton-Green & Sinker, 2000). However, any assessment of the originality and value of a product of creative endeavour will be highly subjective because it can be influenced by cultural, societal or individual viewpoints. Paradoxes arising from a consideration of value include: popularity versus rarity; vogue versus usefulness; personal versus global; craft versus spontaneity; freedom of expression versus constraint; intention versus serendipity.

A creative product is the outcome of a creative process. Many researchers have formulated their ideas on the mechanisms and phases involved in the process of creative activity. These are considered next.

The process of creating

There are many examples in the literature of models of the creative process, which include techniques for generating ideas and developing skills.

Wallas (1926) studied methods of divergent and associative thinking, and was one of the first to structure creativity as a process. The process includes an incubation stage, in which conscious thought is suspended whilst the problem remains as an ambient thought awaiting the 'AHA!' or 'eureka' moment of creative insight in the illumination stage:

Preparation	definition of issue, observation and study
Incubation	laying the issue aside for a time
Illumination	the moment when a new idea finally emerges
Verification	checking it out

This is an influential and enduring theory of the creative process and many researchers have analysed and re-defined its separate stages. Kessler (2000) suggests that: *preparation* is a time of discipline involving the focused gathering of skills, principles and data; *incubation* is a time of letting go, being open to possibility, even chaos; *illumination* arises directly out of the incubation phase; *verification* involves evaluating and refining the outcome. These component phases are used to examine models of the creative process in this section.

The Preparation Phase

For Harnad (2001), preparing the mind is the key to creativity: it involves establishing expectations and moving in familiar directions. Studies have shown that highly creative people tend to build up huge reservoirs of information, demonstrating exceptional intellectual versatility and an insatiable curiosity about fields of knowledge outside their particular specialty (Root-Bernstein, 1995, Simonton, 1999). Rossman's (1931) analysis of questionnaires completed by 710 inventors shows five stages of preparation - observation of a need, analysis of the need, survey of available information, formulation and analysis of solutions - suggesting that intensive research is carried out before a new idea is formed.

The Incubation Phase

Asserting that creativity can be cultivated as a habit, Sternberg (1999) explains that children need to believe in their ability to succeed. Torrance's (1990)

incubation model of teaching comprises three elements: *warming up* engages and stimulates curiosity; in *deepening expectations,* children become absorbed in learning, delve into new information, use senses, question and hypothesise; and in *keeping things going*, they apply and reflect on learning.

Koestler (1975) has proposed that creativity involves deliberately making connections between previously unrelated thoughts to produce a creative idea. Being able to shift a mental model to a new and different perspective is helped by the use of metaphors, analogies and comparisons because they link two seemingly unrelated things (Chi, 1997). Synectics encourages speculative and imaginative thinking to make bold connections between unrelated ideas (Fisher, 2002). Boden (1995) described the creative process as a person's exploration and transformation of conceptual spaces: the *exploration* of conceptual spaces relates to recalling knowledge, while *transforming* conceptual spaces relates to forming new associations between knowledge structures.

Brainstorming, brainwalking, 'mind mapping', SCAMPER (substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to other uses, eliminate, rearrange) and Socratic questioning are approaches that focus attention systematically on each aspect of a 'messy' problem, generate a fund of ideas, and make insightful connections to reach a possible solution (Bowkett, 2005, Buzan, 2001, Fryer, 2003, Isaksen & Trefflinger, 1985, Lucas, 2002, Osborn, 1952, Osborn, 1963, Parnes, 1992, Shallcross, 1981). Smith (1998) has distilled the active ingredients for creativity from an analysis of 172 ideation techniques: *strategies* include the search and retrieval of information from memory and experience, challenging assumptions and habits, and making analogies and comparisons; *enablers* include intrinsic motivation, setting the problem aside, and deferred evaluation. These ideas have influenced understanding of the cognitive aspects of creativity by subsequent researchers (Cropley, 1999; Mumford, 2000; Runco, 2000; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000).

Bloom's (1956) hierarchical taxonomy of cognitive goals – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation – has been influential in planning for thinking in education. Fisher (1990) has updated this by describing critical thinking as synonymous with Bloom's skills of evaluation, creative thinking with synthesis and problem-solving with application and

analysis. He suggests an anxiety-free atmosphere of intellectual flow, of questions and thoughts constantly provoking further questions and thoughts (Fisher, 1998). According to de Bono (1976), creative thinking encompasses knowing what to do, when and how to do it, what tools to use and the consequences. His *Six Thinking Hats* guide lateral thinking in role playing to generate ideas from fresh perspectives (de Bono, 1970).

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) has identified flow as a common characteristic of creative people – the effortless yet highly focused state of consciousness. Achieving this state is the focus of many personal development programmes and books. Intensity combined with playfulness is needed for fluid-adaptive thinking and regulated curiosity in which a person becomes lost in the work and time flies by unnoticed (Kashdan & Fincham, 2002, Rea, 2001). Once the mind has been captivated by such an optimal experience it tends to pursue it again, even in the absence of external rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

The Illumination Phase

Researchers interested in intuition and innovation have proposed that the "Aha!" event is an affective response that arises because of the sudden unexpectedness and surprising difference of a breakthrough (Gick & Lockart, 1995, Perkins, 1995). Barron's (1988) Psychic Creation Model – *Conception, Gestation, Parturition, Bringing up baby* - presents the notion of the growth of an idea that is original to the person who creates it, but also has the power to effect change. Koberg and Bagnall's (1981) Universal Traveller model encourages openness to discovery through accepting the challenge of creativity in deliberate analytical, reflective and practical thinking. Harnad (2001) speculates that the essential elements of creativity might be: *method* - a formula; *memory* – an innate structure; *magic* – a mysterious and inexplicable occurrence; *mutation* – a chance 'bolt from the blue'; and *madness* – obsessive behaviour.

A common theme of process models is the notion of finding a problem and finding a solution to it. Hinton (1968) has surmised that creativity occurs when a problem is solved with an insightful rather than learned response. However, a problem is often approached with the use of wrong heuristics, wrong information or fixed thinking along a wrong line and putting it aside for a while allows for a

fresh, unbiased solutions (Dijksterhuis & Meurs, 2005). Also, problem-solving is only one aspect of creativity.

Craft (2001) has identified levels in the creative process that express, shape and encourage creativity: the impulse or source of creativity that feeds the intuitive, spiritual and emotional levels; this supports levels of imagination, problem-solving and divergent thinking; in risk taking, the person engages in a creativity cycle of preparation, letting go, germination and assimilation.

The verification phase

According to Sternberg's (1996) investment theory, creativity involves *buying low* being willing and able to pursue ideas with persistence, despite encountering resistance, and *selling high* – persuading others of their worth. The culmination of the creative process involves bringing work to a satisfying conclusion with some evaluation in which the appropriateness of the product – as an idea, solution or artefact - is judged. The need to make adjustments to accommodate a new idea or invention into one's life is incorporated into Fritz's *Process for Creation* (Fritz, 1991). Schon's (1983) *Reflection-in-Action Process* and Nakakoji's (2001) *Amplifying Representational Talkback* (ART) model stress the importance of communication in the creative cycle.

Other theories have broadened the idea of the creative outcome further. Scheidermann (2005) identifies three changes brought about by creativity: *inspirationalist* - changes in perception and ideas; *structuralist* - systematic and deliberate changes; and *situationalist* – changes resulting from interaction and collaboration. Boden (2001) asserts that constraints and unpredictability combine in original thinking and lie at the heart of creativity.

Others consider that the creative process is the discipline involved in continuing tradition through imitation and practice towards excellence (Duncum, 2001, Negus & Pickering, 2004, Scruton, 1982).

Creativity in education

The benefits of creativity in education, as well as the challenges, have been discussed by researchers such as Boden (1990, 1995, 2003), Craft (2001, 2002, 2003, 2005), Claxton 2000, 2004, 2005), Lucas (2002), Fryer (2003), and others. Building on Dewey's work, Kolb (1984:38) presented a cyclical model of learning

as a process whereby knowledge is created through a sequence of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Vygotsky (1978) proposed a similar process of creative imagination – *exploring* objects, materials, people, places or ideas, *inspiration* by reflecting on and elaborating on impressions, *production* by assembling selected elements in novel ways, and *sharing* so that products of crystallised imagination can be experienced by others. Eisner (2002) considers that the creative process includes: experiencing the world qualitatively, framing an idea, creating a vehicle through which the idea can be realized, and using a technical repertoire that will make its realization possible.

All Our Futures has made a significant impact on creativity in education (NACCCE, 1999b). Some component characteristics of creativity described in the report were selected by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), which oversees the curriculum and its priorities in the UK, to promote creativity across all national curriculum subjects (QCA, 2003). These are outlined in Table 2.1 below and underpin my research.

Table 2.1 Component characteristics of creativity in education

asking questions	responding to challenges, tasks or problems in an unusual way, showing independent thinking
making connections	seeing relationships, using analogies and applying skills and experience in a new context.
envisaging what might be	seeing new possibilities, looking at things in different ways, and asking "what if?" or "what else?"
exploring ideas	keeping options open, experimenting, trying fresh approaches, anticipating and overcoming difficulties.
reflecting and evaluating	reviewing ideas, actions and outcomes constructively.

When teachers actively plan for creativity, learners respond by engaging with their learning and this improves literacy, self-esteem, motivation and achievement. Referring to the NACCCE report and its consequent findings, *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003) introduced a raft of reform with the government intention that schools should have the freedom to innovate. It was a pledge to provide a rich, broad and balanced national curriculum as an entitlement for all children in England, emphasising that teaching is excellent when learning is enjoyed (DfES, 2003). Importantly, the frameworks of objectives for literacy and numeracy were reviewed and merged into the Primary National Strategy (DfES,

2003). A renewed framework of objectives was published in 2005 resulting in a further round of training, documentation and web-based resources.

There is an appetite for creativity in education. Creative development is one of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum for children up to the age of five in England. Following consultation, a *Creative English Entitlement* for children was agreed by QCA (2005), stating for example, that children should be given opportunities to enter the world of imagination found in books and theatre, and should experience a visit from a writer at least once in each key stage. The document presents 'four Cs' of entitlement in the English curriculum as competence, creativity, cultural understanding and critical skills.

Artsmark awards from Arts Council England endorse the value of a school culture of creativity. The national Creative Partnerships initiative brings together cultural institutions, artists and schools to enrich learning so that children can develop their own creative potential. The government has provided substantial grants for museums and galleries to work in innovative ways with schools. Funding is available for summer schools that develop children's creative talents in their transition from primary to secondary school with specialist teachers, creators and practitioners. The Secondary National Strategy promotes creative thinking activities to equip young people to work creatively and flexibly in new forms of work in the future.

When HMCI reviewed the effectiveness of 33 successful primary schools, they reported that a key factor in the achievement of high standards in literacy is the leadership and practice of visionary practitioners who are imaginative in their interpretation of the literacy strategy because children are engaged by learning that develops, stretches them and excites their imagination (Ofsted, 2002b). Their findings showed that the best primary schools combine high standards with a broad and rich curriculum and enjoyable, exciting learning. Through its Section 10 inspection framework, Ofsted now requires inspectors to evaluate the extent to which the curriculum promotes creativity and to give credit for imaginative lessons and learning that is vivid, real and relevant (Ofsted, 2003b).

The Roberts' Report, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (DfES, 2006) has built on the recommendations of *All Our Futures* and presented a policy

framework for the future of creativity in education. It has the view that all children and young people can be creative and should have access to creative experiences. The Government's Response (DCMS, 2006) has set out actions it intends to take in each of the areas identified by Roberts towards the vision of making Britain the world's cultural hub (Purnell, 2005).

My research was predicated on key factors of creativity defined in *All Our Futures*, with its focus on how creativity can improve learning and make it more effective (NACCCE, 1999a, QCA, 2003). The key factors are:

- *imaginative* activity - thinking and behaving imaginatively
- pursuing *purpose* - applying imagination towards an objective
- being *original* - individual, relative and historic
- outcome is of *value* - in relation to the objective.

For the purposes of this research, this definition of creativity has been synthesized as *purposeful imaginative activity*. The next section examines some perspectives on the imagination.

2.3 Imagination

According to *All our Futures*, the imagination is the driving force of change in response to the impelling pressures of living (NACCCE, 1999b). Imaginative activity is seen as serious mental play, a generative process directed towards a creative purpose in order to expand possibilities, look from new perspectives, see analogies, envisage alternatives, make unusual connections, and project into another person's thoughts, feelings, attitudes and situation.

The next section is drawn mainly from the work of Brann (1991), Beaney (2005), Egan (2004, 2006), Heath (2005), Kind (2006) and Thomas (2006) in order to outline briefly some perspectives on the imagination that continue to contribute to the discourse. I then consider some implications for education.

Historical perspectives on the imagination

Conjecture on the phenomenon of the imagination has inevitably turned to the Greeks, with Plato having a persistent influence on the subject. Although Plato based his original model of education on the arts, he later eschewed the

imagination as fanciful, equating it with conjecture, chaos and copying, advocating that reason through rational activity was the only way to achieve knowledge and intellectual maturity. However, Plato's student, Aristotle perceived the imagination as phantasia - the mental capacity to form ideas as imagery from sense impressions.

Even so, the Platoistic legacy has continued to polarise imagination and reason, so that the imagination is often associated with whimsical fantasy in conflict with reality. The austere forms of reformation Christianity claimed that truth could be distorted through the potentially destructive power of the imagination, illustrating this with biblical references, such as 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth' in Genesis 8:21. The rhetoric suggested that imagery is inferior to the true, 'imageless' insight of prayer, and that imagination, as the vehicle of desire, might lead one morally astray.

In the seventeenth century, Descartes dismissed the power of imagination, maintaining that there was an incommensurable world-gulf between abstract mental imagery and three-dimensional reality. Pascal also dismissed it as the mistress of error and of falsehood. Hobbes saw the imagination as a store of memory's faded images and decaying sense.

Philosophers in the eighteenth century seem to have been more persuaded by Aristotle. Hume pursued Aristotle's belief that the imagination links perception to memory as imagery, enabling things to be available to the mind in their absence and proposing that nothing imagined is impossible. Von Herder claimed that the imagination was the link connecting the finer mental powers of the mind to the body. Kant considered that meaning-making was reliant on the power of the imagination to synthesize impressions as mental images from sensory experiences; he distinguished the transcendental imagination as the power of the mind to make meaning, and the empirical imagination as the ability to create appearances of something in its absence – 'Einbildungskraft' – not limited by substance, space and time.

Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake and Shelley in the nineteenth century viewed the imagination as the 'being' in human being. For them, the imagination synthesised experience as 'second nature' and was

fundamental to rationality and reason. Shelley (quoted in Egan, 2004) considered that the imagination was the 'mind acting upon thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them, as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity'. He claimed that poetry was the expression of the imagination and that the imagination was an instrument of moral good. Blake distinguished degrees of imaginative insight – the narrow, literal view of 'single vision', the creative energy of 'twofold vision', the material and spiritual worlds of the 'threefold vision' and the 'fourfold vision' of rare inspiration.

Coleridge made a distinction between the randomness of fancy and the symbolic power of the imagination to make, modify and structure meaning, checked by the senses and reason. Famously, he distinguished between the primary and secondary imaginations: the primary imagination as 'the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.'; the secondary imagination 'dissolves and dissipates' the material generated by the primary imagination to create imagined worlds. Wordsworth added that the imagination reconstructs objects symbolically and subliminally in their absence as a means of interpreting the world.

In the twentieth century Sartre also deliberated on the non-actual of the imagined and in *L'imaginaire,* his existentialist view was that the imagination can retain vivid visual images known as 'eidetic imaging' and can reproduce an absent original as a quasi presence. Marx in *Grundrisse* remarked, 'What distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality'. Jung developed his *Active Imagination* therapy using 'as if', it's like, and 'that reminds me of' to prompt dialogue with the archetypal world of the psyche. Freud described the imagination as 'the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with material reality'.

Angell (1906) viewed the imagination as a resource for forming concepts and creating meaning. According to Angell (1906:214), 'all imagination is based in one way or another upon previous perceptual activities, and consequently the psychical material which we meet in imagination is all of a piece with the material which perception brings to us, and altogether like it, save that in imagination the fabric is often much faded and sometimes much cut up and pieced.' He explained

how most people can mentally reinstate reliable approximations of visual, auditory, tactual, and motor qualities with confidence. For Dewey (1933:278), teacher imagination was a way to envision pedagogical possibilities.

Warnock (1976), Brann (1991), Finke (1992) and Passmore (1998) have attempted to distinguish between imagery, which is recollective and reproductive, and the imagination, which generates novel intellectual entities or descriptions. Merleau-Ponty (2002) explains how imagination, emotion and perception arise from the same bodily experience and are holistic intentionalities. Passmore (1991:54, 1998: 238)) considers that the conceptual boundaries between 'seeing', 'seeing as' and 'imagining' are only remotely connected to experience.

Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) distinguish 'creative' from 'recreative' imagining: creative imagining is an event in which one produces ideas without determinant expectations and conventions; recreative imagining an event in which imagining simulates another sort of event without being a literal recreation of it - visually imagining X is a simulation of visually perceiving X, It involves imagery, pretence, and supposition. Gaut (2005) proposes that imagining is propositional thought-content without commitment to its existence.

Education and imagination

For Dewey (1934, 1966) the imagination is the medium of appreciation, the gateway through which meanings are derived from past experiences and are carried into the present. His pedagogy integrates the intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions of understanding in phases of purposeful and imaginative activity - doing and undergoing (Dewey, 1990). According to Vygotsky (1978), the cognitive tools of communicating through language with self and others through symbol systems of reading and writing admit children to an enormous mental universe. He recognised that children are experts in their knowledge and experience of real and imagined worlds; they build up systems of representation in social activities through cultural cognitive tools. Vygotsky (1978) considered the imagination to be a higher-order mental function and was interested in the connection between imaginary experience and aesthetic reactions to literature.

Others, such as Piaget and Bruner see the imagination as a transitional cognitive developmental marker to be discarded in favour of structured knowledge and

global abstractions. However, Bruner (1986, 1990, 1996) also encouraged educators to cultivate make-believe narratives in young children to help them generate their own 'possible worlds' in reading and writing as well as play. Although Gardner (1986, 1999, 2005) liberated intelligence into multiple facets, he sees the mind as biologically preset to develop from concrete to abstract, and considers the imagination to be irrelevant, its activity a slippage of neural wiring.

The Root-Bernsteins (1999) propose that learning how to learn can be developed by teaching children tools for imaginative thinking. They describe how imaginative thinkers use a toolbox of thirteen thinking tools to generate, translate and express their ideas, relating their assertions to scientific research into the sensory and emotional aspects of imagination. Pylyshyn's (1991) description theory explains that thoughts are internal notes written in the mind.

Efland (2002:118) explains how the imagination can acquire cultural tools such as language, symbol systems and artworks as `habits of mind' that the learner can apply to reshape their lifeworld. He describes the imagination as a pervasive structuring ability in creative activity; imagery and narrative establish new meanings and achieve coherent, patterned and unified representations. According to Bruner (1990:56), narrative provides a frame, which enables humans to interpret and represent their experiences and construct meaning.

Eisner (2002) argues that education is a purposive inquiry process with the imagination at its heart. For Eisner, the imagination is a form of thinking that engenders the creation of possible worlds and provides a safety net for experiment and rehearsal. He cautions that, because imaginative activity can remain an entirely private affair, representation stabilizes the idea and makes dialogue with it possible (Eisner, 2002). This is similar to Heathcote's idea of the 'holding form' (Heathcote, 1982). Eisner has argued for the cultivation of the senses as a way of expanding the curriculum and, consequently, the consciousness of the learner (Eisner, 2002). Adding a rich multi-sensory component to the writing process dramatically improves children's writing abilities (Olshansky, 1995). International research into the use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic components for children's self-expression, decision-making and learning shows profound positive impacts on their schooling and self-esteem (Johnson & Nurick, 2003).

If the concept of creativity is complex, multi-faceted and difficult to define, then the imagination is perhaps more so, and if the status of creativity in education is insecure, then imagination is treated with particular caution. Table 2.2 highlights five different kinds of imagination synthesised from the literature.

Table 2.2 Conceptions of the imagination synthesised from the literature

aesthetic	when we appreciate or represent something	in apprehending and interpreting the world through the senses in appreciating artworks or nature in appreciating things that express or illuminate meaning in representing meaning symbolically in creating artworks that encourage sensory appreciation in responding to language, symbols or ideas
productive	when we think of something not actually present to the senses	in knowing that something continues to exist even when we look away in thinking of something not presently perceived, but possibly is, was, could, or will be real at some time in believing something to be real, but is a fantasy it is fictional
suppositional	when we contemplate possibilities	in proposing something without necessarily believing it in imagining 'that' (X imagines that p) in pretending in hypothesising without necessarily expecting it to occur in hazarding a guess or anticipating consequences in entertaining a concept
sensory (somatic)	when we conjure up a mental simulation of a perception-like state	in recreating sensory perceptions in the mind in conceiving of mental imagery from sensory thought-content in explaining, describing and representing, through analogy, comparison and metaphor in perceiving the whole from the part
affective	when we infer emotions	in inferring the thoughts, feelings and qualities of another person in imagining what it is like to be someone else in imagining what it is like to be in someone else's position in inferring mood or atmosphere about a place or object in relating experience to someone else's

The literature led to identifying some components of the repertoire of the sensory and affective imaginations in my research.

2.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have attempted to draw together some of the implications from the literature on literacy, creativity and imagination on the research.

Teachers' concerns that the literacy objectives from the strategy were a constraint on creativity and imagination were confirmed in the literature. In addition, there seems to be compelling evidence that effective teaching of literacy occurs where learning is contextualised and children have agency over creating meaning by exploring possibilities and representing their ideas imaginatively.

Characteristics of creativity that can be nurtured were explored in the *person* section. The effect on creativity of contextual and cultural factors was explored in

the section on *provision.* In schools, this means creating a climate of trust and enquiry by teachers who have agency over their pedagogy. Models of the creative *process* reviewed in this chapter have influenced my research and these are presented in Table 2.3 below. I have used headings from Wallas's (1926) version for the horizontal axis to compare phases from other models.

Table 2.3 Creative process models synthesised from the literature

Wallas (1926)	**preparation**		**incubation**		**illumination**	**verification**
	definition of issue	observation and study	laying the issue aside for a time		the moment when a new idea emerges	checking it out
Vygotsky (1978)	**exploration** objects, materials, people, places, ideas	**inspiration** from reflecting on impressions	**elaboration**	**production** - assembling selected elements in novel ways	**sharing** so that products of crystallised imagination can be experienced by others	
Kolb (1984)	concrete experience	reflective observation	abstract conceptual-ization	active experiment-ation	transformation of knowledge	
Barron (1988)	conception		gestation		parturition	bringing up baby
Torrance (1990)	**warming up**	**deepening expectations**		**keeping things going**		
	Children are engaged expectations are heightened curiosity is stimulated	They question and hypothesise delve into new information use senses	They become absorbed in learning		They apply what has been learned	They reflect on personal implications from learning
Kessler (2000)	**preparation**		**incubation**		**illumination**	**verification**
	a time of discipline and focus	gathering of skills, principles and data	a time of letting go, doing nothing	being open to possibility	outcome arises directly out of the incubation phase	evaluating and refining the outcome
Eisner (2002)	experiencing the world qualitatively	framing an idea	creating a vehicle through which the idea can be realized		using a technical repertoire to make realization possible	
Craft	**preparation** identifying the problem	**thinking** divergent possibility	**germination** letting go	**assimilation**	**completion**	**reflection**
QCA (2003)	**asking questions**	**making connections**	**envisaging possibilities**	**exploring ideas**		**reflecting & evaluating**
	responding to challenges, tasks or problems in an unusual way -	seeing relationships & analogies applying skills experience in a new context	Seeing things in different ways, and asking what might be possible - "what if?" or "what else?"	keeping options open, experimentin g, trying fresh approaches	anticipating & overcoming difficulties independent thinking	reviewing ideas, actions and outcomes in a constructive way

The impact on education of the compulsion to equip children with creative skills to secure a strong future economy was discussed in the section on *product.* The

literacy curriculum, with its current emphasis on objectives, targets and value-added outcomes, provided the focus for my research.

The review has influenced the inclusive, child-centred view of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity taken in this research. The following principles have been drawn from consulting the literature:

1. A holistic approach to literacy planning could be provided by placing emphasis on reading for enjoyment, reading with a writer's eye, and writing with a reader in mind;
2. Theories of aesthetic response and appreciation could support the promotion of imaginative meaning-making;
3. Identifying the literacy concepts could provide an organising structure for objectives;
4. A creative process model could be useful for teachers as a planning tool;
5. Teachers need to have agency over their professional decisions even though they feel bound to a local and national standards agenda.
6. If the imagination is viewed as a resource, activities could be planned with the purpose of engaging children in the process of creating and representing meaning
7. Insights into the imagination could be interpreted from children's work

These became the possibilities to be explored through my overarching research question: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?*

The theoretical and historical perspectives summarised from the literature underpin the *literacy planning format* developed in the first cycle of my action research, the *MAGIC planning tool* developed in the second cycle, and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* developed in the third cycle. The research method is explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

This chapter explains the questions driving the enquiry, why a pragmatic stance was taken, why the method was chosen, and how the action research was planned, carried out and evaluated.

As explained in 1.3, my view is that knowledge is an ongoing, dynamic process of actively constructing meaning through enquiry. This draws on Vygotsky's (1978) epistemology of social constructivism, which has influenced my pedagogy and informed the conduct of my research. The topic for enquiry arose from examining the socially constructed perceptions relating to literacy and the imagination from the literature, from my experience, and from within my community of practice. The methodological approach adopted reflects my understanding of action research from the literature, as a systematic method of personal professional development in which the researcher deliberately seeks useful ways to improve an aspect of practice and purposefully constructs their own understanding through an evaluative process of planning, acting, describing and reflecting in, on and for practice (Dick, 2000, Hubbard & Power, 1999, Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, McKernan, 1996, McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Tripp, 2003, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Thus, the research deliberately involved others in order to gain a range of interpretations and perspectives on learning and teaching and thereby co-construct conceptual scaffolds for planning imaginative contexts for literacy. These constructs were built on a diversity of ideas and would not exist without the unique contribution of each participant and the embodied knowledge and shared meanings developed in the group. However, I recognise that the resultant concepts are the consequence of selecting and interpreting those particular experiences, theories and participants most relevant to my enquiry and are not neutral representations (Midalia,1999:28).

3.1 Research questions

Changes to my job as primary education adviser in 2003 meant that I was expected to help teachers implement the national strategies, as explained in 1.2. At the same time, 1 was anxious to retain my long-standing advocacy role in

promoting creativity in schools. Therefore, I decided to focus my research on how I could support teachers in planning their provision for children to 'respond imaginatively in different ways to what they have read' and to write 'imaginative and interesting texts' – their statutory national curriculum entitlement (DfEE, 2000). The overarching research question driving this research resulted from reflecting on issues in this context and placing my role, my values and my living educational theories under scrutiny. It was:

How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?

I was concerned that the national strategy with its scripted methodology had subsumed the primary national curriculum for English. Planning for literacy had become a burdensome preoccupation for many primary teachers (Allen, 2002, Frater, 2002, Ofsted, 2002). Indeed, colleagues who formed the community of practice around my research expressed concerns that, although they were committed to implementing the literacy strategy, they felt they had lost their professional integrity and wanted to provide more holistic and creative learning opportunities for reading and writing. Because I was tasked with supporting teachers with their literacy planning, this prompted a subsidiary research question: *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?*

I was concerned that the national strategy procedures exercised control on teachers' professional creativity. An emphasis on basic skills, attainment levels and teacher subject knowledge meant that the teaching of reading and writing had become fragmented and utilitarian, as discussed in 2.1. Because I value creativity in learning and teaching, I wanted to discover more about the creative processes involved in reading and writing and to find out: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning?*

Because I wanted to understand more about the role of the imagination in creating meaning, this question prompted further research: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?*

These subsidiary questions propelled the cycles of action research and, because they are focused on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem (Creswell, 2003:11), a pragmatic approach was taken.

3.2 The pragmatic approach

A pragmatic approach seeks practical applications of research and pedagogy, synthesising ideas into useful new theories and practices (Dillon et al., 2000). Focusing on literacy research, Dillon (2000:25) asserts that:

> Pragmatism is not a paradigm adapted from those that are currently popular; rather, it is a revolutionary break in our thinking and practice relating to inquiry. As a literacy community, we need to challenge ourselves to step back and think collectively and individually about the inquiry in which we are engaged
>
> (Dillon, 2000:25).

The pragmatic approach fits with my values and beliefs, which were articulated in 1.3 and have affected the way I planned and carried out the research. By following Dillon's (2000) principles for the pragmatic researcher, I endeavoured to:

- engage with others who wanted to address the issue;
- try to make a difference in pedagogy;
- examine my assumptions closely;
- frame my enquiry with a theories from the literature;
- design a meaningful, appropriate and useful enquiry;
- support my findings with data, including pictorial and narrative data;
- communicate my understandings.

Central to the pragmatic paradigm is the research question, and the research method is chosen because it is most likely to provide insights into understanding it (Cresswell, 2003). Therefore, my choice from the range of qualitative research methods discussed in the next section reflects the pragmatic purpose of my research questions.

3.3 Considering research methods

Ethnography, case-study, biography, phenomenology and grounded theory were methods considered for the research with reference to Cohen (2001), Cresswell

(1998), Denzin and Lincoln (1998), and Winters (1999). These research methods are summarised next.

Ethnographic studies involve lengthy and detailed fieldwork so that the researcher can present a cultural portrait of the behaviour and language of a particular group by inferring meanings from words, actions and artefacts gathered over time. Whilst this sort of study might have yielded rich detail of the culture of one classroom, I am expected to work with several schools. Therefore, because I was not in a position to immerse myself in one place with one teacher and one year group, I decided that an ethnographic approach would not provide answers to my research questions.

A case study involves gathering information and experiences so that the researcher can present a detailed, chronological description of how an issue has influenced events in a place. Whilst interpreting these kinds of data might have illustrated how a particular teacher engaged his or her class in purposeful imaginative activities over time, the study of a single case would not have served the purpose of my research. However, my enquiry did involve peer professionals as participants in the research thereby offering a set of case studies from a purposive sample. Also, my thesis presents a case-study of a particular researcher in a particular local authority addressing a particular issue.

A biographical study takes the researcher on an interpretive journey to collect information and experiences so that the development of an individual's ideas can be described in a narrative of their lived experience (Winter et al., 1999). Whilst writing an autobiographical account of my efforts to improve my practice and understanding does form part of the personally reflective aspect of my research, the research was also a collaborative enquiry and I decided that a biographical approach would not provide answers to the research questions.

A phenomenological study involves gathering information and experiences of a phenomenon and reflecting upon these data for clusters of meaning until the essence of the phenomenon is revealed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In some ways, I sought to gain insight into the phenomenon of the imagination and its role in learning and teaching, but the pragmatic focus of the research meant that a phenomenological study would not provide answers to the research questions.

A grounded theory approach involves proposing an open-ended theory about a phenomenon, then subjecting it to constant modifications by gathering, categorising and codifying data with reference to the literature (Glaser, 2004). My research required a methodical approach to break down the large volume of disparate data to a manageable form. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach to grounded theory was favoured because it allowed my data gathering to be oriented around plans created by primary teachers for imaginative literacy activities. It informed the way in which I generated the conceptual categories by which these data were coded and analysed as *ever developing entit*[ies] (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:32). In this way, I was able to make sense of the data and the categories became the components with which the resultant theories were constructed.

The merits and limitations of all these research methods were considered before I decided that, because my enquiry was practical, professional and pragmatic, action research was the most appropriate method to use to address the research questions. Aspects of this method are discussed next.

3.4 Aspects of action research

Action research is a systematic, practical method of professional enquiry that is responsive, reflective and collaborative. These aspects are discussed next.

The professional aspect

In action research, the focus is on the researcher's own professional practice and understanding in order to improve it. It enables professionals to identify a situation for improvement, test ideas in action, undertake reflective self-evaluation and expand their repertoire. My enquiry resulted from making myself look at some of the complexities of my everyday work as an adviser supporting teachers in the local authority. Action research was chosen with the aim of improving my expertise, clarifying my values and developing my living educational theories as useful tools for colleagues to adapt in schools.

The responsive aspect

Dewey (1934) recommended that enquiry should respond to a problematic situation from practice, investigate it from various perspectives, consider and apply possible practical solutions, and evaluate the contributions to pedagogy. My research was a direct response to issues raised by teachers with regard to the

national strategies and planning for creativity and imagination in literacy. Writing and revising this thesis was also a responsive aspect of the action research process because it forced me to explain the reasons for my actions and choices.

The reflective aspect

Tripp (1990:159) sees reflectiveness as looking back to a previous 'frozen' moment or phase so that it can be interpreted retrospectively, as well as looking forward to future action through strategic planning. Action research is a way of making sense of your lifeworld, looking at things in new and creative ways, learning how to act to change things, and finding out how to do things better (Heron & Reason, 2001). Because it is an iterative process of learning in, through and from action, reflection involves taking an attitude of enquiry that keeps purposes, assumptions, actions and sense-making open and provisional (Marshall, 1999, 2004). Schon (1987) emphasises that reflection requires explicit descriptions of shifts in understanding drawn from learning experiences.

Through self-reflective questions, descriptions and explanations in conversations, diagrams and writings, I appraised the quality of my practice, considered possibilities in pedagogy, and tested my working theories against existing theories in the literature. Because of this reflective work, I have begun to understand some of the living contradictions and explanatory principles for my practice so that I feel I know more now about what I am doing, and why – and I am still learning (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

The systematic aspect

Heron and Reason (1992, 1996) see action research as the intentional interplay between action, reflection and making sense in a series of cycles. McKernan (1996) reminds us to clearly define the focus, specify a plan of action to test hypotheses, take action, reflect and evaluate its effectiveness, and finally communicate findings. Dick (2000) suggests that each cycle turns from reflection into action, giving another chance to test and make sense of interpretations developed so far. This systematic process is represented in Figure 3.1.

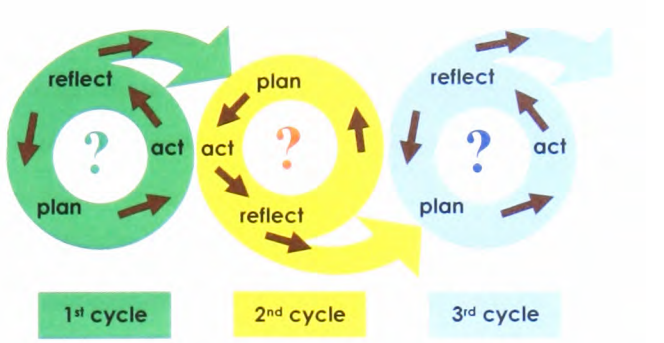

Figure 3.1 Cycles of action research

My thesis examines my understanding and practice through three cycles of action research. The process within each of these cycles took the following (sometimes overlapping) form, as advised by the literature:

Reflect:	identify the focus of research
Plan:	design a strategic direction to address key questions
	consider ideas of researchers and colleagues
Act:	observe, monitor and collect data
Evaluate:	reflect on what happened and explain what was learned
Disseminate:	share ideas, insights and findings with others.

The practical aspect

The three cycles of action research presented in this thesis took the form of three practical projects, which took place in the context of my work. They comprised: a project to organise the literacy objectives in a holistic planning format designed to promote creativity and imagination; a project to exemplify literacy plans that incorporate creativity and imagination; and a project to gather approaches that nurture and interpret children's imaginative endeavours to create meaning.

The collaborative aspect

Action research involves people with shared interests and concerns. As well as developing understanding and practice that is directly useful to them, action research can also empower them at a deeper level to see that they are capable of constructing and using their own knowledge (Freire in Gadotti, 1994, Reason, 2005).

By working with peer professionals in a collaborative enquiry, I was able to:

- enquire with others into mutual issues of concern
- make sense of experiences through partnership and teamwork
- generate plenty of data and ideas
- increase reliability by including different perspectives
- generate and construct practical models

However, effecting change through advisory work can subordinate practitioners and impose subject knowledge (McNiff, 2006). Kemmis (2001) suggests trying to create mutuality, a sense of 'power with' colleagues so that they feel that they participate on equal terms. Heron (1996) advises deliberately attending to your own 'power over' and moderating its privilege by ensuring contributory engagement in the enquiry. I respect colleagues' professional wisdom and evaluated whether participants felt empowered by participating in the research.

3.5 Participants

The collaborative projects were a vital aspect of the action research and involved peer professionals, who were highly qualified experts in my community of practice (Wenger, 1999). This purposive sample comprised a literacy consultant (LC) and seven leading literacy practitioners (LLPs).

The literacy consultant (LC) was employed by the primary national strategy to support the implementation of the literacy framework in the local authority. LC provides professional development for teachers and intensive support for schools causing concern. A key aspect of LC's work is to support teachers with their planning. LC shared her concerns with me about the narrow interpretations of literacy implied by the strategy and inferred by many teachers, and wanted to find a manageable way to exemplify a holistic view of literacy whilst fulfilling her obligations to the strategy.

The seven leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) were expert teachers in six primary schools. The role of a leading literacy practitioner in a local authority is to support teachers in other schools as part of the national strategy, particularly with planning alongside. LLPs are identified by head teachers, senior advisers and literacy consultants because of their outstanding practice. Each LLP has regular quality assurance visits from regional directors, advisers, consultants and teachers.

In turn, they have regular professional development in the form of strategy updates.

I invited the LLPs to take part in the enquiry at an update meeting, prompted by their appeals for more imagination and creativity in literacy. I felt that the LLPs would make a strong contribution to the enquiry because of their confidence and expertise in literacy teaching, their willingness to try to find ways to incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy plans, and their accessibility during the course of the project. Through them, I also had access to children from all year groups in the primary phase. Brief details about each participant LLP and their schools are given next. Initials are used in place of names to protect their identities.

Miss OI was an assistant head teaching Year One in a two-form entry infant school in a large village in the south of the local authority. Although it is in a semi-rural location, children from a large social housing estate in a neighbouring borough attend the school, as do children from the fairground traveller site. The class of five- and six year-olds included 2 children on the autistic spectrum and 3 children who read with exceptional fluency. Miss OI provided activities to nurture the varied learning styles of the children.

Mrs HI was an assistant head teaching Year Two in a two-form entry infant school in an affluent suburb of the local authority. The school was awarded a Gold Artsmark in 2005, an indicator of its commitment to creativity. The class of six- and seven-year olds included 2 children with language difficulties. A withdrawal group of 'gifted and talented' children worked each day for an hour on a research project with the head teacher.

Mrs PJJ taught Year Three in a two-form entry junior school in an affluent suburb of the local authority. The school subscribed to a commercial curriculum, which aims to connect subjects in broad, integrated topics. The class of seven- and eight-year old children included 3 children on the autistic spectrum. An analysis of Miss PJJ's plans is given in 5.3 to illustrate the process undertaken by the LLPs in the research. ***Miss PJG*** was a senior teacher who taught Year Six in the same two-form entry junior school as Miss PJJ.

Miss RP was the teacher in charge of a language unit, which was an integral part of a large, urban primary school. The twelve children were from Years Four and Five. Miss RP was imaginative in her approach, nurturing the children's positive self-image. On display were artefacts for the children to touch and use as well as their own artwork. Visiting teachers supported the children's different language needs.

Mrs BP was a senior teacher who taught Year Five in a new primary school near the town centre. The school has achieved Artsmark Gold. Mrs BP was imaginative in her interpretation of the strategy and planned enrichment activities for the class she had taught for three years. Her classroom was enticing and well-managed. The children were aged nine and ten.

Mrs HDJ was a senior teacher who taught Year Six in a suburban, two-form entry junior school. She interpreted the literacy objectives in an imaginative and resourceful way and planned differentiated enrichment activities to meet the various needs of the ten-year old children in her class.

The LLPs were all involved as active participants in co-constructing our collective understanding through discussions, planning and activity. I tried to emphasise that I valued the creative dialogue of equals that contributed to improving my practice and needed their professional creativity and expertise. Although my benefits probably outweigh theirs, the LLPs and LC saw themselves as stakeholders in the research. Meetings, correspondence and revision of the plans kept everyone up to date. However, there were ethical considerations and these are reviewed next.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were considered in the context of this action research enquiry using questions suggested by Dick (2000).

How did I try to avoid or minimize harm (including nuisance)?

Working in a school setting means attending to its policies and legal requirements. This means that 1 have not used identifiable images or names of schools, LLPs or children. Before I conducted any classroom based sessions, I familiarised myself with emergency procedures, behaviour protocols and any special educational

needs. Children's work was scanned and saved in coded files so that the original could be returned to them as their rightful property. Personalised letters were written to each child in response to their drawing to acknowledge their contribution to the project. All correspondence and materials referring to participants were kept in a locked cabinet in a room that was secured when I wasn't there. To minimise nuisance I provided art materials, paper and books and to minimise disrupting the school day I avoided visiting during collective worship, break-time and registration.

How did I try to make sure the enquiry partners took part in full knowledge of what the project entailed?

Because the research was designed as a participatory, collaborative process, participants were involved in identifying issues and making decisions about the actions throughout. LC and the LLPs became involved voluntarily as participants in the project and were assured they could withdraw at any time. They were not seen as subjects of the research but as expert persons engaged in it and committed to it - the aim was to empower. As stakeholders in the project, anticipated outcomes from the research were considered worthwhile by them and likely to yield useful results in their interests. These considerations were not simply assumed – colleagues were asked specific questions to ascertain their views on the conduct of the research and their part in it. I tried to bear in mind the privileged position I held and its possible effect on power relationships. I explained my belief that I had a lot to learn, including from them. I shared with colleagues the draft versions of my commentaries on their plans, made revisions according to their comments, and reported back to them. However, even though the enquiry was a direct response to problems they had articulated, I acknowledge that it was *my* research aimed at improving *my* practice.

Head teachers in each school were informed about the project and approval was given in all cases (Appendix 3.1, Appendix 3.5). Letters were sent to parents explaining the project and asking them to opt out if they objected to their children taking part. No replies were received. Letters were sent to the LLPs outlining the project (Appendix 3.3) and to the children thanking them for taking part (Appendix 3.6). Exhibitions of work were held in each school.

I secured funding from local authority standards funding to release the teachers from their classrooms to meet with me, to meet with each other and to plan and prepare their actions (Appendix 3.1). There were no hidden costs such as purchasing resources or refreshments. Reprographics were done in my workplace.

3.7 Research overview

Through my research, I sought to find a way of improving my understanding and practice so that I would be better able to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for creativity and imagination in a climate of changing curriculum emphases. This was addressed in three cumulative cycles of reflective and collaborative action research. Each cycle comprised the phases of reflection, planning, action, evaluation and dissemination explained in 3.4.

The first cycle of action research

In the first cycle of action research, I sought to find a way to promote creativity and imagination in reading and writing by interpreting the literacy objectives from the primary national strategy. The phases of reflection, planning, action, evaluation and dissemination are presented in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Phases of the first action research cycle

Research Question:		**How could objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?**
Phase		**Objectives**
Reflection:	What prompted the research?	• to appraise my beliefs, values, understanding and practice • to respond to colleagues' concerns about planning
Planning:	What strategic direction was taken?	• to schedule time to work with LC • to clarify our principles about teaching reading and writing • to discuss theoretical perspectives
Action:	What happened?	• to identify literacy concepts • to use the concepts as categories for analysis of the literacy objectives • to organise objectives in meaningful clusters • to create a literacy planning format
Evaluation:	What was learned from the action?	• to test the literacy planning format with the LLPs and review what was effective • to evaluate the findings against my values and beliefs • to identify what needed still to be done
Dissemination:	What was useful?	• to make revisions to the literacy planning format • to agree a design for publication • to distribute the plans - to schools and on courses

Thus, I considered the problems faced by teachers when planning for literacy and worked with LC to identify the concepts the children need to understand in order to read and write non-fiction, narrative and poetry. These concepts were used as categories for analysing the literacy objectives as data. All literacy objectives for all primary year groups and all terms were organised in a literacy planning format and evaluated. Further reflection relating to my values led to the next planned phase of the research. Chapter Four reports on the research conducted with LC, the primary literacy consultant.

The second cycle of action research

In the second cycle of action research, I sought to find a way that teachers could plan to provide meaningful contexts for children to experience the creative processes involved in reading and writing. The phases of reflection, planning, action, reflection and dissemination and specific objectives are presented in Table 3.2 below. Chapter Five reports on the research conducted with the leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) who applied child-centred, holistic approaches to their literacy planning.

Table 3.2 Phases of the second action research cycle

Research Question:	**How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning?**	
Phase		**Objectives**
Reflection:	What prompted the research?	• to build on the 1st research cycle - the planning format • to respond to requests to exemplify planning • to reflect on my ideas about creativity • to identify components of a planning tool
Planning:	What strategic direction was taken?	• to invite colleagues to participate • to consult the literature on literacy and creativity • to agree a schedule of action
Action:	What happened?	• to work with LLPs to plan meaningful creative contexts for literacy to meet the requirements of the primary national strategy • to analyse the plans
Evaluation:	What was learned from the action?	• to review what was effective • to evaluate the findings against my values & beliefs • to identify what needed still to be done
Dissemination:	What was useful?	• to make revisions to the plans • to agree a format for writing up the plans • to distribute the plans - to schools and on courses

Thus, I set out to reflect on my experiences as an artist, a researcher and an educator, to plan a course of action (Appendix 3.2), and to analyse data drawn

from the LLPs' literacy plans listed in Table 3.3 for evidence that teachers could plan for creativity and imagination in literacy.

Table 3.3 The leading literacy practitioners' literacy plans

School	MAGIC Module		Duration	Children
OI	*Y1 Poetry:*	Looking After Bears	3 weeks	31 x Y1
HI	*Y2 Explanations:*	Alphabetical Animals	2 weeks	31 x Y2
PJJ	*Y3 Instructions:*	Breakfast for a Leprechaun	5 weeks	31 x Y3
RP	*Y4 Narrative:*	Cool Characters	1 week	12 x Y4
BP	*Y5 Traditional Tales:*	Fabulous Firebirds	5 weeks	31 x Y5
HDJ	*Y6 Traditional Tales:*	Urashima the Hero	2 days	31 x Y6
PGJ	*Y6 Magazine Article:*	Flow of Opinion	2 weeks	31 x Y6

My intention was to take the evaluation of the LLPs' plans into the third research cycle using semi-structured interviews. However, in the second cycle of my research, we identified a range of purposeful imaginative activities that engaged and supported children's endeavours to create meaning. This led to the next cycle of the research.

The third cycle of action research

In the third cycle of action research, I sought to discover how teachers could nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning. The phases of reflection, planning, action, evaluation, dissemination, and specific objectives are presented in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 The third action research cycle

Research Question:	**How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?**	
Phase		**Objectives**
Reflection:	What prompted the research?	• to create a resource of purposeful imaginative activities • to identify elements of the imagination's repertoire
Planning:	What strategic direction was taken?	• to schedule time to work with LLPs • to make use of the ideas of researchers and colleagues
Action:	What happened - and why?	• to collect and categorise imaginative approaches that support creativity in reading and writing • to analyse samples of children's work
Evaluation:	What was learned from the action?	• to review what was effective • to evaluate the findings against my values and beliefs • to identify what needed still to be done
Dissemination:	What was useful?	• to agree a format for writing up the AKTEV resource • to distribute the resource and share findings.

Chapter Six presents the research, which was conducted by analysing data drawn from my own experience, field notes, the LLPs' plans and children's drawings.

3.8 Living educational theory in action research

Whitehead (1989:3) explains how action research 'can be distinguished from other approaches in the tradition through its inclusion of "I" as a living contradiction within the presentation of a claim to educational knowledge'. He explains that the researcher needs to articulate their commitment to their values as explanatory principles in order to construct and explain their own living educational theory and live these values more fully in practice. Whitehead's (1989) *living educational theory* concept defines how the personal process of introspective reflection in context can move the researcher forward towards a transformation in practice.

My living educational theory evolved from collaborative action research interwoven with the fairly solitary learning journey of reflection, reading and writing in order to construct understanding. Reflective forms of knowing progressively refine each other (Kolb, 1984) and I made notes from reflections on personal and collaborative experiences during the research and from the literature. These were applied to the identified components in the provisional models to strengthen them as tools to help teachers plan creative learning opportunities in literacy. Thus, the *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* models evolved as living educational theories imbued with my values.

3.9 Data

Data that I collected and analysed for my research were derived from the following sources:

- Documents from government departments, statutory and non-statutory;
- Resources generated from my practice during the period of research;
- Correspondence - letters, notes and emails to and from participants;
- Reflective journal entries – notes, diagrams, collages and writings;
- Plans from the LLPs - drafts, annotated revisions and distributed versions
- Children's work from the planned action including drawings, photographs.

These data were analysed qualitatively in different ways. In the first cycle, literacy objectives from the primary national strategy were analysed according to literacy concepts. In the second cycle, plans created by the LLPs were analysed for evidence of creativity in process, provision, product and personality characteristics. In the third cycle, literacy activities as well as drawings by 179 children aged 5 to 11 years were analysed for evidence of auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional elements of imagination.

3.10 Validity

In the tradition of action research, my enquiry was concerned with improving my practice and understanding through self-realisation rather than trying to demonstrate replicability and generalisablity. However, as McNiff and Whitehead (2006:148) assert, action research is a rigorous process, which involves establishing criteria and standards of judgement. Therefore, in order to judge the validity of my living educational theories, I set my research objectives beside my values and beliefs (discussed in 1.4 and summarized in Table 1.1) and established success criteria. These are set out in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Success criteria related to beliefs, values and research objectives

Values	Beliefs	Objectives	Success criteria To evaluate how I have:
Democratic, ethical ways of working	That I respect the professional wisdom of colleagues, I am accountable for my actions, and I should be useful and productive in my work	To work collaboratively in a way that empowers colleagues	• empowered colleagues by addressing issues in common finding funding to take part trying to dissolve power relationships making sure the research did not cause harm or nuisance - representing their ideas
Research as professional development	That enquiry, action and reflection in response to a professional situation can deepen understanding and improve practice	to conduct action research which is practical, meaningful and useful	• explained why I chose a pragmatic approach to research • analysed data collected in the three cycles of my action research • found evidence to support my living education theories
Evolving knowledge and understanding	That understanding is constructed through a process of enquiry in context and my knowledge is provisional.	To challenge and develop my practice and understanding	• considered a range of theories to challenge and develop my ideas • engaged in reflective appraisal of my practice and understanding • improved what I do and understand
Child-centred, holistic approaches to literacy	That a rich, connected literacy curriculum with opportunities for purposeful imaginative activities can engage & support children's endeavours to create meaning.	To exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning for, and interpreting children's endeavours to create meaning	• shown that reading and writing are aesthetic, creative, imaginative, multimodal and interconnected • developed and tested an approach to planning for literacy

Table 3.5 Success criteria related to beliefs, values and research objectives (continued)

The power of imagination in creating meaning	That the imagination is a powerful resource for children and teachers and should be positively nurtured.	To find a way to help teachers plan purposeful imaginative activities for literacy in a creative process	• identified how the imagination might benefit reading and writing • demonstrated how the imagination is a powerful resource for literacy • found a way to interpret evidence of children's imaginative repertoires

I drew on Lomax's (1994:14) qualities of educational research as a guide to evaluate whether my research was democratic and ethical, that my practice has improved, that my understanding was transformed, that my knowledge is provisional, and that the outcomes are of practical use.

3.11 Limitations

Responsive, reflective and collaborative approaches were integral to my research. Whitehead (2005) considers that a quality indicator of action research is a research account that offers evocative evidence of the researcher as both alive and disciplined; he also acknowledges that evidence can be ephemeral and difficult to demonstrate. Some of the limitations of the responsive, collaborative and reflective aspects of action research are outlined next.

Responsive action research is an effective way of problematising practice and understanding. However, because the research is taking place at the same time as the researcher is working, timing is a problem. During the time taken to set actions in place and report on them in a thesis, new issues have usually emerged and the situation may have already been resolved by others in different ways. In my research, I needed to take account of changing curriculum emphases and so I tried to make sure that the outcomes were transferrable.

Reflective action research is an effective way of improving professional understanding. However, it is inevitably subjective because it is reliant on personal interpretation, therefore more useful in developing theories than in testing them. I needed to acknowledge that, as a researcher, I might be too close to, or even part of, the problem. By declaring my values, I hope I have shown that I want my work to be honest, authentic and useful.

Collaborative action research can be unwieldy, the sample too large or too small, and the findings difficult to replicate. However, working with peer professionals on practical applications was an effective way of improving my practice and

understanding. The purposive sample of participants was restricted to one literacy consultant and seven leading literacy practitioners in primary schools in one local authority in England because they are representative of the interests of teachers generally. In my study, standardized measures were not used, but multiple sources of data were collected and selected for analytical generalisation, not statistical generalization, in order to illuminate changes to my practice and understanding.

3.12 Writing up

As mentioned in 1.5, writing up the report of the research is as much a part of the enquiry as the planning, acting and reflecting. Drawing on the analogy of the researcher-as-*bricoleur*-theorist, writing up my research helped me to reflect on and interpret the emerging confluence of my lived educational theories and the narrative of my practice in action (Burchell & Dyson, 2000, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, Lincoln, 2000, Sternberg, 2003). In revising this written account, I have tried to clarify my values and provide evidence of my commitment to living those values through comprehensible explanations of my journey towards improving my practice and understanding (Habermas, 1976). These criteria have been applied to drafting, organising and editing my work as part of the process of evaluating it (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

The next three chapters present accounts of each of the action research cycles. These accounts explain why and how the action was planned and carried out, reflect on changes to my understanding and practice and offer evidence from analysis of data. These chapters are followed by a discussion of my living educational theories against some theories in the literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST CYCLE:

A LITERACY PLANNING FORMAT

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and justified the methodology employed for the three cycles of my action research, which aimed to answer the overarching research question: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* This chapter reports on the first cycle of my research.

Because literacy was a priority in the local authority, and I had become one of the local authority managers of the national strategy's implementation, I wanted to feel confident that I could support teachers with their literacy planning. Because I held a strong commitment to the principles embedded in the NACCCE report (1999), I wanted to help teachers make provision for purposeful imaginative activities in their literacy plans. Because I was involved in the doctoral programme, I decided to focus my research on finding ways to reduce teachers' burden of planning from the ambitious array of literacy objectives imposed by the national strategy, which was considered to contribute to the constraints on the creativity and imagination of teachers and children, as discussed in 2.1 (D'Arcy, 2000, Dillon et al., 2000, Frater, 2002, Maynard, 2002, Myhill, 2001). Thus, the subsidiary research question driving the first cycle of my research was: *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?*

The research method for this first cycle is outlined in section 3.7 and Table 3.1. It took the form of a piece of collaborative action research with a pragmatic focus and took place during 2003. Documentation issued by the primary national strategy was interrogated as data. Specifically, these data included the framework of literacy objectives, which were analysed and categorised with the purpose of identifying opportunities for incorporating creativity and imagination into literacy planning. As a result, a literacy planning format was developed and used in schools. This work is framed by aesthetic, holistic theories of literacy, which recognise that reading and writing are creative, imaginative activities (Barrs & Cork, 2001, D'Arcy, 1999).

In this chapter, I explain the reasons for my research and show that by engaging in a systematic process of reflection in action, my understanding and practice was transformed and prompted two distinct cycles of further research. Phases of the action research process are used as headings to organise the chapter. *Reflection* examines some of the conflict raised by my ontological and epistemological values and contextualises the research. *Planning* explains how the research was set up to develop a planning format for creativity in literacy with a colleague. *Action* presents the categories identified from the analysis of the literacy objectives as data. An *evaluative reflection* assesses the research against my values.

The first cycle of action research

4.1 Reflective phase

Reflection is integral to the self-actualising process of action research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). By reflecting on changes to my role as a primary education adviser, I was able to identify the focus for my research. Identifying with Denzin and Lincoln's (2000:6) 'researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist', I began to consider the competing and overlapping perspectives of my values, my practice, my understanding, and my role in context. This section examines some of this conflict and contextualises the research.

I had been told to forego my work on the creative and aesthetic aspects of pedagogy, the strengths for which I was appointed to my post, in order to support the implementation of the primary national strategy. The imperatives embedded in the framework of literacy objectives, and its scripted methodology, contradicted the ontological and epistemological values discussed in 1.3.

A key aspect of my role is to support teachers in improving standards in learning and achievement in the local authority schools through advice, support and a programme of professional development. My belief in the professional wisdom of teachers and democratic ways of working was at odds with the cascade model of implementation used by the national strategy. Colleagues in classrooms were expected to deliver the objectives without questioning the methodology or evaluating its effectiveness.

Influenced by the work of D'Arcy in particular, I recognised the value I place on holistic approaches to learning, the creative processes involved in making sense and shaping meaning, the power of the imagination in creating possible worlds in story, poetry and information, and the aesthetic qualities inherent in reading and writing. I was unable to find any reference to creativity and imagination, implicit or explicit, in the literacy framework of objectives.

Planning for literacy was an issue for many primary teachers (Allen, 2002, Frater, 2002, Ofsted, 2002). Teachers in primary schools needed, and still need, to plan at least 60 literacy sessions for a typical 12 week term, as well as planning for all other aspects of the curriculum. In addition, the strategy demanded that specific genres and a particular set of objectives relating to word, sentence and text should be covered each term (DfEE, 1998). Few local authorities provided planning guidance and publishers offered decontextualised exercises. I was concerned that the national curriculum for English, which continues to be children's statutory entitlement, had been subsumed by the literacy strategy.

From these deliberations, I decided to focus my research on improving my understanding and practice so that I would be able to support teachers with their literacy planning, whilst remaining true to my values.

4.2 Planning phase

This section explains how the research was set up to develop guidance for literacy planning. From May 2003 to July 2004, I worked with LC, one of the two literacy consultants in the local authority. LC was familiar with the national strategy and its framework of literacy objectives and wanted to address concerns expressed by colleagues in schools, by strategy managers and by researchers about planning for literacy.

LC's concern about the strategy's guidance on literacy teaching was revealed during our first meeting in May 2003. According to LC, the framework with its 'plethora' of objectives 'was overcrowded'; some objectives were 'dense', or 'weighty'; 'there were many repeats'; and it was 'difficult to plan from'. She explained that teachers often began a new term with the first objective on the list, and ended the term half way through the objectives; others would 'cherry-pick' objectives, leaving aside those that were harder to teach, even though they

'add[ed] value to the children's learning'. If experts such as LC found the literacy framework unwieldy, so would colleagues in school.

For example, an analysis of objectives for Year Three, Term Two, illustrates the magnitude of the task faced by a teacher in planning for just one term. The genre range to be taught comprised 11 different forms: myths, legends, fables, parables; traditional stories, stories with related themes, oral and performance poetry from different cultures, instructions, dictionaries and thesauruses. 86 learning objectives had to be taught in the term: 23 *Text Level* objectives (shown in Appendix 4.1); 24 *Sentence Level* objectives; and 39 *Word Level* objectives. These were not simple, straightforward learning objectives; most require learning that takes time to teach effectively. Planning for learning in literacy involves complex professional decisions.

At the second meeting with LC in June 2003, we combed the literacy objectives and guidance documents for mention of creativity. Even though creativity is explicit in the entitlement national curriculum for English, we found no mention in the strategy documents. LC expressed concern that there were 'no hints of the writing process', 'no mention of responsive reading' among the objectives. Instead, *comprehension* was used as the heading for the reading objectives and *composition* was used as the heading for the writing objectives. In LC's view, these terms were 'restrictive, and [did] not present the complex dimensions of reading and writing', or their 'interconnectedness'. LC admitted that aesthetic response to text and creating possibilities in writing were not part of the strategy's pedagogic principles; the emphasis at that time was on accuracy in grammar for writing and reading comprehension.

Consultants are accountable to the directors of both the strategy and the local authority. Although LC was not prepared to change the wording of the literacy objectives, she expressed her commitment to 'creat[ing] a simplified planning format' that 'must be manageable' and 'holistic' for 'teachers to use in school and for us to use in our work'; it 'should promote creativity in reading and writing more effectively'. As a result, we decided to interrogate the strategy documentation and attempt to organise the literacy objectives holistically in a planning format that would exemplify the creative processes of aesthetic appreciation in reading and of imagining possibilities in writing.

As a result of negotiations with senior management, the development of a manageable, holistic planning format for literacy was authorised as a substantial part of our work for annual performance management reviews. This shows its validity in terms of our professional practice and understanding, and its value as a contribution to the local authority's support for schools.

4.3 Action phase

This section provides evidence that the literacy objectives could be organised holistically to provide a manageable format for teachers to use, with some provision for the creative processes of aesthetic appreciation in reading and for imagining possibilities to generate writing.

An analysis of the national strategy's framework of literacy objectives (DfEE, 1998) was conducted over the next four terms. In order to interpret the objectives and organise them, we first identified the conceptual components of narrative, non-fiction and poetry. These were used as categories with which the literacy objectives were coded and sorted.

Figure 4.1 shows the resultant conceptual components of story – setting, plot, ideas, characters and events – we developed as categories and used to organise the narrative objectives. The acronym SPICE was developed during a pilot project with teachers and artists who worked together to link story and sculpture (Smyth, 2002b). It draws on Card's (2001) *MICE Quotient*, which identified milieu, ideas, characters and events as components of narrative. Teachers in the pilot project had commented that, by using the SPICE headings to plan their narrative units with a book as a theme for five weeks, they could be imaginative. They spoke of permissions and ownership and reported that children were 'immersed', 'engaged', and 'responsive' to the chosen texts, and that their writing was more imaginative as a result.

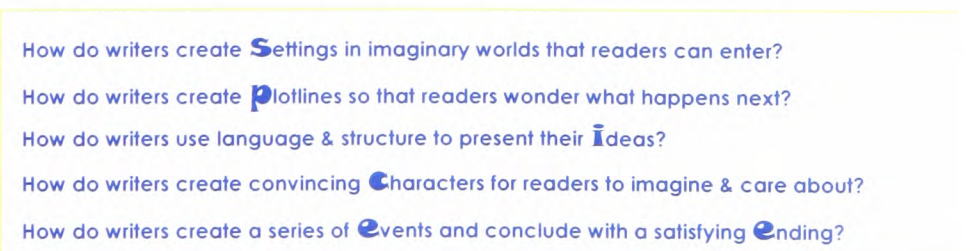

Figure 4.1 SPICE – concepts of story

By working together, LC and I were able to turn these concepts into enquiry questions to prompt the children's learning and organise the objectives.

Figure 4.2 shows the conceptual components of poetry – pictures, patterns and puzzles – used as categories to organise the literacy objectives for poetry. The *3Ps of Poetry* were developed during an earlier project in which LC and I explored a range of approaches with teachers to generate aesthetic responses to text (Smyth, 2002a). The headings are drawn from Chambers' (2001) *Booktalk* prompts and the qualities of poetry highlighted by Styles (1999), Palmer (2003) and Sedgewick (2001).

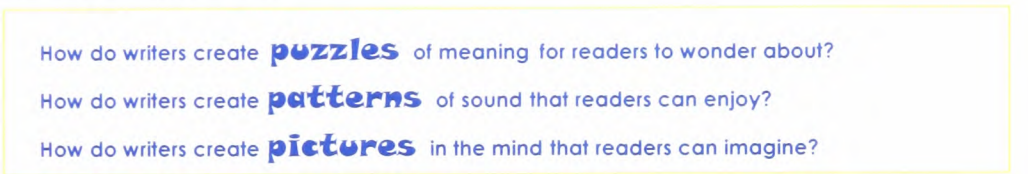

Figure 4.2 The *3Ps* – concepts of poetry

Figure 4.3 shows the conceptual categories used to organise the non-fiction literacy objectives. The acronym KWILT drew on research by Lewis and Wray (1997:73) and Burnaford (2001:44) to promote an enquiry-based learning process: what do the children know; what do they want to find out; how will they investigate; what have they learned; and how could they tell others?

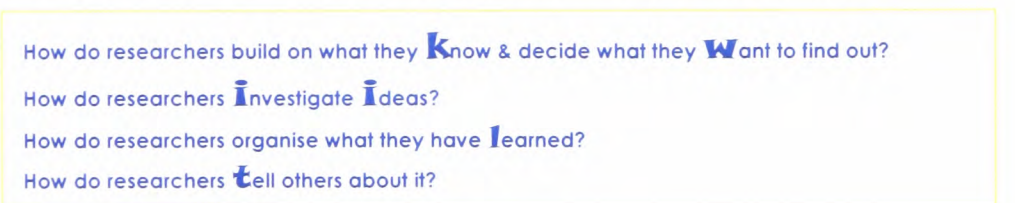

Figure 4.3 KWILT – a research process

LC expressed her concern at the narrow comprehension approaches to deconstructing texts implicit in the objectives. This was echoed in reports of decontextualised literacy lessons by researchers such as Barrs (2001) and Frater (2002). Because of this, we developed a further set of sub-categories to reflect the interconnected, holistic nature of reading and writing. Thus, the heading *reading for enjoyment* signals that reading is responsive and immersive; *reading with a writer's eye* promotes appreciative reading; and *writing with a reader in mind* encourages contextualised writing for meaning with audience and purpose.

Through this collaborative analysis, objectives for all year groups, all terms and all genres were mapped in clusters within a holistic matrix of the processes and concepts involved in reading and writing. As a result of this analysis, we were able to offer teachers a planning format so that they would only need to plan **how** they would teach a maximum of five linked objectives each week.

In order to ensure cumulative progression, some objectives were split and others conflated. For example, Table 4.1 shows how we organised the objectives in the first of a five week narrative unit for Year 3, Term 2. The overarching concept for children to understand is shown by the heading (setting), and the question (How do writers create settings in imaginary worlds that readers can enter) leads the children's enquiry into learning. It can be seen that, as a result of our analysis, 14 literacy objectives - text (T) and sentence (S) were conflated into 5. This plan provides for a creative process for literacy in which children read a myth, imagine its setting, investigate its language, and plan their own alternative sequel.

Table 4.1 A cluster of literacy objectives for Week 1, Y3, Term 2

Setting **How do writers create settings in imaginary worlds that readers can enter?** This week children learn how to:	
read for enjoyment	
T1b,10c	collect some examples of story openings & scene openers
T9a,c,7,8,6	use a story theme from reading to make a story map with a different setting
read with a writer's eye	
T10c,1b	identify typical phrases & expressions from a story – use to help structure writing
S2,3	Identify adjectives & explore their function in sentences
write with a reader in mind	
T10b,6b,9	plan an alternative sequel using the same setting - capture main points in few words to elaborate later

The planning format for all the primary years were given to the group of leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) in the local authority for their comments and observations. Feedback included comments such as: "Just what we needed"; "At last!"; "Can you let us have electronic versions so we can paste them into our planning?"; "Now we can be more imaginative." They appreciated how links between reading and writing were explicit.

From their feedback and evaluations, we noted that the planning format enabled the LLPs to design their own units of work with some provision for creativity. For example, Miss HI was impressed by her Year Two children's grasp of inference after she used the planning format to plan a narrative unit over five weeks based on Cinderella. The LLPs evaluated how effectively they were able to adapt the planning format for their own purposes: for example, Miss HDJ used the Year 6 poetry plan for a theme of identity, whilst Miss PJG used the same Year 6 plan for poetry on an ecological theme. All LLPs commented on how the time saved by 'not needing to sort out objectives' was used more effectively to consider how they would support children's learning. The teachers were able to integrate responsive reading and meaningful writing opportunities in a teaching cycle: for example, Miss BP's Year Five class produced their own scripted animation based on the novel they had been immersed in. The LLPs commented on how the children's writing benefited from a clear creative process of planning, drafting and decision making, often leading to some form of publication. All of the LLPs continued to use the planning format beyond the trial period. Miss BP and Miss HI suggested that we should exemplify the creative process implicit in the planning format with detailed units of work.

When we had made amendments, the planning format was posted on the local authority English subject web pages and distributed to schools on paper and email. The complete narrative plan for Year Three, Term Two is given in Appendix 4.2 as an example of the revised plans.

LC and I evaluated the research project using the success criteria agreed during our planning meeting. From analysis of comments sought from teachers, subject leaders of English and head teachers, the planning format was seen to be a manageable interpretation of the literacy objectives. Out of eighty six subject leaders, only three declined to use the plans because they were committed to published schemes. LC was pleased that the format we had developed was manageable for teachers to use, but agreed with the two LLPs who wanted us to make detailed units of work. She commented that by developing the planning format, we were able to organise the literacy objectives holistically so that the interconnectedness of reading and writing was apparent. Both LC and the other literacy consultant said that the planning format was useful on courses and in their

work with individual teachers. However, LC acknowledged that, because she had insisted on retaining wording from the strategy objectives, the creative processes of aesthetic appreciation in reading and of imagining possibilities to generate writing remained obscure. We realised that the plans needed be developed further to accommodate the renewed emphasis on speaking, listening, phonics and assessment. Thus, it became part of our work to refresh the plans each term.

4.4 Reflective evaluation

This section evaluates how the first cycle of my action research addressed the research question: *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?* I examine how, by engaging in a systematic process of reflection in action, my understanding and practice have improved with regard to my values in Table 3.5: democratic ways of working; research as professional development; the power of imagination; holistic approaches to learning; and the provisional nature of knowledge.

Democratic and ethical ways of working

The value I place on democratic, ethical ways of working was fulfilled in the following ways. By working with LC, we addressed an issue in common – that of helping teachers plan from the literacy framework. Because we have equal status in the local authority, are both reflective practitioners, and were working together on something we both wanted to do, we didn't experience problems relating to disproportionate power. LC commented that she was empowered by the process because she could use the resultant planning format in her work, and she 'wouldn't have produced it on my own'. She said that the experience had been 'dynamic', had helped her to 'really reflect on what was important in children's learning', and think about 'how to sequence the learning needed for literacy in an ideal way'. I appreciated the contribution LC brought to the work and recognise that our professional dialogue has transformed my understanding and practice.

The time spent on creating the planning format was approved as an appropriate and relevant part of our work to implement the primary national strategy in schools in the local authority. Thus, funding was not an issue. No nuisance or disadvantage was caused to colleagues by our work.

Designing the planning format was a professional response to the issue that creativity in teachers and taught was constrained by the burden of planning for literacy. The planning format was copied electronically so that all teachers in the local authority could edit and adapt them to suit their own circumstances and pedagogy. 67 of the 86 schools in the local authority chose to use the planning format and it was perceived by teachers as supportive guidance. A conflict of interest did not arise for teachers who used the planning format because the content was derived from the strategy framework, which schools were expected to plan from.

Research as professional development

I took a pragmatic approach to my research, selecting an issue that required new understanding because of my changing role and a changing curriculum. By conducting the research, I was compelled to actively examine and re-examine literacy pedagogy and its relationship to creativity and the imagination. This work underpinned the categories with which the literacy objectives were analysed and interpreted. The process of analysing the objectives with a colleague increased my understanding of the national strategy, its framework and the issues surrounding it. As a result, I felt more confident in supporting colleagues in school with their planning.

The power of imagination in creating meaning

Although we recognised that the imagination might benefit reading and writing, the planning format did not demonstrate that the imagination is a powerful resource for literacy. Nor did the work explain how teachers might plan purposeful imaginative activities to develop literacy. Evidence of children's imaginative repertoire was not sought in this cycle. Although the creative processes of aesthetic appreciation in reading and developing possibilities in writing were implied in the planning format, they remained obscure. Therefore, further research was needed to exemplify purposeful imaginative activities in literacy.

Child-centred, holistic approaches to learning

The headings *reading for enjoyment, reading with a writer's eye* and *writing with a reader in mind* were designed to show that reading and writing are

interconnected and promote a contextualised approach to the process of creating meaning. As sub-categories in the planning format, they offered a space in our analysis for a holistic interpretation of objectives in the literacy planning format. However, the interrelated creative, aesthetic and imaginative features of literacy were not explicit. Therefore, further research was needed to exemplify these relationships.

Evolving knowledge and understanding

In order to answer my research questions in this first cycle, I explored a range of sources, engaged in a reflective appraisal of my understanding and have shown how, as a result of analysing the literacy objectives as data, ideas were synthesised to create a planning format. My original intention was that the next cycle of my action research would focus on the group of leading literacy practitioners to discover, in semi-structured interviews, how they adapted the planning format to incorporate creativity and imagination in literacy in their own plans. However, the transformative power of my enquiry was such that further questions evolved from this work and propelled my action research into the next cycle.

Instead, I realised that I needed to find out more about the relationship, and the benefits of creativity and imagination to reading and writing, so that I would be able to support teachers with their literacy planning. Therefore, my action research continued with a subsidiary research question, which was: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning.* The next chapter reports on the second cycle of my action research.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SECOND CYCLE:

THE MAGIC PLANNING TOOL

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the impact of an analysis of literacy objectives from the primary national strategy on my understanding and practice, how it began to address my research questions, how it resulted in a literacy planning format, and how it prompted further research. It was the first cycle of my action research, which sought to answer: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* This chapter presents results from the second cycle of my action research, which was conducted in response to the subsidiary research question: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning.*

The analysis and resultant planning format from the first cycle provided a foundation for the second cycle of my action research, because it reinforced my commitment to aesthetic, holistic theories of literacy that promote reading and writing as creative, imaginative activities. In addition, because I gained a clearer understanding of the literacy concepts underpinning the strategy objectives, I was able to help teachers with their literacy planning. However, the evaluative reflection in 4.4 illustrates my concern that the planning format was not explicit about the creative processes involved in reading and writing, nor did it demonstrate that the imagination is a powerful resource. Furthermore, it did not explain how teachers might plan their provision for children to 'respond imaginatively in different ways to what they have read', or to write 'imaginative and interesting texts' – their national curriculum entitlement (DfEE, 2000). Therefore, the second cycle of my action research challenged my understanding of creativity and imagination in literacy, and my practice in promoting it.

The research method is outlined in section 3.8 and Table 3.2. It took place from July 2004 to May 2005 and was collaborative action research involving seven leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) in the local authority who also represented every primary year group. With pragmatic focus, I analysed data drawn from plans created by the LLPs during the Spring Term 2004. As research participants, they used the literacy planning format produced with LC in the first research cycle and a planning tool that exemplifies components of a creative process,

labelled MAGIC. From my analysis of the LLPs' plans and my notes, I found evidence that, even within perceived curriculum constraints, teachers can use their professional imaginations to plan sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful contexts. The *MAGIC planning tool* was developed and tested as a conceptual scaffold and practical creative process and represents my working education theory regarding the importance of creativity and imagination in literacy

This cycle is framed by ideas about creativity: as purposeful imaginative activity and applied imagination from Robinson (2001, 2004); as 'little-c' or 'everyday' creativity from Craft (2002:56); and from the creative processes explored in 2.2 and Table 2.2, including Sternberg's componential models (2003). It took place at a time when creativity was being promoted as 'a powerful way to engage pupils with their learning' (DfES 2003:34) and Ofsted's (2002) reports on the success of creative approaches in raising standards in literacy. D'Arcy's ideas about aesthetic appreciation and representation continued to underpin this work

In this chapter, I aim to show that the systematic process of reflection and collaborative action transformed my understanding, and how this led to a further cycle of research. Phases of the action research process are used as headings to organise the chapter. *Reflection* analyses my understanding of the creative process as a researcher, an artist and an educator, and identifies components of a creative process. *Planning* explains the involvement of the seven LLPs as participants in the research. *Action* analyses the creative and imaginative aspects of the LLPs' plans in terms of the 4Ps of creativity adapted from Mooney (1962): provision, process, personality and product. *Evaluative reflection* examines the research with regard to my values.

The second cycle of action research

5.1 Reflective phase

This section explains how the components of the creative process began to form and take shape as I reflected on my creativity – as a researcher, as an artist and as an educator. Examining my personal and professional responses to ideas from reading, experience and embedded knowledge in this way, led me to identify some possible components of the creative process. This is a valid aspect of action

research because it reveals how my professional understanding developed, my practice began to improve, and my living educational theories evolved (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Analysis of my creativity as a researcher

By analysing my experience of the doctoral programme, I realised that the research process was much like a creative process in the following ways. I was *motivated* by professional curiosity to discover more about creativity in learning and teaching, which led me to read, think and talk to others with this focus. An *association* of ideas occurred from making links between the different aspects of research, and drawing patterns of connection between my experience and new understandings. The emergent ideas needed to be tried out and to do this I needed to *generate* approaches to gathering evidence. Selecting the data and analysing it produced a more focused categorisation, which was *innovative* in comparison to my first ideas. The process was completed when the new idea was *communicated* to others in a publication or presentation. However, this communication of ideas often became the motivation for further discoveries and refinement. It seemed that the process was cyclical and the categories were interdependent phases.

Analysis of my creativity as an artist

By analysing notes made in my sketchbook, I realised that I engaged in a similar process when I embarked upon a creative endeavour. For example, I was *motivated* by the prospect of attending a five-day course in experimental printmaking, and *associated* ideas that I might be able to explore and develop by referring to my earlier work, finding information and making preparatory drawings. *Generating* ideas occurred when investigating the potential of materials, techniques and equipment to discover possible ways to *innovate* my own original artworks. Having completed the course, the artworks were *celebrated* as we shared each other's work. This led to *motivation* to try out more ideas and the process began again with further curiosities about printmaking that have continued to lead my development as an artist.

Analysis of my creativity as an educator

By analysing findings from a pilot study in which I worked with teachers, writers and artists on a literacy and art project, I realised that a creative process helped the

children respond adventurously to the complexities of images and texts (Smyth, 2002). The teachers commented positively on the *motivation* of the children, the way they seemed to connect, or *associate* ideas, and how trying techniques had helped them *generate* ideas and *innovate* their own solutions with more independence; an exhibition at the arts centre *celebrated* the project.

By analysing my practice, I realised that I engage in a similar creative process in my role as a primary education adviser. For example, I was *motivated* to address issues of planning raised by art subject leaders. *Association* of ideas occurred when I reviewed and synthesised the models of the creative process, as shown in Table 2.2. Drawn to Sternberg's notion of creativity as the confluence of different components, my reflective analysis of the pilot study for the doctoral programme led me to *generate* ideas for the possible components of a creative process, leading to *innovation* when I was able to hold the components - **m**otivating, **a**ssociating, **g**enerating, **i**nnovating and **c**elebrating/**c**ommunicating ideas – in the MAGIC acronym. Sternberg talks about 'buying low and selling high in the world of ideas' as a notion of leadership. For me, this meant that the MAGIC process had to be useful to colleagues. This influenced the change from *celebrating ideas* to *communicating ideas.* Thus, *communicating ideas* occurred when art subject leaders and their colleagues, as well as myself, applied the MAGIC process to planning units of work. The subject leaders reported that the MAGIC process engaged and enriched children's creativity and, as a planning tool, it was judged effective, flexible and manageable.

These analyses of my own creativity as a researcher, an artist and an educator show how the components of a creative process *motivating, associating, generating, innovating* and *communicating* ideas – were identified and evolved into a componential planning tool labelled MAGIC.

5.2 Planning phase

This section explains how the seven leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) in the local authority became participants in the research to see if they could incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning.

At a strategy update meeting in July 2004, the LLPs spoke of their concerns about the unwieldy framework and its 'constraints on creativity', of 'dreary lessons' and

'fitting everything in'. This echoed findings from the literature discussed in 2.1. The LLPs explained that they 'want[ed] to be more imaginative' and find ways to 'put creativity back in writing and reading'. However, they wondered how this could be done with the imperative of the national strategy, its ambitious array of objectives, and their role as leaders in the local authority. I invited the LLPs to join the research so that we could work together to discover how we might incorporate creativity and imagination in plans for literacy. The research was driven by the subsidiary question: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning.*

Thus, the seven LLPs profiled in 3.5 formed a purposive sample in my community of practice. They were invited to take part in this enquiry because they represent each year of the primary phase, they had confidence and expertise in English teaching, and they were accessible during the course of the research. Above all, they were willing to explore how they might plan for creativity and imagination in literacy in their classrooms. Letters outlining the project were sent to the LLPs, their head teachers and children (Appendix 3.1 to 3.6). All accepted the invitation to participate. I was successful in bidding for government funding to release the LLPs from their classrooms for planning and preparation time.

At the first project meeting in September 2004, I presented a summary of creative processes in Table 2.2 to provide some theoretical underpinning to our enquiry, together with some examples of purposeful imaginative activities from the pilot project mentioned in 5.1 (Smyth, 2002). Each LLP explained how they planned for literacy: five used published schemes in their school; two planned according to themes in the *International Primary Curriculum.* They all planned five discrete literacy lessons each week and had adopted or adapted the planning format discussed in chapter four.

Three of the LLPs were also using the MAGIC planning tool mentioned in 5.1 to plan art units and complimented its effectiveness. I explained how it mirrored a creative process and the LLPs gave examples of their plans. As a result, the LLPs decided that they wanted to use MAGIC as a tool for planning literacy.

At a professional development day for the LLPs in October 2004, I presented some ideas to provide a theoretical backdrop to our work, which included:

aesthetic response and contextualised, holistic literacy (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Benton & Fox, 1988, D'Arcy, 2000); creativity (Craft, 2000, Robinson, 2001, Root-Bernstein & Root-Bernstein, 1999, Sternberg, 1999); and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999). During the session, the LLPs each planned a sequence of purposeful imaginative activities for their class using the components of the MAGIC planning tool. As a result of feedback from the session, I was reassured that MAGIC was a possible aid to planning for literacy.

I met with each LLP individually twice during November 2004. By using the planning format produced with LC in the first cycle, I noted that the LLPs were able to map the literacy concepts to the MAGIC planning tool, thereby ensuring coverage of objectives in their plans. The LLPs observed that the planning format was 'a manageable interpretation of the literacy framework', 'useful', 'versatile', 'flexible' and 'adaptable'. However, I noted that the LLPs found it difficult to select a theme that would provide a creative context for reading and writing. For example, Miss HDJ said that this was 'a completely different way of working'. Although, when they were asked to imagine what might engage the children in their class, I observed that the LLPs proposed, considered, and chose from a range of possibilities.

5.3 Action phase

This section presents analysis of data drawn from the action phase of this second cycle of my research, which involved the leading literacy practitioners (LLPs) in planning for literacy with the aim of incorporating creativity and imagination. Specifically, these data include my notes from planning meetings, the plans created by each LLP, and their evaluations. These data show that the *MAGIC planning tool* can be used by teachers to plan for a broad range of genres, ages, durations, contexts, and literacy objectives. In addition, from my analysis I began to recognise that the act of planning is a creative endeavour: there was evidence that teachers apply their professional imaginations to consider possibilities and make decisions in order to design contexts for learning. By examining my notes, I observed that the LLPs moved through the component phases of the MAGIC planning tool to create their plans.

For example, analysis of Miss PJJ's plan and notes from two planning meetings reveals how a teacher's professional imagination was applied in a creative planning process. To illustrate the phases of this creative endeavour, Miss PJJ's plan *Breakfast for a Leprechaun* is examined next using the components of MAGIC as headings.

Analysis of Miss PJJ's creative planning process

Motivating ideas phase

Miss PJJ explained that she wanted to 'nurture the creative skills and dispositions' of her Year Three class by planning 'a creative challenge' that would 'build on previous learning' and 'link the school's *Food* topic' to the strategy literacy objectives for 'writing instructions'. The plan should 'enrich the children's understanding of how information is presented as both printed and visual text' in an 'adventurous exploration of possibilities'.

By anticipating what she wanted to achieve from her plan, Miss PJJ was stating her aspirations. By synthesising the key concept the children should learn - that information can be presented in different ways to communicate a message – she was engaging with the purpose and expressing her intention. By using phrases such as 'nurture' and 'build on', she was beginning to construct a plan that relied on a climate of trust to foster children's dispositions to learn.

Associating ideas phase

Miss PJJ referred to the literacy planning format, which organised the 23 *Text Level* objectives, 24 *Sentence Level* objectives, and 39 *Word Level* objectives in a manageable four week sequence. She proposed several ideas before choosing to use the poem, *The Fairies* (Allingham, 1897) as a starting point. Miss PJJ considered that this would set up a meaningful context to engage the children's imaginative thinking in the possible worlds of a narrative, and give them a purpose for writing instructions and achieving the literacy objectives.

By talking about other starting points, asking questions and offering tentative, as well as assured opinions, Miss PJJ actively joined the community of enquiry created around the research through interaction. By mapping literacy objectives to the MAGIC planning tool, she was focusing attention on what the children needed

to learn. By collecting information about leprechauns, Miss PJJ was making conceptual connections and analogies between real and imagined worlds.

Generating ideas phase

Miss PJJ decided that the children would work in role as designers of breakfast food packaging; their challenge would be to design a breakfast that would be tempting to one of the 'little men' in the poem who lived on crispy pancakes made from yellow tide-foam (Appendix 5.1).

By adopting a fictional character in this way, Miss PJJ was offering the children an intended audience for their literacy work, allowing them to dwell for a while in a possible world with real purpose. By discounting some ideas, and adapting others, she was exploring possibilities and using her professional judgement to decide whether they would be appropriate. By using conditionals during the planning meetings, such as 'if', 'what if', 'might', 'could possibly', and 'perhaps', Miss PJJ was conjuring up several imagined scenarios to 'see if [they] would work'. Even so, the notion of challenge shows that she had commitment to the leprechaun idea – a determination.

Innovating ideas phase

Table 5.1 presents the completed plan for *Breakfast for a Leprechaun.* The plan shows that Miss PJJ has applied her professional imagination to create an innovative sequence of purposeful imaginative activities in a meaningful context for literacy. Components of the *MAGIC planning tool* were used to organise all the non-fiction text objectives (indicated as 'T' in brackets on the plan) for the term over four weeks.

Table 5.1 Miss PJJ's Literacy Plan *Breakfast for a Leprechaun*

Week 1	
Motivating ideas	The children respond to *The Fairies* (T1). The leprechaun in the poem provides an audience for their instruction writing - in role as designers of cereal packets, their challenge is to create an alternative breakfast to crispy pancakes (T1,3,8).
Associating ideas	They annotate the poem and discuss note-making (T17a,b). They discuss the language of instructions in a pancake recipe, including how items are separated by commas (T15,14a,16a). As designers, they evaluate how words and pictures make real cereal packets seem tempting to their audience (T12,13).

Table 5.2 continued

Week 2	
Generating ideas	They discuss how key words imply meaning in a message from Lep R. Chaun (T17d,f). They examine food packets, discuss the essential information a food packet should have, and evaluate the appeal of the pictures, fonts and colours (T12,13,15,17c). They write a set of designer rules as a numbered list (T14b,16c). They explore possibilities for alternative leprechaun foods and draft a message in reply to the leprechaun's request (T17d,f).
Week 3	
Innovating ideas	In role as graphic designers, they evaluate the purpose, merits and limitations of instructions and identify how key words and phrases are essential to meaning (T12,13,15,17c,d). They choose a name for their breakfast food (heading), try out different key words and phrases (message), and write instructions for the leprechaun to prepare and serve their breakfast (information), and create their design (T12,13,14d,15,16b 17c,d,f).
Week 4	
Communicating ideas	They evaluate their instructions using a matrix and identify how key words and phrases are essential to meaning (T12,13,15,17c,d). They use a flow chart to *communicate* their ideas and their learning (T7, 8, 14d, 16b,17d,f).

As a result of her interpretations and reflections, this plan represents the product of Miss PJJ's creative endeavour. Therefore, it is original and has value.

Communicating ideas phase

Miss PJJ used the plan in 5.2 to teach a four week literacy module. As a result, they all understood the overarching concept - that information can be presented in different ways to communicate a message. The children, Miss PJJ and the head teacher, evaluated the project as highly effective and very enjoyable. In her evaluation of the plan, Miss PJJ said that using MAGIC for planning was empowering for the following reasons: it drew on her own imagination; it motivated her; it covered all relevant literacy objectives thoroughly and meaningfully; and it made her think about the children's learning. She found that the children's creativity was engaged and supported by the MAGIC process for the following reasons.

Providing a possible world populated by leprechauns **m**otivated the children to read and write in a meaningful creative context; the *intentions* of the plan were clearly related to the learning objectives and the challenge alerted the children's *aspirations* and *dispositions*. By making *connections* between the real world of graphic design, the school world of literacy, and the imagined world of leprechauns, the children **a**ssociated ideas. Opportunities were provided for *interaction* when children suggested possibilities, asked questions and offered

opinions. Miss PJJ said that they gave *attention* – to each other, to the needs of the imagined reader, and to evaluating products. The generating ideas phase of the plan required children to make *adaptations* to existing packaging designs. Miss PJJ said that children showed *determination* in their resolve to 'have a go' with *experimenting* with several possibilities for their own designs. The content of their writing was innovative because the children *reflected* on ideas and techniques, chose how to *represent* their own ideas and *interpreted* the task independently. An exhibition celebrated the project with paintings, design layouts, leprechaun models, maps, stories and the breakfast packets. Aspects of the MAGIC process highlighted in italics are examined further in 7.1.

Analysis of this example shows that, in terms of the 4Ps of creativity adapted from Mooney (1962), the *provision* of a creative context fulfilled the literacy objectives, the *process* was effective in planning as well as practice, children - *personality* - were engaged and supported, and the *product* was original and of value. The project impacted on Miss PJJ's practice: when contacted a year later, she had continued to use the *MAGIC planning tool* to plan other English modules (Appendix 5.3).

Analysis of the MAGIC literacy plans

This section examines the literacy plans created by the other LLPs. The plans - *Looking after Bears, Alphabetical Animals, Cool Characters, Fabulous Firebird,* and *Flow of Opinion* – provide evidence that the MAGIC planning tool can be used to create plans for different age groups, for different literacy objectives, for different durations, and to meet the particular needs of their school, the children, the curriculum – and the strategy objectives.

Analysis of data from the LLPs' literacy plans is presented next in terms of process, provision, personality and product. It will be seen that each LLP has applied her professional imagination to plan a sequence purposeful imaginative activities and design a creative context that placed the children as writers and readers in an imagined possible world. Each plan is an original product of each teacher's professional imagination. The different interpretations of the MAGIC *planning tool* demonstrate its robustness and flexibility as a planning tool.

Analysis of Miss OI's MAGIC Literacy Plan, Looking after Bears

Provision: Table 5.2 shows that, by creating this plan, Miss OI was able to propose how she would ensure coverage of all Term Two poetry objectives for the 27 Year One children in her class over three weeks.

The plan outlines Miss OI's intention to provide a creative context of visiting bears to motivate the children. By reading and inventing lullabies and action rhymes for their bear guests, the children learned about patterns of sound, pictures in the mind and puzzles of meaning in poetry.

Table 5.2 Miss OI's Literacy Plan *Looking after Bears*

Week One	
Motivating ideas	The children look after bears in pairs &decide how to look after their guest.
Associating ideas	They listen to, read and recite bear poems with actions, try different voices, talk about the sounds they can hear in poems.
Generating ideas	They listen to bear poems, talk about sounds at the beginning of words, and make up funny alliterative phrases around the names of their bears.
Innovating ideas	They make up alliterative captions for their bear pictures in their own 'have a go' writing using phonics to help them invent their spellings.
Communicating ideas	They share their ideas, enjoyment and learning with others.
Week Two	
Motivating ideas	They write an invitation to take their bear home for a night.
Associating ideas	They listen to an action poem, recite it to their bears and try to remember it. They play with meanings to make up new lines.
Generating ideas	They respond to the pictures in their heads from a poem by illustrating a verse. They talk about the softness of a lullaby, and how rhymes seem to ask for action.
Innovating ideas	They make up a lullaby or action rhyme for their bear.
Communicating ideas	They share their ideas with others at home and in school.
Week Three	
Motivating ideas	They think how they could record their bear's visit in artwork and photographs and begin to build a simple profile of information about their guest in writing.
Associating ideas	They read a poem, explore some puzzles in it, and try adding new rhyming words and lines to see if they make sense.
Generating ideas	They extend the poem by substituting their own ideas.
Innovating ideas	They make up a poem about their bear
Communicating ideas	They talk about questions they asked themselves to help them write their poems. They share their poems and artwork ideas with others in a Big Book of Bears.

Process: In this case, the MAGIC sequence was repeated each week, as shown in Table 5.3, with motivating activities taking place each Monday.

Personality: By using words such as 'respond to', 'try out', 'have a go', 'explore', 'extend' and 'make up', the plan shows that Miss OI applied her

professional imagination to propose a creative context for literacy. According to Miss OI, the children were 'really turned on'. A year later, Miss OI told me that this work had formed part of her successful deputy headship interview, and was the focus of her conference presentation in Hong Kong.

Product: This plan is the product of Miss OI's creative endeavour. It fulfils the purpose of linking all objectives for poetry to the class topic on *Toys* in an original way. Value was added to the children's learning in that the outcomes exceeded the literacy objectives, and included paintings, collections of bears and books, diaries with written entries and photographs of the bears in children's homes, poems, invitations, and recitals.

Analysis of Mrs HFI's MAGIC Literacy Plan - Alphabetical Animals

Provision: Table 5.3 shows that, by creating this plan, Mrs HFI was able to propose how she would ensure coverage of all Term 2 non-fiction objectives for the 24 Year Two children in her class. It outlines her intention to provide a creative context in which the children would learn about alphabetically ordered and explanatory texts by creating an animal bestiary with illustrated definitions and explanations.

Process: In this case, the MAGIC planning tool was used to plan three full day workshops. Although the workshops included imaginative reading, writing and art activity, they were discrete from the rest of the week's activity. It seemed that Mrs HFI was reluctant to use the tool to plan provision across the weeks. However, Mrs HFI used MAGIC planning tool subsequently to design a five week narrative module.

Table 5.3 Mrs HFI's Literacy Plan *Alphabetical Animals*

Week 1: Day 1	
Motivating ideas	The children read *Greedy Zebra* for enjoyment, discussing the pictures and how this traditional African story explains how the animals got their fur.
Associating ideas	They describe particular characteristics of an animal in pairs and annotate a picture with descriptive labels. They choose an animal and research it in dictionaries and encyclopaedia and *African Animals ABC*.
Generating ideas	The children work in role as illustrators. They look at how artists represent animals then create own artwork.
Innovating ideas	They write a caption for the artwork with the name of their animal and an explanation – "This is how the ..... got its ....." in their own 'have a go' writing.
Communicating ideas	They share their ideas, enjoyment and learning with others.

Table 5.3 continued

Week 2: Day 2	
Motivating ideas	The children work in role as illustrators. They design a print block for their page of the class bestiary. They look different styles of illustration, information and page layouts in alphabet books and encyclopaedia.
Associating ideas	They read the images as well as the text in dictionaries, encyclopaedia and the Internet about their chosen animal.
Generating ideas	They explore ideas for their print block by drawing their animal quickly on paper in a couple of different ways, then drawing it again more slowly to make it clear.
Innovating ideas	They design their print block using different lines and patterns to show the appearance and habitat of their animal and make prints. They write the definition of their animal in the style of an encyclopaedia reference.
Communicating ideas	They share their ideas, enjoyment and learning with others.
Week 3: Day 3	
Motivating ideas	The children work in role as graphic designers to assemble their page of the class bestiary.
Associating ideas	They look at page layouts and text styles in alphabet books. In a bestiary, there is an embellished letter, an illustration definition and an explanation about the animal. They read a flow chart that explains how the zebra got his stripes.
Generating ideas	They think up other explanations for animals getting their fur, skin, noses, ears, voices or whatever and explain how the leopard possibly got its spots. Make a class flowchart to explain how the leopard might have got its spots.
Innovating ideas	They make up an explanation for their animal's skin, fur, feathers or whatever and write their explanation for their bestiary page.
Communicating ideas	They assemble their pages with their illustration, print, an explanation, the letter of the alphabet and a border around the edges.

Personality: By using words such as 'enjoyment', 'have a go', 'think up', 'represent', and 'design', the plan shows that Mrs HFI used her professional imagination to propose a creative context for literacy in which the children would be commissioned to work as illustrators and graphic designers. By working in role, children are given agency over their learning: they try out ideas and techniques with purpose, making decisions and constructing meanings in different ways. A year later, Mrs HFI told me that this work had formed part of her successful deputy headship interview, and had been the focus of staff meetings.

Product: This plan is the product of Mrs HFI's creative endeavour. It fulfils the purpose of linking all non-fiction objectives for Year Two, Term 2 to the class topic of *Animals* in an original way. As a result of following this plan, Mrs HFI said that children were able to give explanations and use alphabetically ordered texts. Value was added to the children's learning in that the outcomes exceeded the literacy objectives and included pastel paintings, prints, stories, a display of African artefacts, and the Big Bestiary book with a page written and illustrated by each child.

Analysis of Miss RJ's MAGIC Literacy Plan Cool Characters

Provision: Table 5.4 shows that, by creating this plan, Miss RJ was able to propose how she would ensure coverage of adapted narrative objectives for Years 3 and 4 for 12 children in her Speech and Language Unit. It outlines her intention to provide a creative context for one week in which the children would learn about characters found in stories.

Process: In this case, the MAGIC planning tool was used to plan one week of hour-long literacy sessions as part of a three week project. At our first meeting, Miss RJ tried to combine 5 strands of the curriculum into this short time. It made me aware that, although exploring possibilities in an unrestricted way can be seen as one aspect of creative endeavour, it can become overwhelming. Miss RJ, who has 12 specific special needs to cater for, commented that the focus and structure of the planning tool helped her be more selective about activities that would help children achieve objectives.

Table 5.4 Miss RJ's Literacy Plan *Cool Characters*

Motivating ideas	The children make their characters using recycled materials.
Associating ideas	They hear and read stories and talk about the characters. From a collection of dolls, they imagine their different characters.
Generating ideas	They draw their imagined characters as a comic strip, visualising what they look like, sound like, and do.
Innovating ideas	They make up oral stories starring their character to tell
Communicating ideas	They listen to each others' stories and write their own.

Personality: By using words such as 'imagine', 'talk about', 'visualising', and 'draw', the plan shows that Miss RJ used her professional imagination to create a sequence of purposeful imaginative activity to develop her children's literacy. By inventing their own puppets using recycled materials and designing their costumes, the children were able to make up stories about their characters.

Product: This plan is the product of Miss RJ's creative endeavour. It fulfils the purpose of linking narrative objectives with the class topic on *Materials*. As a result, Miss RJ said that the children were able to tell their own stories about their own characters, thus having agency over their learning in a way they had not experienced before. According to Miss RJ, the children experimented with materials in a determined and resourceful way. Outcomes from the project

included character puppets, comic strips and stories, a doll and puppet collection, and photographs of the children working.

Analysis of Miss BP's MAGIC Literacy Plan - Fabulous Firebirds

Provision: Table 5.5 shows that, by creating this plan, Miss BP was able to propose how she would ensure coverage of all Term 2 narrative objectives for 33 Year Five children over five weeks. It outlines her intention to provide a creative context in which the children would learn about legends.

Process: In this case, the MAGIC planning tool was applied to a creative project that combined dance, drama, music and art with literacy.

Table 5.5 Miss BP's Literacy Plan *Fabulous Firebirds*

Motivating ideas	The children listen to the *Firebird* music and read the legend.
Associating ideas	They talk about differences in versions of the legend including film, and discuss how culture and place are evoked in oral and written versions through imagery. They visualise how their imagined Firebird looks, sounds, and moves. They explore their ideas in drawing and write an opening for their own version of the legend.
Generating ideas	They listen to and read the legend and compare the narrative structure and theme in oral and written versions. They prepare for oral storytelling by making notes of the story outline. They write a plan for their own version of the legend using structures and themes identified in reading. They design part of the story of their imagined Firebird as a collage.
Innovating ideas	They read and respond to characters' different perspectives on action in oral and written stories, and how they are portrayed as heroes or villains. They write their own draft version of the legend from a character viewpoint. They make an artwork by choosing their best idea from all their research and deciding which materials to use to make and decorate their design.
Communicating ideas	They write their final version and edit it to match the needs of the audience. They evaluate each other's stories and artwork by talking with a 'response partner. They listen to and read each other's versions of the legend.

Personality: By using words such as 'evoked', 'imagery', 'visualise', 'imagine', 'explore ideas', 'storytelling', 'collage', and 'own version', the plan shows that Miss BP applied her professional imagination to propose a sequence of purposeful imaginative activity to develop her children's literacy. Miss BP had used *Write Ideas* (Smyth, 2003) for a term's work in the previous year, with activities based on a novel and Gardner's (1999) multiple intelligences. Even so, this plan demonstrates Miss BP's determination to immerse the children for five weeks in the creative context of Russian folklore. She created multisensory opportunities for her class to respond to the story about a legendary firebird that was told in Russia long ago so that the children were inspired as musicians, writers, dancers and artists, as well as readers and writers.

Product: This plan is the product of Miss BP's creative endeavour. It fulfils the purpose of linking all narrative objectives for Year Five, Term Two with the class topic on *Legends*. As a result, the children were able to tell their own *Fabulous Firebird* story in different ways: as an oral story using animation and PowerPoint; as a wall mural; as collaged boxes in the style of Russian decoupage; and in an exploration and presentation of dance, drama, music. Appendix 5.4 is Miss BP's evaluation of the plan.

Analysis of Miss PJG's MAGIC Literacy Plan - Flow of Opinion

Provision: Table 5.6 shows that, by creating this plan, Miss PJG was able to propose how she would ensure coverage of all Term Two non-fiction objectives for 35 Year Six children over two weeks. It outlines her intention to provide a creative context in which the children would learn about the key concepts of opinion and points of view.

Table 5.6 Miss PJG's Literacy Plan *Flow of Opinion*

Motivating ideas	The children respond to a PowerPoint presentation *Rubbish in the River* and discuss their thoughts and feelings. As reporters for *The Current Times*, they are given the assignment from the editor find out as much as they can about threats to river-life and report on the issue.
Associating ideas	They respond to Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Water Babies* and discuss 2 styles of illustrations. They discuss how Charles Kingsley put across his point of view about child labour in a narrative, then offer their own opinion on the issue. They make notes and write a paragraph with information from the story and a paragraph of their own opinion about children working. They read Chapter 3, scanning for key information / evidence in the text, then discuss statements to decide whether they agree or disagree with them.
Generating ideas	They research a river animal or plant and develop ideas for their articles by discussing how their 'living thing' could be affected by rubbish in the river. They read a balanced argument to help them recognise how an article writer appeals to a reader with persuasive evidence and illustrations. They write a letter complaining about the state of the river incorporating some information from their research.
Innovating ideas	They write up their article elements, reading each others writing for clarity, proof reading and assemble the elements of the article about the aspect of river life from their research together with their opinion.
Communicating ideas	They give oral presentations of their opinions backed up with evidence and display articles and artworks in *The Current Times*.

Process: In this case, the MAGIC planning tool was used to link geography work on rivers as well as literacy.

Personality: The plan shows that Miss PJG applied her professional imagination to create a meaningful context for her children's literacy. By commissioning the

children as reporters for the *Current Times,* they were able to research information about rivers in order to write discursive articles with informed opinions. By using a novel as a theme for the term, the children were immersed in a fictional world from which they could explore several different points of view.

Product: This plan is the product of Miss PJJ's creative endeavour. It fulfils the purpose of linking all non-fiction objectives for Year Six, Term 2 with her class topic on *Rivers*. As a result of this plan, children created illustrated magazine articles about conserving river life. Outcomes from the project included posters, batiks, and graphic organisers on Power Point.

5.4 Reflective evaluation

My action research sought to address the overarching research question, which was: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* This led to the action research evaluated here, which was driven by the question: *How might teachers plan a sequence of purposeful imaginative activities for literacy to engage children's creativity?*

By analysing data in this second cycle of my action research in the quest to answer these research questions, I found evidence that, when teachers used their imaginations with professional purpose, they were able to make provision for their children to achieve the literacy objectives by creating meaningful contexts for reading and writing. The data showed that teachers could plan sequences of purposeful imaginative activities for reading and writing, and still cover the objectives set by the national strategy. Moreover, the LLPs discovered that when the planned activities drew upon the children's imaginations in a meaningful context, their creative capabilities were engaged, enriched and extended, and their reading and writing improved.

Analysing how this has improved my practice and understanding has led me to judge my endeavours against my values, as shown in Table 3.5: democratic ways of working; research as professional development; the power of imagination; holistic approaches to learning; and the provisional nature of knowledge.

Democratic ways of working

The research was a creative endeavour in a community of practice. It reflects the value I place on democratic, ethical ways of working in the following ways. I did not view the LLPs as subjects of the research, but as expert persons engaged in it and committed to it. I took an appreciative rather than a critical stance, as shown by the way the project built on the teachers' professional wisdom, imagination and expertise. The research addressed the issue articulated by the LLPs, which was to plan literacy activities that would engage and support children's creativity; they all felt that taking part in the research, and using the MAGIC planning tool, supported them in this work. Therefore, the research was relevant, appropriate and did not cause nuisance.

Research as professional development

The project was funded as professional development for the LLPs. As fellow researchers, the LLPs felt empowered by the project, because their expertise was respected and their ideas have been represented. They led staff meetings for colleagues in school and co-presented workshops. All seven LLPs have since moved into deputy headships. Theories on the pedagogues of creativity and literacy underpin this work but, by learning from colleagues, my understanding and practice have been challenged and transformed.

The power of imagination in creating meaning

The LLPs applied their imaginative interpretations of the literacy objectives to a different way of planning and created rich learning experiences for the children. Importantly, I have recognised the concept of teacher's professional imaginations from my analysis of their plans.

The LLPs found that immersing the children in a fictional but real-world related context for their literacy work improved their motivation and commitment to the reading and writing involved in the tasks and challenges. Typical evaluations are given in Appendix 5.4 and 5.5. Children and teachers were very positive about the plans.

Holistic approaches to learning

The plans exemplify a holistic approach to literacy provision; they show that reading and writing are interconnected, and in all cases, other aspects of the curriculum were integrated. In a meeting held a year later, the teachers had

continued to use the planning tool to create further literacy and cross-curricular modules.

Evolving knowledge and understanding

This chapter has shown that, according to the success criteria relating to my values, I have explored ideas from a range of sources, engaged in a reflective appraisal of my understanding, and synthesised my ideas from analysis. It explains that my understanding has evolved over time and was transformed by this research. From my analysis of the data, I found that the *MAGIC planning tool* could support teachers as a conceptual scaffold and practical creative process. Thus, the *MAGIC planning tool* represents my living education theory and is offered from the research as a way to exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

Questions arising from the first research cycle propelled the action of the second. A surprising discovery forced the research into its third cycle. My analysis of the data revealed different kinds of imagination: the professional imaginations applied by the LLPs to creating their plans; and the sensory, affective and suppositional imaginations applied by the children when they engaged in purposeful imaginative activities. Because of this insight, I realized that I wanted to discover more about the depths and dimensions of the imagination's repertoire.

Thus, the third cycle of my action research was driven by the subsidiary research question, which became: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?* The next chapter examines the role of the imagination's repertoire in creating meaning.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THIRD CYCLE:

THE AKTEV IMAGINATION REPERTOIRE

Introduction

The previous chapter presented evidence that a creative process could be incorporated into planning provision for literacy. Analysis revealed that teachers applied their professional imaginations to plan sequences of purposeful imaginative activities to engage and support children's imaginations in creative contexts. By conducting the first two research cycles, which focused on teachers planning for literacy, I realised that I wanted to learn more about the imagination and its role in supporting children's endeavours to create meaning. This chapter presents results from the third cycle of my action research, which was driven by the research question: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?*

This cycle of my research is framed by Robinson's work in particular. Robinson asserts that the imagination is the foundation of creativity, that creativity is applied imagination the deliberate effort and effect of engaged and appreciative encounters (Robinson, 2004). Table 2.2 synthesised five characteristics of the imagination interpreted from the literature – aesthetic, productive, suppositional, somatic and affective. For D'Arcy (1998, 2000), Dewey (1990) and Vygotsky (1978), the aesthetic and productive aspects of the imagination are involved in the creative acts of reading and writing; these aspects underpinned the analysis of literacy objectives in the first research cycle with the literacy consultant (LC), which resulted in a planning format. For Eisner (2002) and Bruner (1996), the imagination engenders the creation of possible worlds, and for Craft (2005), it encourages possibility thinking; evidence of this suppositional aspect was found in the second cycle of research, in the way that teachers used their professional imaginations to plan creative contexts for literacy. For the Root-Bernsteins (1999) and Egan (2004), the somatic, or sensory and affective aspects of the imagination provide children with the tools for learning how to learn. The third cycle of my action research challenged my understanding of the role of the imagination in learning and teaching, particularly the sensory and affective aspects of its repertoire, and my practice in promoting it.

The research method is outlined in 3.7 and Table 3.4. The third cycle was a reflective endeavour and involved recognising the insights gained from my analysis of the research data. I analysed data drawn from the literacy plans created

by the group of seven leading literacy practitioners involved in the research, from notes of meetings, and from children's work. From my analysis, I found evidence of a range of purposeful imaginative activities that teachers provide to engage and support children's endeavours to create meaning. As a result, I identified a set of categories to describe the somatic and affective aspects of the imagination. These became the components of the AKTEV imagination repertoire. To illustrate how children use this repertoire, I present evidence from the data in the form of children's narrative drawings. Thus, the AKTEV imagination repertoire is offered from the research as a practical toolkit for planning, as a conceptual scaffold to engage and support creativity, and as an interpretive lens for appreciating children's endeavours to create meaning. It represents my working education theory regarding the importance of the imagination in literacy.

In this chapter, I aim to show how the systematic process of reflection in action has transformed my understanding. Phases of the action research process are used as headings to organise the chapter. *Reflection* explains how a componential model of the imagination's repertoire evolved. *Planning* presents categories arising from an analysis of imaginative activities. *Action* explains how the model was used as an interpretive tool with which to find evidence of aspects of the imagination's repertoire. *Evaluative reflection* evaluates the findings against my values and beliefs.

The third cycle of action research

6.1 Reflective phase

This section shows that my understanding of the role of the imagination in supporting children's literacy developed as I reflected upon my embedded knowledge, upon my findings from the previous cycle, and upon my literature search. It explains how a componential model of the imagination's repertoire emerged.

Analysis of purposeful imaginative activities

Throughout my research, I favoured the definition of creativity as purposeful imaginative activity (NACCCE, 1999) and valued its place in the pedagogues of literacy and creativity. By reflecting on findings from the second research cycle, which revealed how teachers use their professional imaginations to plan for

literacy, I realised that my research had led me to examine the role of the imagination in the creative processes of reading and writing. There seemed to be a synergy between the creative process, the imaginative activities and the literacy purpose, which was not evident in the primary national strategy documentation.

From my analysis of the LLPs' plans, I found evidence of a range of purposeful imaginative activities, such as drama, discussion and drawing. For example: to motivate ideas, children were given roles as designers, hosts and journalists; to associate ideas, they used visual organisers and talk-teams; to generate ideas they tried out techniques. According to the LLPs, these imaginative activities empowered children to be innovative in their writing and in their responses to reading. At a meeting in December 2004, a list of activities the LLPs had used, or would like to use was collated and mapped to the components of the MAGIC planning tool. However, this didn't work because these imaginative and purposeful activities could be offered at any component phase of the MAGIC creative process. The next section examines the kinds of imagination used to create meaning in reading.

Analysis of an aesthetic appreciation and representation

Vygotsky (1978) considered the imagination to be a higher-order mental function and was interested in the connection between imaginary experience and aesthetic reactions to literature. An aesthetic reading is a highly personal fusion of sensory and emotional impressions and ideas experienced by transacting with a text (Benton & Fox, 1988, D'Arcy, 1998, Rosenblatt, 1978, 1986). This process of creating meaning by living through a text is what Heathcote (1996) calls seeing with significance, and Perkins (1994) refers to as adventurous looking. An analysis of my responses to a novel is given next to illustrate the somatic and affective engagement of the imagination produced by taking an aesthetic stance as a reader.

Analysis of my responses to a novel

Plain Truth tells how an unmarried Amish mother is proved innocent of the murder of her newborn child (Picoult, 2003). In an apparently automatic internal translation to inner speech from the words on the page, I was able to tune into an auditory approximation of the voices of the characters, each subtly different in

tone and cadence, even loudness and force. Sounds of machinery, general activity and music were either taken from information in descriptive words or phrases, or inferred as sounds that seemed to accompany events or actions. Movement and stillness of the characters and in the landscape could be inferred on every page. Imagining the characters' gestures and gaits added nuance and credibility to their actions. The tactile qualities of quilts, cobbles and tobacco leaves, and surfaces that were walked, laid or sat upon were woven into the words. Temperatures ranged from extreme heat to ice-cold. Characters play out the tension between legal and moral truths from multiple perspectives. The emotional tie to the attorney character was like that to a friend and towards the other main character, doubt and confusion, yet empathy too. I was caught up in the quandary of how truth telling for a young Amish woman could differ from the truths presented in the legal representation in a courtroom. Thus the book became filmic as the words evoked rich impressions of the different people, places and events.

Descriptions of settings, characters and events in this novel are spare, but my imagination sought to fill the gaps between the words (Iser, 1978). The text evoked complex responses in my imagination. I seemed to use my **a**uditory imagination to infer sounds and silence, my **k**inaesthetic imagination to infer movement and stillness, my **t**actile imagination to infer textures and temperatures, my **e**motional imagination to infer feelings, atmosphere and mood, and my **v**isual imagination in my responsive reading of the novel. As Boden (1990, 2003) has pointed out, imagining is more complex than creating images in the mind.

6.2 Planning phase

From my analysis, it can be seen that my reading evoked **a**uditory, **k**inaesthetic, **t**actile, **e**motional and **v**isual responses in my imagination. Drawing on the work of Root-Bernstein (1999), I began to consider these as components of the imagination's repertoire. Reflecting on a conversation about an approach to learning styles labelled VAK prompted me to add the tactile and emotional elements to the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. AKTEV became a useful acronym with which to hold these sensory (somatic) and affective components of the imagination. Figure 6.1 shows how the hand was used as a holding form for these components. It builds on my work based on multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999, Smyth, 2003).

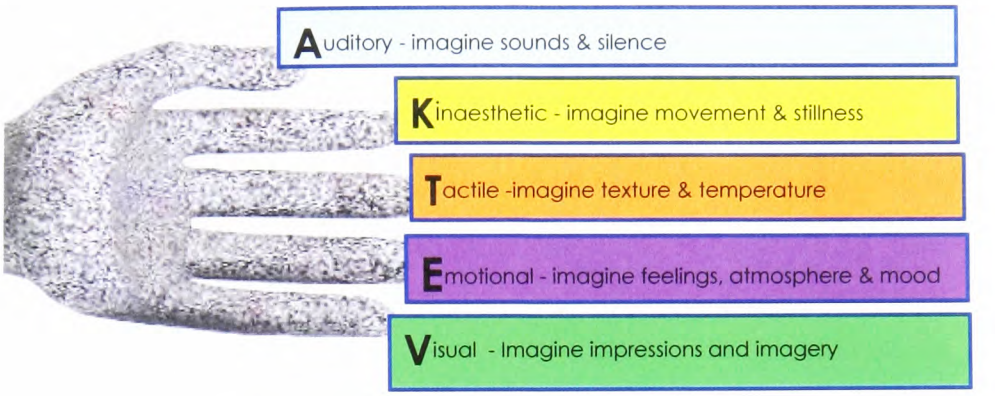

Figure 6.1 The hand as a holding form for the AKTEV imagination repertoire

In further analysis of data in the form of plans, meeting notes and evaluations, I organised the array of purposeful imaginative activities in categories using the components of AKTEV as headings. For example: collage and sculpture involved children's visual and tactile capabilities; looking at pictures drew on their visual and emotional responses; in poetry, they explored imagery and auditory qualities; Appendix 6.1 is an example of purposeful imaginative activities for drama organised in AKTEV categories. Other AKTEV activities for literacy included:

- *auditory imaginative activities*, such as: poetry, chants and rhymes: making and appreciating music: discussion, presentation, questioning, reciting and story-telling: drama, role-play, puppets, masks and toys; and visitors.

- *kinaesthetic imaginative activities*, such as: dance, mime and drama; visits, outdoor play and walks; maps and trails; sculpture, cutting, construction and drawing; making dens and dressing-up; mobiles, origami and kites.

- *tactile imaginative activities*, such as: paper and textile collage; claywork, printmaking, weaving, painting and pastels; weather-watches, gardening and pond-dipping; and collecting, sorting and classifying.

- *emotional imaginative activities*, such as: jokes, poems, biographies, diaries and letters; talk-teams, partner work and discussion groups; artworks and literature; philosophy, contemporary issues and historical events; character study and role play.

- *visual imaginative activities*, such as: looking at pictures, buildings, objects and landscapes; making artworks and curating; graphic design and calligraphy; photography; and imagery and analogy.

At the meeting with the LLPs in April 2005, they were in accord that, when children were provided with opportunities to apply their imaginations, their reading and writing had improved. Assessments of progress of children in the LLPs' focus groups showed at least one sub-level of progress in literacy. For example, children in Miss PJJ's focus group had moved from Level 2a to Level 3c; children in Miss BP's focus group had moved from Level 3a to Level 4b. The LLPs attributed this progress to children's involvement in the project, the focus on creativity and imagination in planning and provision.

Engaging children's auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and/or visual imaginations seemed to apply to all stages of the MAGIC creative process, with different age groups, during, after and in preparation for reading and writing, and in a range of creative contexts. For example, all LLPs found that drama and drawing encouraged responsive reading and offered rehearsal for writing. Miss PJJ found that Guided Visualising demanded deeper thinking about characters, settings and events. Miss BP found that the *Talk Team* roles of *Sound Seeker* (auditory), *Action Catcher* (kinaesthetic), *Touch Tapper* (tactile), *Feeling Finder* (emotional) and *Picture Person* (visual), adapted from work by Daniels (1997), organised turn-taking in discussion groups and prompted children to discuss their responses evoked by texts confidently and in depth (Appendix 6.2). Miss HDJ found that AKTEV helped children understand features of grammar, including adverbial phrases, metaphors and similes: auditory = verb + adverb; kinaesthetic = preposition + verb + adverb; tactile = adjective + noun; emotional = abstract nouns; and visual = nouns + imagery. Miss RJ observed that puppets required the full spectrum of auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual imaginations.

The AKTEV imagination repertoire helped the LLPs to plan and provide activities that engage and support children's imaginations. For example, Miss OI made a planning fan embellished with tokens to represent the AKTEV components: a bell for auditory; a penlight on elastic for kinaesthetic; a silk and wool rag doll for tactile; a tiny envelope with a secret whispered into it for emotional; and a crystal

for visual. Mrs BP made an aide-memoire of two hands – one holding the elements of the MAGIC process and the other holding the elements of AKTEV.

In my own work in classrooms, I found that focusing children's attention on their imagination as a powerful personal resource helped them respond to and represent sounds and voices, movement and stillness, texture and temperature, mood and atmosphere, and impressions and imagery in their reading and writing. All LLPs commented on the improved attention to detail and quality of their children's writing when they used AKTEV to prompt ideas about sounds, movement, texture, emotion and impressions. For example, Miss HDJ said that the SAT result for her Y6 class was higher than in the previous year, by 18% for Level 4 and 22% for Level 5, which she attributed to AKTEV. I have since translated the repertoire for children, and now draw their attention to **ITEMS – I**mpressions, **T**extures, **E**motions, **M**ovement, and **S**ounds in a project aimed at improving children's writing from Level 4 to Level 5 in LA schools (Appendix 8.2).

Thus, an analysis of plans and evaluations from the research demonstrates that children's reading and writing improved when they were motivated to associate, generate, innovate and communicate meaning through activities that engaged and supported their imaginations with clear purpose. By identifying the kinds of purposeful imaginative activities that engage and support children's endeavours to create meaning, the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* was fused with the *MAGIC planning tool.*

However, I still wanted to gain some insight into children's imaginative meaning making. By analysing the complex narrative meanings implied in children's drawings, I began to find a way to answer the research question and appreciate children's imaginative endeavours to create meaning. The next section explains how AKTEV was eventually used as an interpretive lens through which evidence of elements of the imagination's repertoire was revealed in children's narrative drawings.

6.3 Action phase

This section presents my analysis of data to demonstrate how children seem to use their imaginations to create meaning. Data generated by the research included a set of 179 narrative drawings by children aged 5 to 11 in the classes of the LLPs.

The drawings depict the scene they imagined from the phrase, *'A cat was rescued from a tree'*. For example, the drawing made by the seven-year old artist, Daniel, in Figure 6.2 shows a tree, four vehicles, a cat and a person.

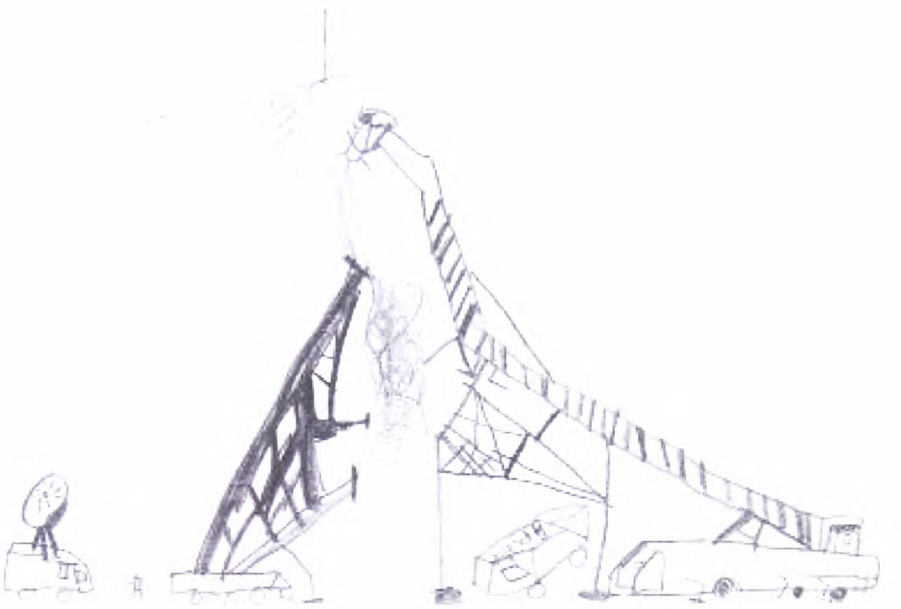

Figure 6.2 Drawing by Daniel, aged 7

Daniel's drawing could be interpreted in several ways: it could reveal Daniel's progress in comparison with the prowess of other seven-year-olds; the strength and sensitivity of the pencil lines could be indicators of the artist's psychological health; or the verity of its realistic likeness could be assessed.

In an attempt to gain insight into children's imaginative thinking, I interpreted the drawings according to different theories. Through a series of analyses, I grew to understand that these narrative drawings reveal evidence of the effort and effect of the children's endeavour to create meaning from the personal resource of their imagination's repertoire. This was a crucial breakthrough in my research. The next sections explain my analysis of the drawings according to narrative imagination, imaginative details, imaginative solutions, and AKTEV imagination.

Analysis of the drawings as narratives

I began by analysing the complex narrative meanings implied in the drawings. Bruner (1990) has argued that representing experience in narrative provides a frame that enables us to interpret and construct meaning. According to Bruner

(1996), children perceive, feel, and think all at once, and act within the constraints of what they 'perfink'. When children construct narratives of possible worlds, imagery and symbols are integrated in a multifaceted process of thoughts, emotions, and enaction. Analysis of the drawings demonstrates that children represent settings, characters and events - the fundamental concepts of narrative, which were identified with LC in the first research cycle. For example, Daniel's drawing (Figure 6.2) shows a person conducting the rescue operation of a cat stuck in a damaged tree.

Analysis of the drawings also demonstrates how all 179 children inferred nuances of narrative meaning from the simple given phrase *A cat was rescued from a tree* in the following ways.

14 children have represented the literal meaning of the phrase: *A cat was **[at some time previously]** rescued from a tree.* Their drawings show that the act of rescue had happened already and the cat was safe.

43 children have represented the tension of an anticipated rescue, implying that: *A cat was **[going to be]** rescued from a tree.* Their drawings depict cats in need of rescue with people preparing the rescue or summoning help.

However, most of the children seem to have preferred to catch the drama and action of the rescue at the very moment it occurred, implying that: *A cat was **[in the process of being]** rescued from a tree.* Their drawings depict the event, reportage style: the cat is being rescued and the figures are deployed at the scene to make this happen.

Interpreting all the drawings in this way allows them to be 'read' as unique, complex narratives, in which children used their pencils to represent characters, settings and events in the visual syntax of past, present or future to solve the imagined problem: *How is/was/will the cat (be) rescued?*

Analysis of imaginative details in the drawings

Further analysis of the drawings revealed how the children used their visual vocabulary of schema, marks and symbols to represent their invented narrative ideas. Arnheim (1969) coined the term visual thinking, asserting that productive thinking takes place in the realm of imagery, and that images underlie language. He believed that children organise marks and shapes to differentiate form

according to the constraints of the medium. Efland (2002) has discussed extensively the equation, *intent* + *materials* = *graphic form* in his multiple repertoire theory. Graphic representations of sensory responses, emotional connections and mental imagery contribute to making meaning - somatic knowing – and hold multi-modal information that can be shared with others (Anning & Ring, 2004, Eisner, 1982, Kress, 2000).

Figure 6.3 Five categories of tree forms found in the sample

Because the children were asked to imagine and represent an event a cat was rescued from a tree - their compositions generally include characters (people and cats) in a setting (homes, woods, gardens or parks) with objects (trees, technology, transport, and ladders). I began to understand that the schema, marks and symbols were being used as a visual language by the children to describe the details of their imagined narratives in their drawings. For example, a tree is depicted in all 179 drawings. Analysis of the ways in which children have represented trees revealed five categories according to the styles found in the drawings of every age group. Examples in Figure 6.3 include: the 'lollipop' form, embellished with apples, birds, or patterned branches in the crown; tree trunks occupying a full

perpendicular axis with distinct tertiary branches attached; and patterned forms with leaves or twigs on branches.

By interpreting the way that the children represented trees as a significant aspect of their narrative compositions and appreciating the way they created stylised but recognisable forms, I was able to find evidence of visual imagination. Evidence of tactile imagination is revealed in the way that the bark and crowns have been differentiated by pattern and infilling.

Analysis of the drawings according to developmental stages

In an attempt to discover a pattern of progress in children's imaginations from their narrative details, I decided to analyse the drawings that include a human figure with reference to some influential age-related developmental stage theories. Whilst all the children represented a tree in their drawing, and all but 6 placed a cat in the tree, 35 of the children did not include a human figure. Where a human figure was included, the majority of children depicted them as active participants. Table 6.1 shows the categories of drawings showing a 'human figure(s) present'; and 'no human figure present'.

Table 6.1 Human figures across the sample

Human figure(s) present	144
No human figure present	35
Total number of drawings	179

Goodenough (1926) used a 17 point scale to score body parts and dimension as markers of progress from tadpole to profile figures in children's stages of development. Read (1966) classified children's symbol systems and stylistic qualities with Jungian personality types. Kellogg (1969) devised developmental categories by isolating elements from their contexts and describing how feelings are expressed through exaggeration, geometric shapes and X-ray figures. Lowenfeld (1978) maintained that concepts such as ground lines and schemas are age-related, based on experience and represent children's attempts towards visual realism. Table 6.2 illustrates a span of developmental stages in human figure drawing which, according to these theories, is typical of ages 5 to age 10.

Table 6.2 Typical developmental stages in drawing human figures

A 	The 5 year old artist has progressed from a tadpole schema to adding limbs to the torso in drawing **A**:	**B** 	The 6 year old artist has given substance to her figure with fingers, facial features and thickened limbs in drawing **B**:	**C** 	The 7 year old artist has formed the jacket with a single outline and detailed the badge, buttons and shoe ties in drawing **C**:
D 	The 8 year-old artist has placed an upward-gazing profile on a front-facing body with a fused neck in drawing **D**:	**E** 	The 10 year old artist has achieved a walking figure in full profile in drawing **E**:		

In each case, the head is drawn as a circle, but stages of development can be inferred from the way in which the body and clothing have been differentiated. However, from my analysis of the drawings, I discovered examples in every year group of human figures depicted in more or less realistic ways, from tadpole to profile, and with more or less constituent body parts. Even though the drawings might be seen to indicate increasing prowess, I began to realise that the five-year-old artist's depiction of a human figure engaged in the rescue was as valid to the narrative as that of the ten-year-old.

It is worth noting here that my aim in interpreting the children's drawings was to gain some insight into children's imaginations. Interpretations are inevitably subjective, depending on the reader's views on children's drawing and expertise. During the April meeting with the LLPs, I noticed that we seemed to make informal assessments of the children's intellectual growth and maturity when we looked at their drawings. At this point, I realised that developmental stages offered a deficit model, which did not do justice to the imaginative effort that the children had made to create their narrative composition.

For example, evaluating Simon's drawing of the rescue scene in Figure 6.4 below according to the arbitrary stages of development that mark progress and prowess toward realistic representation could lead us to assess this 9 year-old's relative immaturity. We could conclude that his drawing is more typical of a seven year-

old because of the way the trees float in the paper space without a baseline and the figures are unsophisticated.

Figure 6.4 Drawing by Simon, aged 9

However, if we acknowledge the imaginative effect of the marks, schema and symbols that Simon has used to represent the detail of his story rather than the deficits, we can appreciate the imaginative effort and inventiveness of this young artist. The visual vocabulary of this drawing can be read as a narrative: a circle with radiating spokes symbolises the sun, the composition is balanced with trees on each side of the central character, and schema depict a dog, cat, people, flowers and a bird. Simon has created an original solution to both the problem set by the narrative and the challenge of arranging the limbs of his characters so that they can reach the cat on the branch.

It can be seen from this analysis that my attempts to categorise the drawings by their apparent stages of development was unreliable and didn't offer much insight into children's imaginative thinking. This realisation prompted me to look instead at the way that children create imaginative solutions to the problem of representing meaning in their visual narratives.

Analysis of the drawings as imaginative visual solutions

Evidence of imaginative problem solving was revealed by interpreting the children's drawings to see how children differentiated details in their human

figure representations. The capacity to solve problems is considered to be an attribute of creative people by many theorists, as discussed in 2.2.

With regard to drawing, Golomb (1992; 2002) has offered a way of looking at children's increasing capacity to invent visual solutions to the problem of representing three-dimensional forms in pictorial space. She has described how children move towards an economy of form in their depictions of human figure equivalents whilst at the same time endowing them with more differentiated features and clothing details. Table 6.3 was distilled from these descriptions and from an analysis of the drawings in which human figures were represented.

Table 6.3 Differentiation of detail in human figure drawings, based on Golomb

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Features</th><th colspan="2">Clothing / Accessories</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Head</td><td rowspan="2">Eyes</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Iris / Pupil
Eyelashes Eyebrows</td><td colspan="2">Spectacles</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Nose</td><td colspan="2">Nostrils</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mouth</td><td colspan="2">Lips
Teeth</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cheeks</td><td colspan="2">Freckles / Tears / Spots
Beard / Stubble</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ears</td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">Earrings</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hair</td><td colspan="2">Long / Short</td><td colspan="2">Hat / Ribbons / Slides</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Body</td><td colspan="3">Neck</td><td colspan="2">Scarf / Collar / Necklace</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Torso</td><td rowspan="2">Top
Dress / Coat
Cloak</td><td rowspan="2">Trousers
Skirt</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Limbs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Feet</td><td colspan="2">Shoes / Boots / Laces</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hands</td><td colspan="2">Fingers
Finger nails
Knuckles</td><td colspan="2">Gloves
Ring
Watch / Bracelet</td></tr>
</table>

I studied the differentiated detail in 144 drawings of human figures and discovered that children of all ages pay attention to representing features, such as eyelashes and fingernails, and clothing, such as shoelaces and ribbons. These differentiated details are suggested by drawn marks and serve to add description to the narrative implied by the drawings. In addition, Golomb (1992, 2002) regards figures as actors within a pictorially represented event. She explains that action can be interpreted from a figure's orientation on the vertical, horizontal and diagonal axes, their relative proximity to other figures and objects, and from the way that legs are bent, arms reach and hands grasp. By interpreting this implied action in the children's drawings and appreciating the way they solved the

problem of depicting their characters in the act of climbing a ladder, I was able to find evidence of kinaesthetic imagination. In the following interpretations, the human figures have been cropped from the full picture.

In Figure 6.5 below, the characters in A and B are front facing and perpendicular, and the feet make a connection to the ladder. The characters in C, D, E and F are also front facing but have been drawn on a diagonal axis to show they are climbing and reaching.

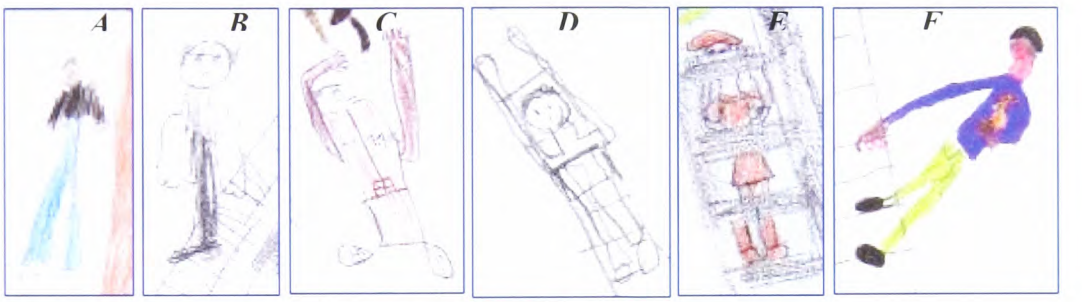

Figure 6.5 Examples of forward facing, perpendicular figures

In *F*, the character seems to be climbing down the ladder having rescued the cat.

In Figure 6.6 below, the front-facing characters have been drawn in part-profile to allow for the expression of emotion on the faces and show the reach and hold on the ladders.

Figure 6.6 Examples of reach and hold in forward facing figures

In *A*, there is a suggestion of bend in the knees of the figure and the arms reach upwards and to the side. In *B*, the torso bends slightly to accommodate the position on the ladder and the arms bend so that the hands can grasp the ladder rung. Strong physical action is represented in *C*. The balletic pose of *D* is an elegant solution to the problem of ensuring connection between the ladder and the figure – the bent arms and legs and lengthened limbs strengthen the position of the character climbing the ladder.

In Figure 6.7 below, the full-profile figures are drawn at an angle from the ladder and the limbs show the intention of climbing. In *A* and *B* the arms extend to grasp the ladder and the legs curve to accommodate the figure on the rungs. In *C* and *E* the arms stretch out, one to hold the ladder and the other towards the cat. The figure in *D* appears to be concentrating on the climb – the fingers grasp in a determined hold and the leg is bent to secure the boot on the rung.

Figure 6.7 Examples of figures in profile

In Figure 6.8 below, the characters are drawn parallel to the ladder. In *A*, the figure rests on the structure to call the cat. In *B* the figure appears to be inching upwards, toes poised, neck craned, gaze directed at the cat and one hand clutching both the ladder and a saw.

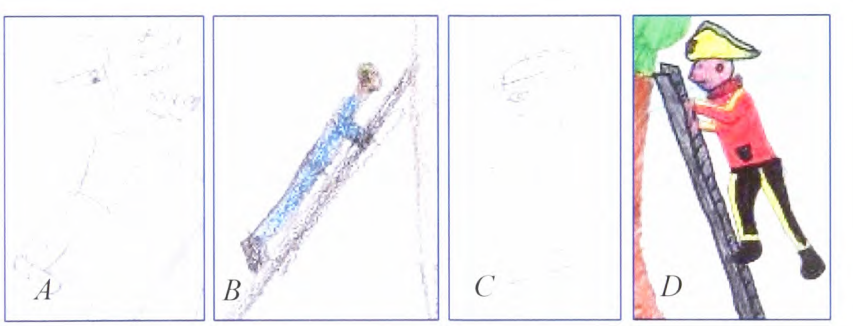

Figure 6.8 Examples of figures in profile drawn parallel with ladder

In *D,* the character is nearing the top of the ladder with elbows bent, one foot on the ladder and the other appearing to swing from the last rung in the climb. By isolating the human figures in this way, I have shown that children, regardless of age, find imaginative solutions to the problem of representing three-dimensional form in a two-dimensional space to create meaning. Action is implied through the child's choice of axis, pose, stance and gesture - their characters are poised in the poses required of them to show what is happening in the particular narrative. This kinaesthetic element is evident in the effort of drawing and is made visible

through the effect of an intentional depiction of motion or stillness shown by the way that legs are bent, arms reach and hands grasp.

Analysis of AKTEV imagination in the drawings

From the journey of interpretation presented above, it can be seen that I began to understand how, in the iterative process of drawing, children use marks, symbols and schema to give graphic voice to their intention to create meaning by representing narrative detail provided by the imagination. By using AKTEV as an interpretive lens, I was able to analyse the drawings to reveal further evidence of the way that children apply their **a**uditory, **k**inaesthetic, **t**actile, **e**motional and **v**isual imaginations to depict narratives, regardless of age.

For example, if we look again at Daniel's drawing, shown again as Figure 6.9 below, we can interpret the imaginative detail implied in his narrative composition by inferring these AKTEV elements from the marks, symbols and schema he has used.

Figure 6.9 Drawing by Daniel, aged 7

Daniel's drawing is a dramatic representation of an event in which elaborate action is being taken to rescue the cat from the tree. Damage to the stricken tree is shown in the textural marks and shading in the trunk. Its imminent topple is suggested by the angle of the fragile branches and the strong lines used to depict the structure and to indicate the strategically placed props. Four vehicles at the scene include a broadcast unit and rescue vehicles and show activity dedicated to the rescue as the extended ladder almost reaches the unfortunate cat.

Analysis reveals evidence of kinaesthetic imagination in the engineering details, tactile imagination in the strength of line and shade, emotional imagination in the

mood of imminent and past danger, and visual imagination in the form and balance of the whole composition. If we consider Vygotsky's (1962) claim that drawing is graphic speech, a language of thinking that conceptualises internal narratives, then auditory imagination is apparent too.

Table 6.4 shows how the AKTEV imagination repertoire was used as an interpretive lens with which to analyse the children's drawings for evidence of visual, emotional, tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory modes of imaginative thinking.

Table 6.4 The AKTEV imagination repertoire as an interpretive tool

Auditory imagination	can be inferred: from implied sounds and voices; through the graphic 'telling' of the narrative; in the depictive languages of speech bubbles and symbol systems.
Kinaesthetic imagination	can be inferred: from implied action and stillness; through the narrative moment of an event in which something is shown to be happening; in the depictive languages of gesture, stance, reach, grasp and hold of the figures as actors, and their orientation in the composition.
Tactile imagination	can be inferred: from the implied surface qualities and temperature; through the narrative details of setting and character; in the depictive languages of mark-making, directional infill and symbolism.
Emotional Imagination	can be inferred: from the atmosphere and mood implied by the scene; from feelings implied by the character's expression, stance or gesture; by symbols, lines and mark configurations used to represent emotion.
Visual imagination	can be inferred: from how things were represented in the implied event, including size, and relationships; through the narrative representation of characters and objects in a setting, in the depictive languages of line, colour, pattern, shape, texture, dimension, and symbols.

To illustrate how drawings can be interpreted for evidence of visual, emotional, tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory modes of imaginative thinking, I have selected four drawings from across the sample that depict human figures and fire engines. They offer examples of the kinds of implied meanings represented by the children that can be read from these complex narrative texts. From my analysis, I present an appreciative assessment of the effort of children's imaginative thinking and the imaginative effect of the marks, schema and symbols in representing the detail of their narratives. Appendix 6.3 is an example of how I annotated the drawings

from the full sample with clues to children's visual, emotional, tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory imaginations.

Sebastian's narrative

Figure 6.10 Drawing by Sebastian, age 5

Sebastian's drawing in Figure 6.10 depicts his narrative of a cat being rescued from a tree. A fire-engine is on the scene, manned by the driver. Four fire fighters wait whilst their captain climbs the ladder to reach the cat. Analysis reveals evidence of auditory, kinaesthetic, emotional and visual aspects of imagination in Sebastian's narrative in the following ways.

Auditory Imagination: Sounds are implied by the marks radiating from the fire-truck's bell indicating its clanging and the driver appears to be talking on his radio. Sebastian has 'told' his narrative: a cat is being rescued from a tree by a fire-fighter.

Kinaesthetic Imagination: The rescuer is shown in a front-facing pose climbing a ladder with his arms and hands reaching out towards the cat. The cat is standing on a high branch, neck erect and ears alert. Four crew members wait at attention, their bodies taut and fingers spread.

Tactile imagination: The textures of the tops and trousers on the crew are differentiated by the pressure and density of colouring. Directional colouring is used for the solid tree trunk, crown, sky and rain.

Emotional Imagination: There is a mood of anticipation evoked by the smiling faces on the crew, and the symbols of the sun and the rainbow.

Visual Imagination: The narrative is expressed in the compositional balance, achieved by the solid central tree with the four characters lined up on one side and the fire engine on the other. The rescuer figure occludes the ladder. Tree, rescuer and ladder are arranged vertically along the horizontal axis of the paper edge.

Sarah's narrative

Sarah's drawing in Figure 6.11 depicts her narrative of a cat that is *going to be rescued* from the tree. Three female figures wait whilst a fourth climbs the ladder towards the cat. Three people can be seen through the windows of the fire engine. Analysis reveals evidence of auditory, kinaesthetic, emotional and visual aspects of imagination in Sarah's narrative in the following ways.

Auditory Imagination: Speech bubbles show that three of the four main figures are speaking: "come cat"; "you said you was looking for help"; and "help". Implied are the sounds of the truck arriving with a blast of exhaust fumes.

Kinaesthetic Imagination: The rescuer is drawn in part-profile, with arms stretched sideward and hands grasping the ladder. Her body is bent and the legs are arranged on the diagonal axis to show the climb. Faces in the fire truck peer from the window. The cat is alert and standing on a tree branch, tail curling upward. Birds sit peering from their nests in the crown of the tree.#

Tactile imagination: Colouring differentiates the textures of the tree trunk and crown, jagged tertiary branches hold the ladder and zigzag lines are used for the grass.

Figure 6.11 Drawing by Sarah, age 6

Rays of sunshine and the flower imply the warmth of a sunny day.

Emotional Imagination: Distress is shown by the open-mouth and call for help of the figure on the far right and her neighbour has a down turned mouth and tears.

Visual Imagination: The narrative is expressed in the composition. The rescuer is drawn mainly on the diagonal axis, adding to the dramatic tension. The tree is positioned centrally on the vertical axis and the ladder is parallel to the trunk. The cat is placed on the highest tree branch.

Sean's narrative

Sean's drawing in Figure 6.12 depicts his narrative of an airborne team in the process of rescuing the cat from the tree. Evidence can be found of auditory, kinaesthetic, emotional and visual aspects of imagination in this representation in the following ways.

Kinaesthetic Imagination: This is a scene of great activity. Four figures are at the scene, one in profile with raised arm and pointing finger, one with arms stretched to stop the harrier, one reaching to rescue the cat and one at the controls of the rescue vehicle. The cat is straddling a branch of the tree. The 'rescue

heroes' craft hovers whilst another craft is lowered and a rescue ramp is stretched towards the tree. The harrier waits on the ground, doors open and ready to take off. Turbo jets are charging in the aircraft.

Figure 6.12 Drawing by Sean, age 8

Visual Imagination: The narrative is expressed in the composition. The planes are drawn confidently in single contour outlines. The figures are simple but effective and the tree is elegantly stylized. The airborne thunderbird is central to the composition and optimum use is made of space and positioning for effect.

Auditory Imagination: Sounds are implied by marks around the turbo jets on both aircraft. The characters appear to be shouting.

Tactile imagination: Textures can be seen in the stripes on the cat and patterning on the uniforms. There is netting or fencing on the rescue ramp.

Emotional Imagination: A mood of excitement prevails but there is a sense that the operation is under control.

Summer's narrative

Summer's drawing in Figure 6.13 shows a fire engine at the scene, two male figures and the cat awaiting rescue in the tree. Evidence can be found of auditory,

kinaesthetic, emotional and visual aspects of imagination in Summer's narrative in the following ways.

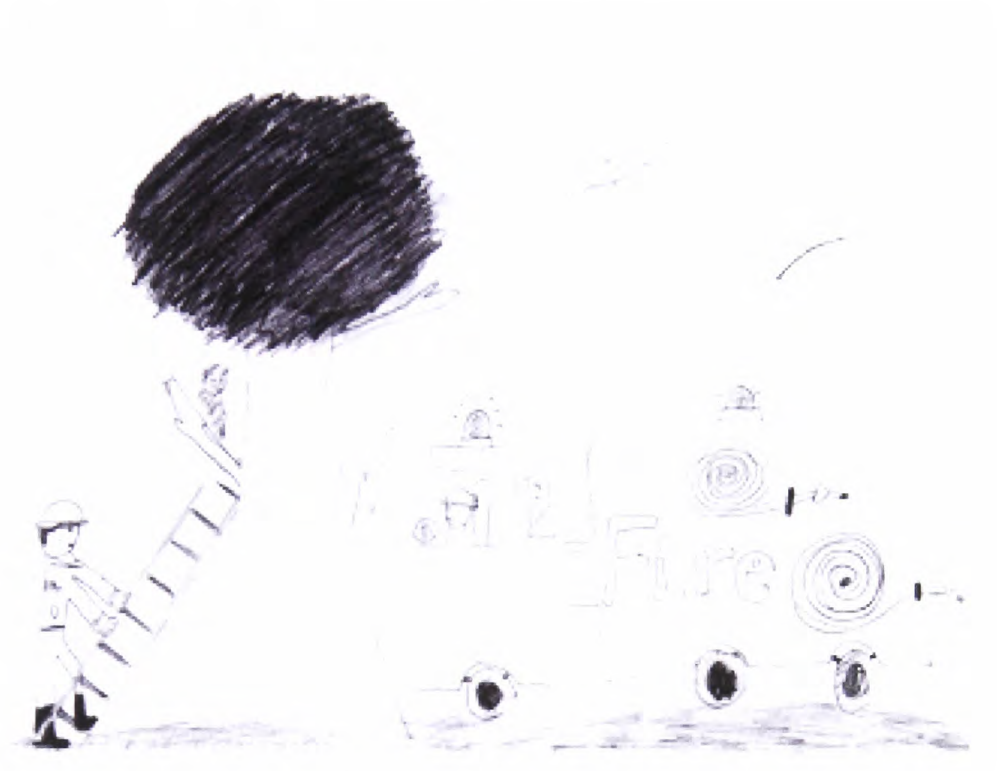

Figure 6.13 Drawing by Summer, age 9

Visual Imagination: The narrative is expressed in the composition. The tree, cat and rescuer are in the left third of the paper and the fire truck occupies the rest of the space. The rescuer is in full uniform with boots, hardhat and jacket with pockets, badges and seams clearly differentiated.

***K**inaesthetic Imagination*: Climbing the ladder, the fire-fighter is posed in profile with his arms reaching and his fingers grabbing hold of the ladder. One of his knees is bent and his boot rests on a ladder rung. The cat sits alertly waiting on a broken branch. The fire-engine is an articulated vehicle.

***T**actile imagination*: The trunk of the tree is lightly patterned and the crown is densely shaded. Additional limbs on the tree are jagged and broken. Other textures are found in the coiled hoses and tyre treads on the truck.

***A**uditory Imagination*: Sounds of the fire truck siren are implied by the flashing alert lights. The driver in the vehicle appears to be talking on radio.

Emotional Imagination: The situation seems under control and the firefighter looks determined, although the cat seems unhappy from its expression.

These examples show that AKTEV constitutes a different, but valid approach to interpreting drawings as texts that can be read to gain some insight into the way children apply the repertoires of their imaginations.

6.4 Reflective evaluation

My action research sought to address the overarching research question: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* This led to the cycle of action research evaluated here, which was driven by the research question: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?*

By analysing data in this third cycle of my action research in the quest to answer these research questions, I found evidence that teachers use their professional imaginations to engage and support children's auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual imaginations by providing purposeful imaginative activities. Moreover, this provision has led to improvements in reading and writing in classrooms in the local authority. Analysis of the drawings has demonstrated that the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* can be used as an interpretive tool to appreciate children's endeavours to create meaning.

Analysing how my research has improved my practice and understanding has led me to judge my endeavours against my values, as shown in Table 3.5: democratic ways of working; research as professional development; the power of imagination; holistic approaches to learning; and the provisional nature of knowledge.

Democratic, ethical ways of working

The research reflects the value I place on democratic, ethical ways of working in the following ways. Although this research cycle was mainly reflective, discussions with the LLPs were essential to developing the AKTEV model. I drew on their professional wisdom and experience to compile the AKTEV categories of purposeful imaginative activities.

I endeavoured to conduct the research in an ethical way. For example, the drawings were made on A4 paper in response to the same task by all 179 children in the sample. After the work was scanned, the original artworks were returned to the schools in recognition of creative copyright, and the children and teachers were thanked. The drawings selected for presentation in this thesis are typical of the age range, ability and gender of children in the sample.

I now view children's drawings in an appreciative way that acknowledges the effort and effect of children's creative endeavours. The AKTEV interpretations were deliberately not linked to stages of development because the AKTEV method revealed evidence of children's creativity regardless of their age or prowess with a pencil.

Research as professional development

This cycle of action research has impacted on my professional development. I have continued to use the model in my work on courses and in classrooms. Resource packs created as a result of the research include *AKTEV Approaches to Drama, AKTEV Writing, AKTEV Activities* and *AKTEV Response to Pictures.*

The power of imagination in creating meaning

The AKTEV model was influenced by aesthetic response theories whereby meaning is accomplished by the reader in transaction with a text in the absence of its maker (Benton & Fox, 1988, Iser, 1978, Rosenblatt, 1986). The research revealed categories of somatic and affective response as auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual imaginations, which became components of the AKTEV imagination repertoire.

Analysis of the drawings as transactional objects, informed by the AKTEV model, has revealed how children represent imagined emotions and sensations in their pictorial narratives. These meanings are implied by the children in marks, schema and symbols, and can be inferred by the reader. I have shown how, in this transaction, the reader constructs scenes and narratives from the characters, settings, objects and events depicted by the children. Subtle meanings were interpreted from details in the drawing such as position, stance and expression of characters, relationships between characters, objects and setting, and differentiation in form, shading and patterning. Drawings representing the 'cat

rescue scene' from other schools, and on other topics, provide further evidence of children's AKTEV imagination repertoire to substantiate these claims. Whilst I acknowledge that an AKTEV interpretation is more subjective than a summative evaluation of stages of development, 1 feel that it offers an approach that appreciates and respects the effort of imaginative thinking that children invest in their endeavours to create meaning. The LLPs evaluated AKTEV as a very effective way of assessing children's creative writing and responses to reading as well as drawing.

In addition to revealing evidence of children's imaginative thinking, the AKTEV model has helped teachers plan purposeful imaginative activities effectively within the creative process of reading and writing, and helped children access the powerful resources of their own imaginations.

Holistic approaches to learning

AKTEV applies imaginative approaches from across the curriculum to exemplify a holistic, multimodal approach to literacy provision.

The provisional nature of knowledge and understanding

This chapter has shown that, according to the success criteria relating to my values, I have explored ideas from a range of sources, engaged in a reflective appraisal of my understanding, and synthesised my ideas from analysis. It explained that my understanding evolved over time and was transformed by seeking to answer the research questions.

From my analysis of the data, 1 found that AKTEV can be used as a practical toolkit for planning, as a conceptual scaffold to engage and support creativity, and as an interpretive lens for appreciating children's endeavours to create meaning. Thus, AKTEV represents my working education theory regarding the importance of the imagination in reading and writing.

However, in recognition of my belief that knowledge is tentative and provisional, I wanted to further strengthen the construction of the AKTEV model with reference to the literature. The next chapter examines theoretical perspectives from the literature to underpin my living educational theories represented as the MAGIC and AKTEV models.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter examines how the research so far has helped answer my research questions and how the data and analyses have affected my professional practice and understanding (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, Reason, 2006, Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). My action research was driven by overarching research question, which was: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* This prompted three cycles of research with the purpose of finding ways to exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

The first cycle of my action research focused on: *How can literacy objectives from a standards agenda be interpreted to promote imaginative reading and writing?* Informed by literature pertaining to aesthetic, holistic and imaginative approaches to reading and writing, I addressed the research question by analysing data drawn from the national strategy's literacy documentation. Chapter four reported on this research, how it resulted in a holistic planning format for literacy for teachers in the local authority, and how this prefaced and prompted further research.

The second cycle of my action research focused on: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning?* Informed by literature pertaining to creativity in process, person, provision and product, and building on findings from the previous cycle, I addressed the research question by analysing teachers' plans. Chapter five reported on this research, and explained how components of a conceptual scaffold and practical creative process were identified and developed as a planning tool labelled MAGIC. It was tested by teachers who applied their professional imaginations to plan a variety of teaching sequences for literacy for different age-groups, genres and durations. In 7.1, I aim to strengthen my living educational theory represented by the *MAGIC planning tool* through further analysis. Each component - *motivating ideas, associating*

ideas, generating ideas, innovating ideas and *communicating ideas* – is examined with reference to the data and the literature.

The third cycle of my action research focused on: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?* Informed by literature pertaining to the sensory, affective, suppositional and aesthetic dimensions of the imagination, I addressed the research question by analysing data, which included teacher's plans and children's drawings. Chapter six reported on this research, and explained how the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* was developed and tested as a planning tool, and as an interpretive lens for appreciating children's endeavours to create meaning. In 7.2, I aim to strengthen my living educational theory represented by the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* through further analysis. Each component - *auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional* and *visual* – is examined with reference to the data and the literature.

Inductive analysis of those data resulting from discussions, observations and participants' plans were coded on charts in the second and third cycles of the research. Patterns observed in the data generated shared meanings and framed the emergent living theory underpinning the conceptual models. Specific interpretations of these data together with deductive analysis of those data selected to represent children's meaning-making reshaped the conceptual models, The interweaving of the deductive and inductive phases of analysis with reference to the wider literature synthesised and confirmed the co-constructed components of the conceptual models.

7.1 The MAGIC planning tool

This section examines the five components of the *MAGIC planning tool* - motivating ideas, associating ideas, generating ideas, innovating ideas and communicating ideas. These components were synthesised from analysis of data in the second cycle of my action research in response to the research question: *How can teachers incorporate creativity and imagination into their literacy planning?* The resultant componential model in Figure 7.1 represents my living educational theory with regard to a creative process.

To offer this theory as a contribution to knowledge, and with the aim of consolidating the model, I have returned to the data and the literature to identify some contributory features within each component of the *MAGIC planning tool*. From Mooney's 4Ps of creativity, I adapted *process*, *personality*, *provision* and *product* as headings for my review of the literature on creativity in 2.1 and as categories for my analysis of the leading literacy practitioners' (LLPs) plans in 5.3. I have used the headings again to identify and organise an analysis of some of the contributory aspects of provision, personality and product in each component of the creative process represented as the *MAGIC planning tool*. Thus, *provision* examines the kinds of purposeful imaginative activities in the LLPs' plans; *personality* examines the kinds of creative characteristics noted; and *product* examines some of the outcomes.

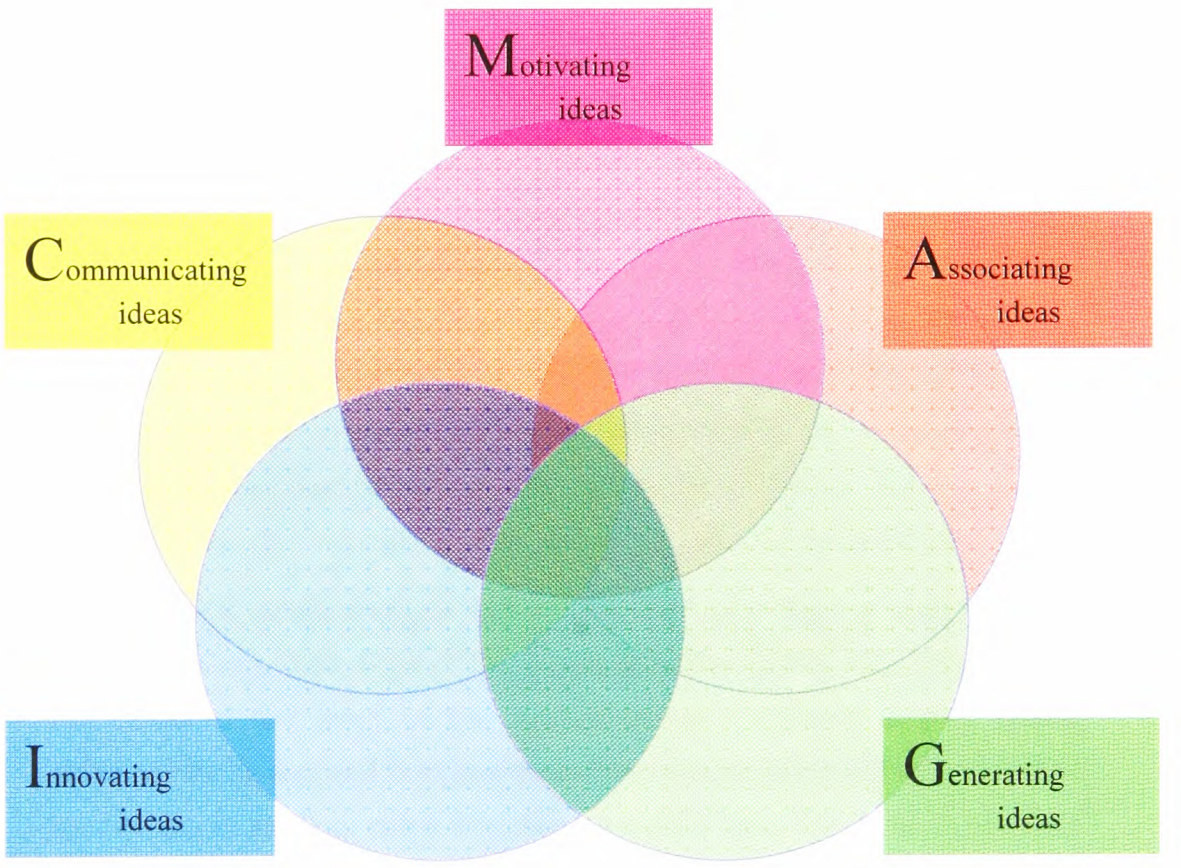

Figure 7.1 Components of the *MAGIC planning tool*

The *motivating ideas* component

From her research on creativity in business, Amabile (1996) has identified motivation as the most essential component of creativity. From my analysis of plans and notes of visits, I have synthesised three contributory features of the motivating ideas component of the *MAGIC planning tool*: aspiration, with regard to provision; disposition, with regard to personality; and intention, with regard to product.

Provision - aspiration

Howe (1998) refers to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and the learner's 'locus of control', which is either aspirational mastery or fatalistic dependency. In the research, five MAGIC modules placed the children in role as designers, writers or artists and the LLPs observed that children were immediately engaged as participants in their learning by assuming roles in this way; role-play was seen as an important motivator in encouraging a 'can-do' attitude.

Creative individuals tend to have a discovery orientation, which leads them to view situations flexibly and to ask novel questions (Csikszentmihalyi & Getzels, 1988). By creating meaningful contexts for learning, Miss OI observed that her children seemed to 'anticipate their learning with curiosity'; Miss BP observed that her children seemed 'open to wonder', and Miss PJJ observed that her children were 'keen to accept challenges'. In my visits to two classrooms during this phase, I noted that the children were curious about what was going to happen, wondered what they were going to do, and asked questions about the topic.

A classroom is a collective unit with a mood and mores that can foster creativity or crush it (Craft, 2000, Fryer, 1996, Woods & Jeffrey, 2003). Miss PJG and Miss PJJ explained that many of the children lacked confidence in their writing abilities, valuing approval from parents and peers about secretarial aspects such as handwriting or spelling, rather than their own good ideas. However, in my visits to two LLPs' classrooms during this phase, I noted that Miss PJJ and Miss BP created a climate of psychological safety: by giving children reassurance about difficulties and mistakes: by welcoming their questions; and by reacting to discoveries and adventurous vocabulary with surprise and excitement. Miss OI

commented that her children had 'aspirations' which were 'positively directed towards mastery rather than dependency'.

As a result, I consider that providing a climate of psychological safety that nurtures ***aspiration*** contributes to motivation.

Personality - disposition

Being open to experience and willing to have a go are dispositions that can be nurtured and help children feel that their involvement will contribute to their learning (Katz, 2000; Carr, 1999; Craft, 2000). In my visits to two LLPs' classrooms during this phase, I noted that Miss PJJ and Miss BP seemed to value children's personal qualities and individual capabilities by making activities inclusive and accessible, and commenting appreciatively in response to their ideas and suggestions. There was a playfulness about embarking on the learning in both classrooms. By offering activities such as poetry and music as motivating starting points, encouraging the children to ask questions, and supporting a 'can do' approach, they nurtured children's learning dispositions and sensitivities.

As a result, I consider that when teachers nurture positive ***dispositions***, this contributes to children's motivation.

Product - intention

Intention is a key ingredient for the capacity of knowing how to learn or 'learnacy' (Claxton, 2000, Goleman, 1996). A key purpose for the LLPs planning their MAGIC modules was to motivate the children at the start of their learning journey towards achieving the literacy objectives – the 'product' of their learning. In my analysis of their plans, I found that the LLPs translated learning intentions from the literacy objectives. Learning intentions were related to children being able to construct meaning and were made clear in all cases. In two LLPs' classrooms visited during this phase, I noted that Miss HDJ and Miss PJG both explained to the children what they were going to learn and what was probably going to happen over the next few weeks to help them learn it. Miss PJG invited the children to think about what they needed to know and talk with a partner about what they wanted to be able to do at the end of the module. The children said that they felt involved in their learning and could think about the sorts of successes they might be able to achieve.

However, targets, goals, multiple objectives and an emphasis on tangible outcomes can have detrimental effects on creativity (Bailey, 2002, Kimbell, 2000, Maynard, 2002, Myhill, 2001). Although the LLPs planned modules with learning intentions that were deliberately flexible and open-ended, they explained that they were aware that they would be judged in performance management appraisals or by Ofsted, on direct, whole-class teaching and value-added outcomes. Miss RP was concerned that the 'intended curriculum in the plans match[ed] the delivered curriculum exactly, particularly when we're observed'. Miss PJG and Miss RP returned to published scheme materials after the project because of this tension.

In reading and writing, children create personal and collective meanings (D'Arcy 1989, 1998, 1999, 2000). By planning activities such as poetry, stories, music, drama and drawing for the start of the modules, the LLPs involved the children in beginning to construct meanings with purpose.

As a result, I regard the ***intention*** to create meaning with purpose to be an important contribution to motivating ideas

Table 7.3 shows three contributory features - *aspiration, disposition* and *intention* - of the *motivating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*. In other words, motivating ideas involves providing a climate of trust so that children anticipate their learning with aspiration, can-do dispositions and the intention to create meaning.

Table 7.1 The *motivating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Motivating ideas	Aspiration Children anticipate their learning with curiosity, a 'can-do' attitude and a 'discovery orientation'	Disposition Children appreciate their own personal qualities, sensitivities and developing capabilities	Intention Children realise that the purpose of learning is to be involved in constructing meaning

The *associating ideas* component

Isaksen & Trefflinger (1985) consider that making connections in order to think of new and unusual possibilities is essential to creativity. From my analysis of plans and notes of visits, I have identified three contributory features of the associating ideas component of the *MAGIC planning tool*: *interaction* with regard to

provision, *attention* with regard to personality, and *connection* with regard to product.

Provision - interaction

Talk in participatory learning situations enables enculturation into creative strategies, perspectives and attitudes (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Bruner, 1996, Cole, 1996). Creativity is sociocultural (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998, Sternberg & Lubart, 1996). In the research, the LLPs planned opportunities for interaction that involved the children working in pairs, triads, quads, jigsaw groups and as a whole class. Five LLPs planned situations to simulate work-related roles and found that the children considered possibilities in sophisticated ways because of the shared imagined contexts. In my visits to three LLPs classrooms during the associating ideas phase, I noted that Miss HDJ, Miss BP and Miss OI had set up evocative environments with procedures that engendered trust. As a result, the children were confident to explore possibilities in their discussions – they asked questions, offered opinions, listened to others and contributed ideas.

As a result, I consider that the provision of opportunities for ***interaction*** contributes to children associating ideas.

Personality- attention

Brain studies have shown that associative thinking sparks more complex neural connections (Cummings & Oldham, 1997, Dacey & Lennon, 1998, Eide & Eide, 2004). In the research, the LLPs planned purposeful imaginative activities that involved the children in giving attention to their experiences, present and past, as well as using their imaginations to, for example, visualize, conjecture, and respond to reading text and images. The LLPs gave the children opportunities to explore ideas relating to the real and imagined world, focusing on sensory and emotional responses. Approaches such as drawing and Buzan's (2001) mind-mapping were used to focus attention systematically on generating a fund of ideas. As a result, children used the associative capacities of their imaginations to discover analogies, patterns and similarities, to find out what others thought, and to realise one idea could lead to another.

As a result, I consider that giving ***attention*** is a significant creative characteristic that contributes to associating ideas.

Product - connection

Making links between ideas, experience and alternative interpretations in an encouraging context are important aspects of creativity (Cziksentmihalyi, 1998, Efland, 2002). The cognitive processes involved in the production of an idea that is new to the mind in which it arose can be created by combining familiar ideas or things and by analogy, comparison and metaphor (Alder, 2002, Boden, 2003, Craft, 2000, Heerwagen, 2002). In the research, the LLPs incorporated thinking strategies such as visual organizers, discussion and drama to encourage the children to collect and connect ideas. The LLPs' plans were designed around themes to make the learning journey clear to the children. Because the children were encouraged to connect ideas from their previous experience with new ideas, they began to construct new learning. The LLPs also used the associative capacities of their own imaginations to make the learning meaningful and relevant when they planned the modules. Three of the plans were cross-curricular and drew on children's interests, experiences and learning encounters out of school. A tension for the LLPs was to produce tangible outcomes that made the learning visible to parents and other members of staff. In response to this problem, three of the teachers made charts with symbols to reward the children's good ideas.

As a result, I consider that making ***connections*** contributes significantly to associating ideas.

Table 7.2 shows three contributory features - *interaction, attention* and *connection* - of the *associating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool.*

Table 7.2 The *associating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Associating ideas	Interaction Children ask questions, talk ideas, listen and offer opinions with mutual trust in a community of enquiry	Attention Children tune in to their sensory and emotional responses to the real and imagined world	Connection Children discover themes, explore relationships and make analogies from ideas they have collected

In other words, associating ideas involves providing a community of enquiry in which children tune in their attention to the sensory and emotional aspects of the real and imagined world and explore connections between ideas and experience.

The *generating ideas* component

Children learn how to think imaginatively in classrooms where there is time for ideas, resources to try out ideas, people with sensitivity, playfulness and humour to stimulate and share ideas, and opportunities to take risks and make choices (Edwards & Springate, 1995, Isaksen & Trefflinger, 1985, Woods & Jeffrey, 2003). From my analysis of plans and notes of visits, I have identified three contributory features of the *generating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*: *experimentation* with regard to provision; *determination* with regard to personality; and *adaptation* with regard to product.

Provision - experimentation

Positive feedback and encouragement help to eliminate self-consciousness and fears of failure (Claxton, 2000, Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, Torrance, 1988). In the research, the LLPs gave the children opportunities to investigate techniques for creating meaning in poetry, information and narrative. All LLPs planned a sequence of at least three different techniques or materials for the children to try out in this phase of their modules. Using images and words, the children were able to explore ways to express their responses to real and imagined experiences. Appreciative feedback was given to children in the form of verbal compliments. In my visits during this phase, I noted that children were encouraged to try out ideas and play with possibilities. In the sessions, I observed them immersed in rich visual and verbal texts and noted how they were able to show that responses to the same idea can be very different and just as 'correct'. This was due to the protocols set up in all classrooms during the project for encouraging, appreciative feedback.

As a result, I consider that providing opportunities for ***experimentation*** contributes to generating ideas.

Personality - determination

According to Sternberg (2002, 2005) creative people know what risks are worth taking, convince others of the value of their ideas and have perseverance and

resilience. Children need a tolerance for unpredictable outcomes, mistakes or even failure as they explore and try out ideas in different ways (Claxton, 2000, Claxton & Lucas, 2004). In the research, the LLPs encouraged children to develop a 'have-a-go' attitude and learn how to tolerate inevitable mistakes. For example, I noted a level of chutzpah in the children in BP's classroom because they resolved to have a go and try things out with determined effort and, even when things didn't work, I observed children shrugging, smiling and having another go. However, the LLPs spoke of the tension of high expectations from parents and helping children realise that mistakes are fundamental to learning. Also, because the strategy was prescriptive with regard to features of genres and grammar, and didn't advocate drafting for writing, tentative talk, or aesthetic responses to reading, the LLPs felt it was 'difficult to try things out' and 'explore possibilities' when children, parents and colleagues expected accurate composition and comprehension.

As a result, I consider that ***determination*** is a creative characteristic that contributes to generating ideas.

Product - adaptation

Efland (2002) has proposed that cognitive flexibility requires a repertoire of strategies from which choices rather than generalisations can be made. According to Dweck (1999), many children sacrifice valuable opportunities to develop their learning muscles in order to 'look good' (Dweck, 1999). In the research, the LLPs commented on the children's unwillingness to make mistakes, and that they seemed to think that everything had to be right first time. Miss BP was an exception and I observed that children in her classroom were prepared to make changes and adapt their ideas in writing.

Because flexibility, decision-making and adapting ideas were highlighted as areas for development, the LLPs put creative literacy protocols in place. These included the drafting process so that children were involved in writing journeys with response partners, and serialised novels read aloud so that children had immersive encounters with rich texts (Barrs & Cork, 2001, Bearne & Watson, 2000, D'Arcy, 1989). Protocols for aesthetic response were introduced, such as *Booktalk* (Chambers, 2001) and *Talk Teams* (Daniels, 2002). As a result, the LLPs adapted

these effective approaches, which none of them had used before, and said that their children were able to adapt ideas and techniques for their own purposes.

As a result, I regard ***adaptation*** to be a contribution to the product aspect of the generating ideas component of the *MAGIC planning tool.*

Table 7.3 shows three contributory features - *experimentation, determination* and *adaptation* of the *generating ideas* component of the creative process. In other words, generating ideas involves providing opportunities for experimentation in which children can develop determination to have-a-go and make adaptations to ideas and things.

Table 7.3 The *generating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Generating ideas	Experimentation Children play with possibilities and try out ideas and techniques in different ways	Determination Children have a 'have a go' resilience and tolerance for inevitable mistakes	Adaptation Children realise that ideas are flexible – that skills and ideas can be applied in different ways

The *innovating ideas* component

According to Heerwagen (2004), innovation is the transformation, transmission and adoption of creative discovery. Personal novelty (Boden, 2003) was considered to be most appropriate in this research. From my analysis of plans and notes of visits, I have identified three contributory features of the innovating ideas component of the *MAGIC planning tool*: *interpretation* with regard to provision; *reflection* with regard to personality; and *representation* with regard to product.

Provision - interpretation

Efland (2002) suggests that the creation of a completed work is an interpretation of what the maker has seen, felt or undergone - the imaginative reordering of that experience and its embodiment in a medium. As mentioned earlier, the LLPs set in place protocols for reading such as talk teams, and for writing, such as writing journeys; because of this, the children were given opportunities to interpret the information they had gathered and choose the ideas they wanted to pursue from the possibilities they had explored. In my visits to three LLPs' classrooms during

this phase, I observed children interpreting their own ideas in writing, artwork and music and appreciating those of others. The children in Miss HDJ's class said they felt that their interpretations and ideas were respected by each other and their teacher. The children in Miss BP's class said that they had been able to make their own interpretations of the firebird story after trying out different techniques in writing, dance and art.

As a result, I consider that providing opportunities for ***interpretation*** contributes to innovating ideas.

Personality - reflection

Innovation arises from reflecting (Kolb, 1984) on impressions (Vygotsky, 1998), or being in the flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Making sense of events and situations and shaping personal meaning are intricately connected to innovation. Other words associated with innovation, such as illumination, inspiration, intuition, insight, instinct, inkling, improvisation, introspection, all imply the iterative nature of innovation. They all begin with 'I' and seem to connect the inner and outer worlds, which makes them doubly personal.

In the research, the LLPs' plans gave children opportunities to mull over ideas and review possibilities through reflective talk with talk partners. All the children were given sketchbooks as a tool for reflection. For example, in Miss BP's classroom, children recorded their reflections on their learning; this included ideas, diagrams, annotated experiments, and notes about changes they would make. Although the children didn't use this resource spontaneously – they were directed to use ideation techniques - in all the classrooms, children were encouraged to review the range of possibilities and ideas they had generated so they could make informed choices.

As a result, I regard ***reflection*** to be a significant creative characteristic to be nurtured towards innovating ideas.

Product - representation

Representation is a vital aspect of creativity enabling ideas to be transformed and expressed in imaginative ways (Bruner, 1990). In the research, the LLPs' plans gave the children opportunities to reflect on their learning, so they could interpret

their personal meanings, and make informed choices about how they were going to produce their own original work.

Piazza (1999) has explained that literacy is a complex amalgam of communicative channels, symbols, forms and meanings. The LLPs spoke of the tensions between innovative outcomes, which result from children being encouraged to create, shape and represent personal meanings, and the pressure on time imposed by the literacy objectives. Furthermore, sustaining the momentum that led to the phase of innovation was a problem.

Producing novel ideas or things and transforming concepts is part of everyday thinking, but their value and usefulness are determined by the context (Boden, 1990, Buchanan, 2001, Mumford, 2003, NACCCE, 1999, Sternberg, 2001). The LLPs explained that pressures exerted by the strategy meant that they had to ensure that the outcomes were directly related to the genre features of particular text types studied each week. However, because they used the planning format, the LLPs were able to ensure coverage, and by applying the *MAGIC planning tool*, they were able to build the children's understanding over a sequence of sessions so that they could make independent choices. For example, Miss OI's children were all able to achieve the literacy objectives related to poetry by making up their own lullabies and action rhymes after exploring poems and sound patterns over three weeks. Mrs HI's children all achieved the literacy objectives related to explanatory texts by representing their ideas as effective animal bestiary pages after working in role as writers and illustrators over four weeks. Miss BP's children all achieved the narrative literacy objectives by representing the story of *The Firebird* in writing after exploring ideas in drama, dance and music.

As a result, I regard ***representation*** to be a significant aspect of innovating ideas – it seems to involve combining forms, ideas and symbol systems to create meaning.

Table 7.4 shows three contributory features - *interpretation, reflection* and *representation* of the *innovating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool.* In other words, when planning this phase, teachers provide opportunities for children to interpret ideas, to reflect on possibilities and to represent their own meanings.

Table 7.4 The *innovating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Innovating ideas	Interpretation Children make sense of their own ideas and those of others to shape personal meaning	Reflection Children review possibilities and ideas they have generated and make informed choices	Representation Children shape their own meanings by combining forms and symbol systems

The *communicating ideas* component

According to Sternberg's (1996) investment theory, creativity involves *buying low* by being willing and able to pursue ideas with persistence, and *selling high* by persuading others of their worth. From my analysis of plans and notes of visits, I have identified three contributory features of the communicating ideas component of the MAGIC creative process: *celebration* with regard to provision; *satisfaction* with regard to personality; and *evaluation* with regard to product.

Provision - celebration

For Eisner (2002), the privacy of an idea becomes stabilised through representation and thus can be shared. In the research, all LLPs celebrated the creative endeavours of their children by displaying work in process as well as the outcomes. Work was presented in assemblies, in other classrooms, on school websites and on CD. Writing was published by scanning it, photocopying it or word-processing it.

As a result, I consider that providing opportunities for ***celebration*** contributes to communicating ideas and involves sharing ideas and learning with others.

Personality - satisfaction

Vygotsky (1978) proposed a process of creative imagination in which children gain satisfaction on their achievement by: exploring objects, materials, people, places or ideas; reflecting and elaborating on impressions for inspiration; assembling selected elements in novel ways; and sharing so that their products of crystallised imagination can be experienced by others. In the research, the LLPs evaluated the children's satisfaction with their learning progress as well as their own feelings of satisfaction with the teaching process. They reported that the

children had invested their creative energies in the activities provided for them and felt positive about what they had achieved. For example, Miss HDJ observed that the children's satisfaction was 'tangible' when they 'shared their breakfast designs they were all smiling and eager' and 'pleased with what they had done'.

As a result, I regard ***satisfaction*** to be an aspect of communicating ideas.

Product - evaluation

The strategy (DfES 2004) recommends a daily, three part lesson for literacy with an introduction, independent work and plenary. The plenary is supposed to be a time for evaluating the learning - it should help the children feel that they have agency over their learning. However, the LLPs felt that critical evaluation seemed to create negative barriers to future learning. Miss BP explained that teachers and children work in a 'could-do-better' world of performance targets and continuous improvement. Constructive criticism is an oxymoron; yet reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes is considered a hallmark of creativity according to QCA (QCA, 2003). Six of the LLPs revealed how they had suffered the consequences of harsh criticism in their own education, resulting in lowered self-confidence in abilities, and reluctance to engage in creative activities.

In the research, we began to address this issue by establishing appreciative protocols for evaluating work that was creative in intent so that feedback by peers and mentors was positive and constructive. As a result, the following protocols were developed and used in the LLPs' classrooms.

The *'DOW Index'* protocol comprises discussion (D), observation (O) and work samples (W). Discussion of the learning was framed with prompts, such as: 'Tell me about your work'; 'What helped you?'; 'What didn't work?'; 'What did you learn?'; and 'How could you use what you have learned?'. Observations of the interactions in focus groups of four children revealed developing ideas; the LLPs took photographs of the work in progress. Work samples were annotated with the context and process that brought about the outcome. Completed work was assessed using the rubric of learning objectives and, in Miss HDJ's class, on success criteria agreed by the children.

The *response-partner* protocol is a dialogue for peer-assessment of writing comprising three parts: the writer explains what they were trying to say and reads

their work aloud; their partner gives at least two compliments and explains what was effective; the writer might then ask for advice and the reader could offer it. This protocol was used by peers, teaching assistants, parents and teachers when conferencing with children and by the LLPs at the end of the modules.

As a result, I consider that ***evaluation*** contributes to communicating ideas. It often marks the beginning of the next creative cycle, as ideas evolve.

Table 7.5 shows three contributory features - *celebration, satisfaction* and *evaluation* - of the *communicating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool.* In other words, when planning this phase, teachers provide opportunities for children to interpret ideas, to reflect on possibilities and to represent their own meanings.

Table 7.5 shows three contributory features *celebration, satisfaction* and *evaluation* - of the *communicating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool.* In other words, communicating ideas involves providing time, space and audience to bring work to a satisfying conclusion, share what has been done, and evaluate its effectiveness in some way.

Table 7.5 The *communicating ideas* component of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Communicating ideas	Celebration Children share their ideas and appreciate what is novel to each learner	Satisfaction Children feel positive about what they have achieved	Evaluation Children assess their learning through feedback and outcomes

The *MAGIC planning tool* model

As a result of my analysis, I have identified contributory features of each component of the *MAGIC planning tool.* Thus, **m**otivating ideas comprises intention, aspiration and disposition; **a**ssociating ideas comprises interaction, attention and connection; **g**enerating ideas comprises experimentation, adaptation and determination; **i**nnovating ideas comprises interpretation, reflection and representation; and **c**ommunicating ideas comprises satisfaction, evaluation and celebration. I have organised the contributory features as a matrix with regard to

provision, personality and product and in relation to the components of the creative process, as shown in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 Components of the *MAGIC planning tool*

Process	Provision	Personality	Product
Motivating ideas	**Aspiration** Children anticipate their learning with curiosity, a 'can-do' attitude and a 'discovery orientation'	**Disposition** Children appreciate their own personal qualities, sensitivities and developing capabilities	**Intention** Children realise that the purpose of learning is to be involved in constructing meaning
Associating ideas	**Interaction** Children ask questions, talk ideas, listen and offer opinions with mutual trust in a community of enquiry	**Attention** Children tune in to their sensory and emotional responses to the real and imagined world	**Connection** Children discover themes, explore relationships and make analogies from ideas they have collected
Generating ideas	**Experimentation** Children play with possibilities and try out ideas and techniques in different ways	**Determination** Children have a 'have a go' resilience and tolerance for inevitable mistakes	**Adaptation** Children realise that ideas are flexible – that skills and ideas can be applied in different ways
Innovating ideas	**Interpretation** Children make sense of their own ideas and those of others to shape personal meaning	**Reflection** Children review possibilities and ideas they have generated and make informed choices	**Representation** Children shape their own meanings by combining forms and symbol systems
Communicating ideas	**Celebration** Children share their ideas and appreciate what is novel to each learner	**Satisfaction** Children feel positive about what they have achieved	**Evaluation** Children assess their learning through feedback and outcomes

Process relates to the sequence of motivating, associating, generating, innovating and communicating ideas of the *MAGIC planning tool*. *Provision* relates to fostering aspirations and planning opportunities for interacting, experimenting, interpreting and celebrating in a climate of trust and enquiry. *Personality* relates to characteristics of disposition, attention, determination, reflection and satisfaction. *Product* relates to intended outcomes, and connecting, adapting, representing and evaluating ideas. Although these contributory features interlock and overlap in the real world of learning and teaching, they add dimension to each component of model.

The *MAGIC planning tool* did not exist at the start of my action research. It evolved from reflecting on experience, analyzing data, consulting the literature to address the research questions, and the concepts were co-constructed with the

research participants. It represents my living educational theory regarding creativity and is offered as a contribution to the field of children's literacy.

7.2 The AKTEV imagination repertoire

This section examines the five components of the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* model – *auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional* and visual – which I synthesised from my research. These components were synthesised from analysis of data in the third cycle of my action research in response to the research question: *How can teachers nurture children's imaginations and appreciate their endeavours to create meaning?*

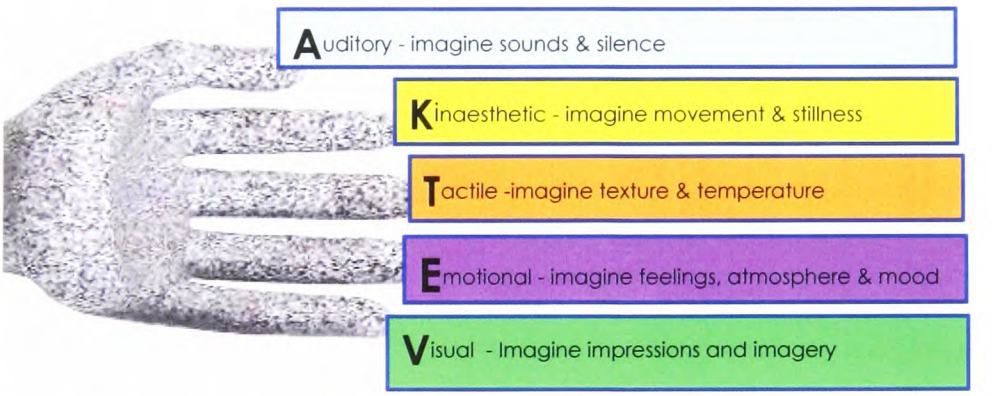

Figure 7.2 Components of the *AKTEV imagination repertoire*

The resultant componential model in Figure 7.8 represents my living educational theory with regard to imaginative meaning making. Characteristics of the imagination were identified from the literature in 2.3. This supported my working theory that the imagination's repertoire has sensory (somatic) and emotional (affective) dimensions. However, the suppositional, productive and aesthetic dimensions revealed in the literature also became evident in findings from my action research. To offer my theory as a contribution to knowledge, I have returned to the data and the literature to examine the aesthetic, productive and suppositional, as well as the somatic and affective dimensions of the imagination.

Somatic and affective imaginations

In this section, 1 examine the auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual components of the *AKTEV imagination* repertoire with reference to the research and the literature.

Auditory imagination

Vygotsky (1978) has explained how the imagination is linked to children's development of speech and social interaction. To nurture children's auditory imaginations for listening, the LLPs planned activities such as story-telling, discussion, visits and music. From this work, we identified that listeners respond to intonation, cadence, loudness, rhythm, tone, tempo, and register in spoken language, and to melody, discord, noise and silence in environmental sounds.

According to aesthetic response theory, readers tune in to the words and imagery presented in a text in inner speech and the voice of the writer or narrator, the voices of characters in dialogue, and of sounds accompanying descriptions of place or action, are inferred (Iser, 1978). Auditory imagining makes a significant contribution to the reading pleasure of between half and two-thirds of school-age readers (Tellegen & Coppejans, 1991). To nurture children's auditory imaginations for reading, the LLPs planned activities such as music, poems, chants and rhymes.

Reading with the ear and hearing the voice of the text also benefits writing (Alexander, 2005). Writers rely on words and imagery to create patterns of sound and tempo and to imply voices, noise and silence. To nurture children's auditory imaginations for writing, the LLPs provided activities such as such as drama, role-play and puppets. Evidence was found in the children's writing of patterns of sound such as rhyme, rhythm and alliteration, of phrases that describe sound and silence, and dialogue between characters with verbs and adverbs to imply how they spoke.

The narrative drawings analysed in 5.3 revealed evidence of children's capacity for auditory imagination in that they were able to imply sounds, voices and silence.

Kinaesthetic imagination

The kinaesthetic imagination provides information about the action and stillness of people and materials. According to the Root-Berensteins (1999), the awareness of the position, orientation, movement, and size of our limbs, our sense of balance, and our awareness of bodily sensations such as pains and tickles is experienced through imaginative proprioception; it is indicated in narratives through deixis, a feature of language that indicates time, place and view point. The narrative drawings analysed in 5.3 revealed evidence of children's capacity for kinaesthetic imagination in that they were able to show that something was happening in time and place and implied action through gesture, stance, reach, grasp and hold of their characters.

Readers create possible worlds where things happen to characters (Bruner, 1986). According to aesthetic response theory, readers imagine how characters might move, anticipate possible consequences or actions, and infer stillness or motion in the setting inhabited by the characters. To nurture children's kinaesthetic imaginations for reading, the LLPs planned activities such drama, dance, map-making and drawing.

Writers of stories create characters in imagined worlds where things happen. These characters are made all the more convincing by their actions and by the movement, gesture, gait or stance implicit in the words and imagery. To nurture children's kinaesthetic imaginations for writing, the LLPs planned activities such as drawing maps, dance and sculpture. Evidence was found in the children's writing of sequences of events, phrases to describe what characters did, and verbs and adverbs.

Tactile imagination

The term tactile refers to the general sense of touch, and haptics to intentional active touch. A review of the literature shows that this is an area of emerging interest in museum and science education, computers and neuropsychology. Brain scans show that parts of the visual cortex are activated when people are involved in tactile exploration of textured surfaces. The narrative drawings analysed in 5.3 revealed evidence of children's capacity for tactile imagination in that they were able to imply textural surface qualities and temperature.

Readers respond to the tactile qualities implied in imagery with how they imagine things might feel to touch, walk on, or brush against. To nurture children's auditory imaginations for reading, the LLPs planned activities such as painting, collage and collecting objects connected to a story.

Writers depict an imagined three-dimensional world by revealing small details about objects, landscapes and architecture and implying the surface features of texture, temperature, weight and structure. To nurture children's tactile imaginations to support their writing, the LLPs planned activities such as sorting and classifying, drawing and painting, and making decoupage boxes and puppets. Evidence was found in the children's writing of informative details about objects and places, descriptions of temperatures and textures, and imagery that included similes and metaphors.

Emotional imagination

Damasio (1999) has demonstrated that when people imaginatively engage with the potential consequences of various courses of action, they activate their emotional response mechanisms and encode the results of these simulations somatically. Emotion is the personal, affective response to mood, atmosphere, people, places and situations. The narrative drawings analysed in 5.3 revealed evidence of children's capacity for emotional imagination in that they were able to imply atmosphere, mood, humour, optimism or fear.

Empathy is the understanding that arises from imaginative projection into the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and situation of someone other than the self (Cremin, 1998). Although Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) argue that an emotional state evoked by a narrative is only an emotion-like imagining, rather than genuine emotion, I maintain that successful readers are able to respond affectively with empathy for a character through inference and deduction, and care what happens to them. Warnock (1976) has argued that children cannot be taught empathy but they can be taught imaginative emotion. To nurture children's emotional imaginations for reading, the LLPs planned activities such as character study, happy-sad graphs talk-teams, and serialised novels.

Writers create circumstances in which their characters make choices or confront an issue. Vulnerabilities and relationships make a character's behaviour in the

situation all the more compelling. Velleman (2000) has explained that when pretending to be an elephant, a child does not form an explicit representation of elephant behaviour and act accordingly, but imagines being an elephant weighing a ton, walking on stumpy legs, carrying floppy ears and then assesses how to behave. To nurture children's emotional imaginations for writing, the LLPs planned activities such as writing partners, biography and letter writing, and role-play. Evidence was found in the children's writing of convincing characters, their feelings and attitudes, and mention of points of view and relationships.

Visual imagination

Arnheim (2004:192) asserts that the visual imagination is 'the universal gift of the human mind' in his discussion of drawings as inventions. My analysis of the narrative drawings in Chapter five revealed evidence of children's capacity for visual imagination in that they were able to imply what places, objects and living things look like.

Readers respond to the visual qualities implied in language by inference and deduction to build an internal picture in their 'mind's eye' of how things seem to them. Imaginative perception is, according to Thomas (1999), the continual updating of our attention to details about a scene or object in recognizable patterns of imagery. Imagery can be seen as having quasi-pictorial entities in the mind, which are like, or functionally equivalent to, inner pictures (Stephen, 1983). The analysis of my aesthetic responses to a text in 6.3 confirms this. To nurture children's visual imaginations for reading, the LLPs planned activities such as looking at pictures, curating and making artworks.

Writers supply observations and informative details to show how things look through words, through the descriptive languages of imagery, metaphor and analogy, and by implication. Pylyshyn (2003) asserts that mental images are language-like representations - descriptive notations in the brain. To nurture children's visual imaginations to support their writing, the LLPs planned activities such as observing details in photographs, descriptive writing and poetry. Evidence was found in the children's writing of informative details about the appearance of characters, settings and objects, of simile and metaphor, and of precise yet adventurous vocabulary.

Purposeful AKTEV imagination activities

My analysis of the purposeful imaginative activities in the LLPs' plans and my notes of meetings resulted in Table 7.7, which shows some activities that can be offered to nourish the somatic and affective aspects of children's imaginations.

Table 7.7 Purposeful AKTEV imaginative activities

Auditory	**Children respond to and imagine sounds & voices with:**			
	Poems	Chants	Rhymes	Music
	Discussion	Drama	Role play	Puppets
	Masks	Toys	Story telling	Visitors
Kinaesthetic	**Children respond to and imagine movement & stillness with:**			
	Dance	Mime	Drama	Visits
	Wonder Walks	Maps	Sculpture Trails	Drawing
	Dens	Mobiles	Kites	Cutting
	Outdoor play	Dressing-up	Construction	
Tactile	**Children respond to and imagine textures & temperature with:**			
	Paper collage	Textile collage	Claywork	Printmaking
	Weaving	Painting	Pastels	Gardening
	Collections	Sorting	Classifying	
Emotional	**Children respond to and imagine feelings, moods and atmosphere with**			
	Jokes	Letters	Talk Teams	Novels
	Character Study	Role Play	Philosophy	Biography
	Historical events	Writing Partners		
Visual	**Children respond to and imagine how things look with:**			
	Looking at pictures	Looking at buildings		Curating
	Looking at landscapes	Making artworks		Photography
	Designing symbols	Descriptive Writing		

These kinds of purposeful imaginative activity were used in classrooms during the research and the evidence clearly confirms that they engage and support children's creative capabilities in literacy. By categorising the activities according to the components of the *AKTEV imagination repertoire*, the list provides another tool to help teachers plan for creativity and imagination in literacy. Other teachers came to know about, and use the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* through my work with them in schools and in formal professional development sessions.

Reason (2003) urges us to ask ourselves how the findings from our action research have affected our work and understanding. The reflective evaluation of my research project has presented some surprises. From the review of literature, suppositional, productive and aesthetic dimensions of the imagination were identified. They are embedded in the research, yet I haven't overtly explored them as aspects of the imagination. The next section redresses this imbalance in part, in a brief consideration of other dimensions of the imagination's repertoire.

Other dimensions of the imagination's repertoire

The suppositional imagination

This section examines the role of the suppositional imagination in learning and teaching, with reference to the literature and the research. Dewey (1993:278) recognized that teachers need imagination to envision their teaching with 'imaginative running beyond fact into the realm of desired possibilities'. Casey (2000) has taken this notion further by defining imaging, imagining-what, and imagining-how as significant aspects of the imagination in professional settings. Planning for literacy was the key purpose of my research and I discovered that teachers use their professional imagination to consider possibilities in order to make decisions. As a result, I now recognise that planning draws on the suppositional dimension of the professional imagination.

From the review of literature, it can be seen that researchers and philosophers through the ages have commented on the relationship, or not, between imagination and possibility. Mellou (1995:100) differentiated imagination and fantasy: 'fantasy is usually but not always about the impossible, or at least improbable, while imagination explores what might be, discovering various possibilities'. Craft (2000, 2001, and 2005) suggests that possibility thinking is at the core of creativity and involves problem finding, asking 'what if?', and problem solving. Brill (2004:2) proposes that the imagination involves hypothetical thinking to produce alternatives 'as they might be, not as they are'. In the research, the LLPs planned activities that engaged children's suppositional imaginations to support their literacy, such as drama, discussion and drawing in which the children, as readers and writers, created possible worlds represented in and from texts in print and image.

Eisner (2002:35) recommends that conceiving of imaginative possibilities requires perceptual activity (like Dewey's flexible purposing), such as noticing relationships, making analogies, and interpreting meaning. My research was underpinned by D'Arcy's (1998) work on responding in an engaged and appreciative way to the possibilities of meaning embedded in children's writing.

Steele's (2004) research shows that drawing is a language medium through which children can articulate a range of imagined possibilities. My analysis of the drawings in 5.5 gives evidence of the children creating complex meanings in their narrative representations that describe imagined people, places and things. The drawings infer modal verbs and conditions, such as 'A cat is [going to be] rescued from a tree', by depicting figures poised in readiness for some future action. In these interpretations, the viewer's imagination is brought into play.

The suppositional aspects of the imagination, in particular teachers' 'professional imaginations' and children's 'imagining possibilities' would provide very fruitful avenues for further research.

The productive imagination

The productive imagination would appear to be at the very heart of purposeful imaginative activity. Earlier, contributory features of the *MAGIC planning tool* relating to *product* were identified and examined as intention, connection, adaptation, representation and evaluation. Efland (2002) highlights how the effort involved in pursuing purpose and its effects are significant aspects of creative endeavour.

Comparing, synthesising, inferring, making deductions, analysing, making choices and decisions, seeking solutions, going beyond the obvious, and thinking outside the box were some of the imaginative skills observed by the LLPs in their classrooms, particularly in the generating and innovating ideas phases of their literacy modules. These were also the skills that they applied themselves in creating their literacy plans, which were an outcome of their productive imagination, as purposeful imaginative thought and action. Thus, the LLPs' plans and my living educational theories are products of imaginative thinking.

The literature has revealed theories about the imagination as productive or reproductive, recreative or enactive (Brann, 1991, Cropley, 2003, Currie &

Ravenscroft, 2002, Gaut, 2003) and these would be interesting aspects to explore through research.

The aesthetic imagination

Aesthetic response theory has had a profound influence on my research. The imagination as a resource for creating meaning through appreciating or representing ideas in pictures or print was at the heart of my research. The meanings that can be brought to a work by the reader and the writer have been already been discussed in the somatic and affective imagination section. Evidence of these aspects was found in children's writing and their responses to literature. As a result of my analyses, I now regard the somatic and affective dimensions of the imagination to be aspects of the aesthetic imagination. Teasing out the similarities and differences could provide the focus of further research.

The *AKTEV imagination repertoire* model

The *AKTEV imagination repertoire* did not exist at the start of my action research. It evolved from reflecting on experience, analyzing data, consulting the literature to address the research questions, and the concepts were co-constructed with the research participants. It represents my living educational theory regarding the role of the imagination children's meaning-making. Perhaps the hand, as suggested in Figure 7.2, could represent a confluence of the aesthetic (shown as the AKTEV somatic and affective dimension), suppositional (shown as the possibility dimension) and productive (shown as the appreciating / representing ideas and creating meaning dimension) components of the imagination's repertoire.

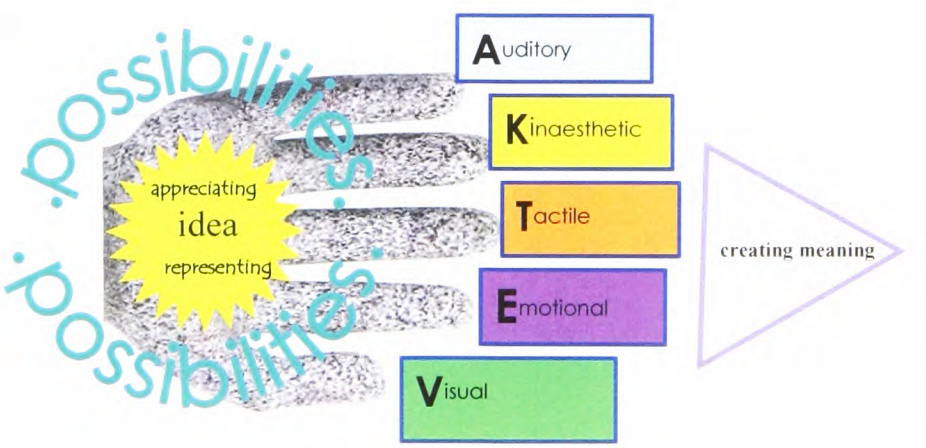

Figure 7.3 Developing a confluence model of the imagination's repertoire

7.3 Summary

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4-6) describe the researcher as a *bricoleur*, or quiltmaker, who pieces together layers of interpretation and overlapping perspectives to construct emerging theories. Thus, the working theory of AKTEV with its purposeful imaginative activities became like the top-stitching across the layers of the working theory of MAGIC as a creative process.

Combining the two models helped answer the overarching research question, which was: *How can I improve my practice and understanding so that I can support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for creativity and imagination in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* As a result of the research, I was able to exemplify child-centred, holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Previous chapters have presented the collaborative and reflective cycles of my action research and the literature that was consulted in relation to the overarching research question, which asked: *How can I improve my understanding and practice to support teachers with their literacy planning and help them make provision for children's imaginative meaning-making in a climate of changing curriculum emphases?* Through this thesis, I have examined how my understanding has evolved over time and was transformed by the three cycles of my research. I have explored ideas from a range of sources, engaged in a reflective appraisal of my understanding, and synthesised my ideas from analysis.

In this chapter, I evaluate the research and offer some recommendations for future enquiry. In 8.1, I judge whether my research confirms my ontological and epistemological principles. In 8.2, I consider the impact on my professional practice of the growth of my understanding. The contribution of my living educational theories to the field is proposed in 8.3, and in 8.4 I consider implications for future research. In 8.5, I reflect on the findings to offer some tentative recommendations for child-centred holistic approaches to planning sequences of purposeful imaginative activities that embed literacy concepts in meaningful creative contexts.

8.1 Ontological and epistemological principles

My values and beliefs have influenced the objectives of the research and the success criteria by which it would be evaluated. They were discussed in 1.3 and presented in Table 1.1 and Table 3.5. These values are: democratic and ethical ways of working; research as professional development; evolving knowledge and understanding; child-centred, holistic approaches to literacy; and the power of the imagination in creating meaning. These are considered in turn.

Democratic and ethical ways of working

I have evaluated my research by judging whether it empowered those who were involved in it. A community of practice was formed around the research as a collaborative endeavour and colleagues addressed the problem of literacy planning together. Colleagues were not seen as subjects of the research but as expert persons engaged in, and committed to it and this helped to dissolve any

power presumed in an adviser's role. They developed creative contexts and imaginative activities in their classrooms as co-researchers. The research endorsed children's entitlement to the statutory curriculum. The project built on their professional wisdom, integrity and imagination. Their ideas were respected and their voices are represented in the accounts of the literacy modules planned in the project. It was considered to be an empowering experience for participants as well as me. The ethical considerations set out in 3.6 were fulfilled and an appreciative rather than critical stance was adopted. A democratic, inclusive view of creativity was taken.

Research as professional development

I have evaluated my research by judging whether my action research was practical, meaningful and useful. As a form of professional self-development, the research has considerably improved my practice and understanding of literacy, creativity and imagination. It was set in a methodological frame of action research, a systematic process of planning, acting, and reflecting in, on and for practice, using qualitative approaches to gathering and interpreting data. This was influenced by Dick (2000), McNiff (2005) and Tripp (2003) and Whitehead's (2006) notion of living educational theories.

I have explained how my approach fits within the pragmatic tradition of reflective and collaborative action research. I examined my assumptions at the outset of the research and as the research progressed. This made me realise that I held beliefs that were influenced by events in my childhood. 1 have deliberately explored these and their histories by learning how to do this through journaling and collage.

It was also an effective form of professional development for colleagues involved. One year after the project, all the teachers had presented their work to colleagues in their schools at staff meetings and INSET days. In addition, Miss OI had presented the work in 3 teacher's centres and a conference in Hong Kong, and secured a post as Deputy Head. Mrs BP, Mrs Hl, Miss PJJ and Mrs HDJ had also been successful in their applications for deputy or assistant headships. Mrs BP and Mrs HDJ had presented the work to English subject leaders at their termly meeting. Miss PJ and LC, the literacy consultant, presented the literacy plans and modules at a strategy conference regionally and nationally.

Evolving knowledge and understanding

I have evaluated my research by judging whether my understanding has been challenged and transformed. Although I realise that my understanding is provisional and evolving, I acknowledge the transformative power of this research. Sternberg's theories influenced my understanding of the characteristics of creativity. My growing understanding of the imagination was challenged and developed by Craft's theories of creativity, particularly possibility thinking, and by Robinson's ideas on the role of the imagination in creativity. Theories of aesthetic appreciation and representation from D'Arcy's work were the key to developing my living educational theories and my commitment to this has deepened. Egan's work was helpful in reviewing what the imagination was, is and might be; however, I have reservations about his stages of imaginative development.

The collaborative and reflective aspects of the research, together with the extensive reading have led me to ask questions of myself, my work and my beliefs. I have moved away from accepting received wisdoms and some uncomfortable professional moments have occurred as a result. Although my confidence in my living educational theories I still want to find out more, particularly how children feel about their imaginative potentials.

Power of the imagination in creating meaning

I have evaluated my research by judging whether I have found a way to help teachers plan purposeful imaginative activities and appreciate children's imaginative meaning making. Evidence from the research showed that when children endeavour to create meaning, they draw upon the resource of their imaginative repertoire in sound, in movement, in textures, in feelings, and in images to respond to their real and invented worlds, explore understandings, and represent their ideas. The imaginative contexts planned by the teachers motivated the children and, because they knew the intended purpose of activities, they could participate in their own learning. Rich evidence of children's somatic, affective and propositional imaginations was interpreted from the sample of drawings. An effective bank of purposeful, imaginative activities was collected and categorised, providing a resource for teachers.

Child-centred, holistic approaches to literacy

I have evaluated my research by judging whether I have exemplified child-centred, holistic approaches to planning for, and interpreting children's imaginative meaning-making. The literacy plans produced in the research were holistic and showed that reading and writing are interconnected, creative endeavours. Theories of aesthetic response are embedded in the work. By immersing the children in fictional but real-world related contexts for their literacy work, their motivation improved and prompted an array of possibilities. The teachers continued to use MAGIC and AKTEV to plan literacy and cross-curricular modules after the research project was completed.

8.2 Impact on my work

The research has led me to look at my leadership role in the local authority. I am now committed to a collegiate way of working and favour an appreciative enquiry approach to support colleagues in improving pedagogy. In Sternberg's terms, I am probably a redefiner with aspirations to be a synthesiser. In an ongoing project to improve writing, *Write Ideas,* I have introduced the *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* in the schools and to prompt children to apply their imaginations in reading and writing. Appendix 8.1 shows an example of a child's writing using AKTEV. Appendix 8.2 shows that schools adopting these conceptual models have achieved increased results in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

8.3 Contribution of the research to the field

The research contributes to the field of primary literacy pedagogy by offering as living educational theories two original tools for planning literacy. The *MAGIC planning tool* and the *AKTEV imagination repertoire* offer conceptual scaffolds and practical processes to teachers to adapt to their requirements. They are underpinned by theory and were developed and tested with peer-professionals in a community of practice. By testing them over time, with different teachers planning modules for different age groups and for different durations, MAGIC and AKTEV have demonstrated transferability. They have been found to provide meaningful contexts for nurturing the skills and dispositions children need to appreciate and represent meanings. AKTEV also offers a useful approach to interpreting the effort and effect of children's creative endeavours in their

imaginative representations. I have disseminated the findings in a range of professional situations on courses, conferences and in classrooms. Printed and web-based materials include plans, project ideas and guidance. The audiences for this work are peer professionals in primary education.

8.4 Implications for further research

In this thesis, I have emphasised the importance of the imagination in children's endeavours to create meaning in literacy. I am now building on this research in my work with colleagues in schools and in the local authority. The research indicated that several aspects would benefit from further study:

i. Approaches to learning and teaching investigated in the research placed the children in situational contexts and prompted imaginative responses. Reflecting on the findings has led me to consider ways in which the suppositional imagination is used by children to create possible worlds and by teachers to create plans for teaching literacy. Exploring possibility thinking in the context of the revised framework for literacy (DfES, 2007) would draw on the work of Craft and build on my findings.

ii. The Roberts' Report, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (DfES, 2006) built on the recommendations of *All Our Futures* and presented a policy framework to government for the future of creativity in education. It has the view that all children and young people can be creative and should have access to creative experiences. As a result, policy decisions within the local authority will need to be made. How this might affect my role would provide a fruitful focus for continuing my research.

iii. Several head teachers in the local authority have embraced the freedom to innovate and have articulated their intentions to provide holistic, creative curricula in their schools. Their approaches appear to be very different. It would be interesting to research how a school adapts to these changes, or to compare plans for literacy from several schools.

iv. This research found that children's narrative drawings could be interpreted for insight into how children use their imaginations to create meaning. It fell beyond the remit of this research to interview the children about their drawings. A study of drawings made by a small focus group over a year together with

discussions about their pieces and any linked work would yield some interesting data.

v. A brief examination of the suppositional, productive and aesthetic dimensions of the imagination has revealed areas of interest for future research: to discover children's perspectives on the imagination and to examine the role of the professional imagination in planning.

8.5 Recommendations

Until these and other projects are undertaken, I make these tentative recommendations for professional practice that follow from my research.

1. Literacy plans should take children through a creative process in which they engage their imaginations in possibilities. Provision should be made for children to:

   engage in learning through **m**otivating contexts in a climate of trust so that intentions are shared, dispositions are nurtured and aspiration is focused on engaging potential;

   - **a**ssociate ideas so they can interact to find out what others think, attend to their experiences – real and imagined, and make connections between ideas;

     generate ideas so they can experiment with the possibilities of ideas, materials and techniques, overcome reluctance with determination, and wonder 'what?', 'why?', 'how?', and 'if';

   - **i**nnovate ideas so they can invent their own solutions to the problem of interpreting, reflecting on and representing their own ideas;

   - **c**ommunicate ideas so they have time, space and audience to celebrate, explain and evaluate what they have learned.

2. Within this process, activities should be planned that offer children opportunities to draw on the powerful resource of their own, and collective imaginations in evocative contexts for learning.

3. Literacy learning should be seen as a holistic, creative process, in which children are making and shaping complex meanings rather than just acquiring secretarial skills and grammatical knowledge. The range should include visual, verbal, print and multimodal texts which cut across genres.

4. Levels of attainment and developmental stages should not be the only methods used to interpret children's imaginative endeavours to create meaning. Assessment for learning needs to be researched further so that the subtle, deep and complex imaginative meanings in children's work can be acknowledged.

My research was designed to support my work as an adviser. In it, I took a pragmatic stance that endorses children's entitlement to a creative English curriculum that goes beyond the narrow framework for literacy. The action research approach prompted questions, actions, reflections, reading, writing and discussions towards developing my lived education theories and mirrored the creative processes of purposeful imaginative activity. It took place within an empowering community of practice and reflected the interests of teachers and children as well as my own. A foundation has been laid for further improvements to my practice and understanding in my continuing journey of self-actualisation.

GLOSSARY

AKTEV	A conceptual planning tool of the imagination's repertoire developed in the research, comprising **a**uditory, **k**inaesthetic, **t**actile, **e**motional and **v**isual imaginations
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfEE DfES DCSF	Government departments in the UK: Department for Education and Employment, replaced by the Department for Education and Skills, replaced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors of schools
KS1	Key Stage One – children in schools in England aged 5 to 7 years
KS2	Key Stage Two – children in schools in England aged 7 to 11 years
KWILT	A research process in which children move from what they know, wonder, investigate, learn and tell others
LA	Local authority
LC	Literacy consultant in the local authority
LLP	Leading literacy practitioners identified in each local authority as expert teachers
MAGIC	A conceptual planning tool of a creative process developed in the research, comprising **m**otivating ideas, **a**ssociating ideas, **g**enerating ideas, **i**nnovating ideas and **c**ommunicating ideas
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education – a task-force convened by Sir Ken Robinson and appointed by government to report on, and set the agenda for, creative and cultural education in England
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PNS	Primary National Strategy – a government led initiative to raise standards in literacy through a framework of objectives, teaching procedures and training led by regional networks of literacy consultants
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SATs	National curriculum standard assessment tests given at the end of end of year 2 and year 6
SPICE	Narrative literacy concepts identified in the research as *setting, plot, ideas, characters,* and *events*
Y	Year group

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APPENDIX 3.2 **Project Timeline**

Project Timeline

By Friday 24 September	**Set Task 1** **Children draw their interpretation of the phrase "A cat was rescued from a tree"**
By Friday 1 October	**Set Task 2** **Children represent how they think their imaginations work**
Monday 4 October 1.00 to 4.00	**PD Session 1** **Feedback and discussion on set tasks** **AKTEV Thinking** (Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Tactile, Emotional and Visual Imaginative Thinking)
By Friday 8 October	**Set Task 3** **Children create an artwork in response to a text**
By Friday 15 October	**Activity 1** **Children are told the story / poem of the 'Wishing Fish' and asked to prepare how they might show sound, movement, texture and feelings in their work in 4 ten-minute daily drawings and a full composition**
TBA October	**Interviews** **Focus Group children respond spontaneously to a given artwork** **Teachers discuss their ideas about creativity and imagination**
By Friday 22 October	**Set Task 4** **Children respond to a given artwork in an activity designed to encourage 'AKTEV' looking**
By Friday 12 November	**Activity 2** **Children respond to an artwork in an activity designed to encourage 'AKTEV' looking and a deepened response in one of the AKTEV modalities**
Friday 12 November 1.00 to 4.00	**PD Session 2** **Feedback and discussion on set tasks and activities** **The 'MAGIC' Creative Process** (Motivating children to Associate, Generate, Innovate and Celebrate ideas)
TBA November	**PD Consultations** **Plan a learning module with each teacher**
November / December	**Activity Module** **Children work as young researchers on a MAGIC programme of study**
	PD Shared Teaching Sessions **Working together in the classroom on a planned creative activity**
Friday 10 December	**PD Session 3** **Feedback and discussion on module** **Adaptations** **Reflective evaluation**
By Friday 17 December	**Set Task 5** **Children represent how they think their imaginations work**
TBA 2005	**A BIG Thank You** **Pam works on bringing it all together**

APPENDIX 3.3 **Letter to LLPs at start of project**

«Leading_Literacy_Teacher»
«School_Name»
«Address»
«Address_1»
«Address_2»
«Post_Code»

16 September 2004

Dear «LT_Forename»

Creative Classroom Research Project

I am delighted that you are going to work with me to research aspects of creativity with the children in your classroom. As I mentioned last term, some funding has been given to your school to release you from teaching for your professional development (PD) in this project (Grant 301, 2003/04).

The notion of creativity has vexed generations of educators. Ken Robinson has defined creativity as 'thinking and behaving imaginatively with purpose' (NACCE, QCA, DfES). In our study I hope we will discover and identify some characteristics of imaginative thinking from our different experiences To do this I would like to explore with you some effective 'imaginative thinking' strategies that children and teachers can use effectively in the context of the Primary National Strategy. In particular I have devised an approach to responding to visual and written texts – 'AKTEV Thinking', and a creative process – 'MAGIC' from all my reading and work in schools. I will explain what these are when we meet together.

The 'articulate' project will give you a PD course that includes 3 half-day sessions, 2 planning consultations, 2 shared-teaching sessions and some classroom resources. It will involve your children during this Autumn Term in some 'set tasks' and some activities planned to suit your class. I will analyse children's work and offer feedback. I would like to interview you and a focus group of 4 children as the project progresses. I will supply you with interview transcripts and drafts for your comments and approval - the confidentiality of responses will be kept and all names will be masked. I would like to look at some planning and policy documentation and your reflective evaluations of some aspects of our project - I am seeking to discover rather than judge and my interpretations will not be an 'inspection' of your professionalism, competences or abilities.

Outcomes from the project will provide me with qualitative data to inform my work as an Adviser in Bromley schools, my University of Greenwich doctoral thesis on imagination and our collective understandings of creative development. I hope to complete my dissertation in 2005 and will give you a copy for your interest.

The practicalities are outlined in the schedule attached – we may need to amend this as the project progresses to make it suit your availability and purpose.

Thank you for agreeing to help with this when we spoke in July. I look forward to working with you.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Smyth
General Adviser, Arts Education
London Borough of Bromley
020 8461 6223
pamela.smyth@bromley.gov.uk

APPENDIX 3.4 **Letter to head teachers at start of project**

COPY FOR YOUR INFORMATION

«Head_Teacher»
«School_Name»
«Address»
«Address_1»
«Address_2»
«Post_Code»

16 September 2004

Dear «Forename»

Creative Classrooms Research Project

I am writing with more details about the 'articulate' project and have attached a copy of the letter sent to your Leading Literacy Teacher. As I mentioned in my letter of 22 July 2004, £225 has been given to release «Leading_Literacy_Teacher» for three half-day sessions of professional development. The project also provides 2 planning consultations and 2 shared-teaching sessions during this Autumn Term and some classroom resources.

Outcomes from the project will provide me with qualitative data to inform my work as an Adviser in Bromley schools, my University of Greenwich doctoral thesis on 'imaginative thinking' and our collective understandings of creative development. I will analyse children's work from activities as the project progresses and would like to interview a focus group of 4 children – I will seek permissions from the children and their parents when the group is chosen. I would like to look at some planning and policy documentation. All names will be masked in my dissertation and publications unless you would like them attributed.

Thank you for taking part in this research project. I look forward to working in your school.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Smyth
General Adviser, Arts Education
London Borough of Bromley
020 8461 6223
pamela.smyth@bromley.gov.uk

APPENDIX 3.5 **Example of communication - fax sent to an LLP**

Messages/Comments

CREATIVE CLASSROOMS

Thank you for the 'Cat rescue' drawings - I hope to share some of the analysis with you on MONDAY 4 OCTOBER. Session 1.00 to 4.00. We will look at imaginative thinking and creativity during the session.

If this transmission is not fully legible please telephone and ask for

I look forward to seeing you then.

Best wishes

Pamela.

Bromley
THE LONDON BOROUGH

TRANSMISSION OK	
TX/RX NO	4777
CONNECTION TEL	02082492897
SUBADDRESS	
CONNECTION ID	
ST. TIME	01/10 11:45
USAGE T	00'48
PGS. SENT	1
RESULT	OK

****
*** TX REPORT ***
****

/10 2004 11:46 FAX 0208 461 6286 E D C 001

APPENDIX 3.6 **Example of communication - letter to child**

10 October 2004

Dear Ryan m

Creative Classroom Research Project [redacted])

I am delighted that you are going to work with me to help me understand more about children's imaginations. I think that our imaginations help us to be creative. We all have powerful imaginations that we can use in every bit of our lives, especially when we read, write, talk to each other and make things. My imagination seems to sort out my experiences - things I've done, things I've read, things I've seen, heard and felt – and then it comes up with ideas. I have used my imagination to give me ideas that I can share with you and your teachers.

I am using my imagination now to help me respond to your drawing about the cat that was rescued from a tree. I pretended to be a journalist who had to write a very short report to go with the picture. This is what I imagined:

CAT RESCUE

The fire truck arrived at the scene in just 3 minutes and Captain Pickhurst ran across to the tree to try to rescue the cat. "I think that the cat was frightened by all the noise," explained the captain. "Suddenly he just leapt from the tree." Luckily the captain was ready and waiting and he caught the cat before it fell to the ground.

Thank you very much for sharing your work with me. I look forward to working with you again soon.

With very best wishes
Pamela
General Adviser, Arts Education, LB[redacted]

APPENDIX 4.1 **Primary national strategy literacy objectives - text level for Year 3, Term 2**

Fiction & poetry: myths, legends, fables, parables; traditional stories, stories with related themes; oral & performance poetry from different cultures.

Pupils should be taught reading comprehension

1 to investigate the styles & voices of traditional story language – collect examples; list, compare & use in own writing;

2 to identify typical story themes, e.g. trials & forfeits, good over evil, weak over strong, wise over foolish;

3 to identify & discuss main & recurring characters, evaluate their behaviour & justify views;

4 to choose & prepare poems for performance, identifying appropriate expression, tone, volume & use of voices & other sounds;

5 rehearse & improve performance, taking note of punctuation & meaning;

Pupils should be taught writing composition

6 to plan main points as a structure for story writing, considering how to capture points in a few words that can be elaborated later; discuss different methods of planning;

7 to describe & sequence key incidents in a variety of ways, e.g. by listing, charting, mapping, making simple storyboards;

8 to write portraits of characters, using story text to describe behaviour & characteristics, & presenting portraits in a variety of ways, e.g. as posters, labelled diagrams, letters

9 to write a story plan for own myth, fable or traditional tale, using story theme from reading but substituting different characters or changing the setting;

10 to write alternative sequels to traditional stories using same characters & settings, identifying typical phrases & expressions from story & using these to structure the writing;

11 to write new or extended verses for performance based on models of 'performance' & oral poetry read, e.g. rhythms, repetition;

Non-Fiction: (i) instructions, (ii) dictionaries without illustrations, thesauruses.

Pupils should be taught reading comprehension

12 to identify the different purposes of instructional texts, e.g. recipes, route-finders, timetables, instructions, plans, rules;

13 to discuss the merits & limitations of particular instructional texts, including IT & other media texts, and to compare these with others to give an overall evaluation;

14 how written instructions are organised, e.g. lists, numbered points, diagrams with arrows, bullet points, keys;

15 to read and follow simple instructions;

Pupils should be taught writing composition

16 to write instructions, e.g. rules, recipes, using a range of organisational devices, e.g. lists, dashes, commas for lists in sentences, recognising the importance of correct sequence; use 'writing frames' as appropriate for support;

17 to make clear notes, through:

- discussing the purpose of note-making and looking at simple examples;
- identifying the purpose for which particular notes will be used;
- identifying key words, phrases or sentences in reading;
- exploring ways of writing ideas, messages, in shortened forms, e.g. notes, lists, headlines, telegrams, to understand that some words are more essential to meaning than others;
- making use of simple formats to capture key points, e.g. flow chart, 'for' & 'against' columns, matrices to complete in writing or on screen;
- identifying intended audience i.e. self or others.

Spring Term

Y3

non-fiction

In this course of non-fiction study, children listen to, talk about, read, instructions.
They learn to use dictionaries without illustrations and thesauruses.

GfW Units 11, 13 & 14; NLS Writing Fliers 1 & 6

Some
approaches to **m**edium
planning for **l**iteracy
excellence & enjoyment

All text and sentence literacy learning objectives for the term are covered in the SAMPLE plans for narrative, non-fiction and poetry.

This non-fiction course of study clusters the text learning objectives (T) into aspects of research - KWILT - with a balance of reading & writing.

Sentence learning objectives (S) are linked to the text learning objectives.

Speaking & listening and word objectives are included on Page 2 for you to plan for the needs of your class.

References are made to Grammar for Writing (GfW) & Spelling Bank (SB)

page 1

How do researchers build on what they Know & decide what they Want to find out? Week 1

This week, children learn how to:

- identify the different purposes of instructional texts, e.g. recipes, route-finders, instructions, plans, rules T12
- read & follow simple instructions T15
- compare, discuss & evaluate the merits & limitations of particular instructional texts, including ICT T13
- discuss the purpose of note-making, look at simple examples & identify the purpose for own notes T17a,b
- use commas in reading & discuss their function in helping the reader S6,7
- write instructions in lists with commas & recognise the importance of sequence T14a,16

How do researchers Investigate Ideas? Week 2

This week, children learn how to:

- make clear notes by identifying key words, phrases or sentences in reading T17c
- read, follow, compare, discuss & evaluate the merits & limitations of particular instructional texts T13,15
- explore ways of writing ideas in shortened forms & identify intended audience - self or others T17d,f
- write instructions in numbered points & recognise the importance of sequence T14b,16c
- experiment with transforming sentences, noting which words need to be changed S10d

How do researchers use language to organise what they have Learned? Week 3

This week, children learn how to:

- read, follow, compare, discuss & evaluate the merits & limitations of particular instructional texts T13,15
- identify key words, phrases, sentences in reading & that some words are more essential to meaning T17c,d
- explore ways of writing ideas in shortened forms & identify intended audience - self or others T17d,f
- organise written instructions in bullet points & recognise importance of sequence T14d,16b
- experiment with deleting words to see which ones are essential to meaning S9,GfW Unit 13

How do researchers Tell others what they have learned? Week 4

This week, children learn how to:

- read, follow, discuss & evaluate the merits & limitations of each others' instructions T13,15
- use flow charts, for & against columns or matrices to capture key points on paper or screen T17e
- organise written instructions in diagrams with arrows or keys T14c,e
- write instructions using a range of organisational devices & recognising importance of sequence T16
- understand & use 2nd person verbs in instructions S10c,GfW Unit 14

APPENDIX 5.1 **Notes from Miss PJ about her plan *Breakfast for a leprechaun***

MAGIC Process

Dear Pamela,

Sorry I haven't yet sent you any information about the creativity research project. I have written some notes below about the unit of work on leprechauns and have included plans and sample of work. Hope this is of some use. Sorry it is so late!
Best wishes.

Motivating ideas

We read the poem about the little men as a starting point to thinking about leprechauns and getting a picture of the little men in their minds. This was quite a challenging poem but after discussing key language and events in the poem it really captured the children's interest. The pictures of leprechauns also got them interested. They were keen to talk about all the stories which they had heard about leprechauns and the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. When reading the part about where the leprechauns steal the little girl every child was totally focused and waiting in anticipation to see what happened next. They enjoyed having time to close their eyes and imagine these little men, when they opened their eyes they told their talk partner all what they had seen. When it came to annotating the poem they were all prepared to have a go. There was lots of discussion taking place about what the little men might like to eat. They suggested seaweed sandwiches, golden coins and many more. The crispy pancake recipe interested them. They enjoyed trying to put the instructions back in the right order and it familiarised them with the language used in recipes. They talked about following recipes at home and were all able to suggest imperatives which they had seen.

Associating ideas

The children enjoyed looking at and discussing the wide variety of breakfast cereal packets. They were keen to say which they enjoyed eating for breakfast and why. They built on their learning by looking at the importance of key words for how to prepare and compared this to the recipe which they had looked at previously. They discussed similarities and differences between packets. The children particularly enjoyed voting on their favourite packet and saying why they liked it. So developing speaking and listening skills.
They made their own designs for cereal packets and pictures which they felt would tempt someone. They talked a great deal with talk partners

about why certain packets were more tempting than others. They drafted their own product names and experimented with different fonts and colours. They wrote their own nutritional information. All used their imaginations to think about what type of breakfast a leprechaun might enjoy. By working in groups and hearing each others ideas children began to change and reshape their ideas e.g not just designing a cornflake box but inventing rainbow nuggets or golden flakes etc. In this way we were able to see how our ideas led to others and we were able to improve our work.

Generating Ideas

They loved the message from the leprechaun. This really captured their interest. They had fun sharing ideas about what a leprechaun might enjoy for breakfast, they had all sorts of ideas like dandelion water etc. They were really using their imaginations. Children were confident when making an annotated poster of what you must do when making a food packet.
The children tried out lots of alternatives they tried writing the same name in different fonts and colours. They suggested several possible names for a cereal etc. They used their imaginations to suggest alternative combinations of food which they felt a leprechaun might enjoy for breakfast.
Whilst trying out ideas they asked what might a leprechaun eat. What might happen if I changed the colour of this writing or if I added another ingredient. Why the writing had to be bright and colourful. Why it was necessary to include certain information? How to set out cereal boxes. What would happen to the overall effect of the box if they changed the layout.

Innovating ideas

They loved making the food packets. They used dictionaries to try and think of catchy titles for breakfast cereals. Lots of discussion again about leprechauns and why they would choose this packet in the supermarket. They used their imaginations to express their own ideas for breakfast packets. They thought about what information they needed to include and how best to present this information.

Celebrating Ideas

We shared ideas by swapping cereal packets on our table and looking at each others designs and reading the information. We shared with the rest of the school by making a display of all our cereal packets and some other work we had carried out on this topic. The children learned a great

deal about persuasive language, use of commas etc in a fun way. They enjoyed making the cereal packet and seeing theirs on display in the corridor.
Used flow chart to recap on all we had done and all they had achieved. As it was shrove Tuesday they then did a flow chart for making pancakes and then actually mad their pancakes going back to the first lesson on this topic.

Literacy Plan ***Year 3*** ***Term Spring/ 24.01.05*** ***Week 3***

Day	Whole Class Shared Reading and Writing	Whole Class Phonics, spelling, vocab and grammar	Group Name Below Av.	Group Activities Group Name Average.	Group Name Above Av.	Plenary
Day 1	Look at instructions on food packaging. Read the packet. Discuss key words on the instructional text.	Take away key words. (verbs, nouns, adjectives) Does it make sense? Ask children to suggest key words used in instructions. Explain to talk partner which words are essential in instructions. List	As average. Provide with evaluation sheet.	In pairs examine a food packet. Look for key words or phrases on the packet. Evaluate the instructions with marks out of 10.	As average. Repeat with a second packet. Say which packet was more effective and why?	Check children have understood how key words and phrases make instructions clearer and easier to read. Add to class list words and phrases which they think are important.
	To identify key words and phrases in reading. (T17c)	Experiment with deleting words to see which are essential to meaning. (S9)	To learn how to compare and discuss the merits and limitations of instructions & evaluate (T13)	To learn how to compare and discuss the merits and limitations of instructions & evaluate (T13)	To learn how to compare and discuss the merits and limitations of instructions & evaluate (T13)	To identify key words and phrases in reading. (T17)
Day 2	Read message from the leprechaun. What is the message about (big idea in a short message). Together draft a reply (turn a big idea into a short message) What might happen if you change font size, type, colour. Does it make a difference to the message?	Tell talk partner why some words are more essential to meaning than others in the message from the leprechaun. Try taking out some words. Does this change the meaning?	As average. Provide with writing frame.	Make a list of three breakfast foods the leprechaun might enjoy. Draft a brief message in reply to the leprechaun explaining that he must choose one from the list.	As average. Design a packet for the breakfast food.	Check all understand how a message is a big idea in a short form. Exchange messages with a partner who pretends to be the leprechaun and tells them what their message means. HWK: Silent Letters (P36- C.Moorcroft)
	To explore how ideas can be written in shortened forms- (T17d,f)	Experiment with deleting words to see which are essential to meaning. (s9)	To explore how ideas can be written in shortenedforms(T17d,f)	To explore how ideas can be written in shortened forms(T17d,f)	To explore how ideas can be written in shortenedforms(T17d,f)	To explore how ideas can be written in shortenedformsT17d,f)

APPENDIX 5.3 **Extract from the revised plan - *Breakfast for a leprechaun* – as an example of format sent to schools**

Week 2 Session 2 | Generating Ideas

In this session children investigate possibilities in their learning, so that they can use their imaginations to play with ideas and wonder 'what?', 'why?', 'how?', 'if'.

They explore how ideas can be written in shortened forms - messages, notes, lists (T17d,f)

and experiment with deleting words to see which are essential to meaning for their intended audience (a modern-day leprechaun)

Shared Reading & Discussion Activity

In this activity children explore ways of writing ideas in shortened forms – messages as notes, lists and instructions – on screen.

Together they all:

- read a message from the leprechaun to focus on the text
- tell you **what** they think the message is about – a big idea in a short message
- explain to each other **why** some words are more essential to meaning than others
- help you draft a reply – **how** to turn a big idea into a short message
- suggest what might happen **if** you change the font type, size and colour – does it make a difference to the message

Follow-up Writing Activity

In this writing activity children work individually to:

- make a list of three breakfast foods the leprechaun might enjoy
- draft a brief message in reply to the leprechaun explaining that he must choose one from the list

The message from Lep R. Chaun

Friend

Fed up with crispy pancakes – tide foam v. brown nowadays. Can you suggest something different? It must be

- *quick to make*
- *simple to prepare*
- *easy to read*

I like rainwater, cream, berries, mushrooms, seaweed and dandelions. Willing to try anything except eggs.
Need reply ASAP as very hungry.

Best wishes

Lep R. Chaun

Plenary

Check that they have all understood how a message is a big idea in a short form

Ask them to exchange their messages with a partner who pretends to be the leprechaun and tells them what their message means

Explain that tomorrow they will find out how they can plan the sort of information they will need to put on the food packaging they will be designing next week.

Display

The message from the leprechaun and some replies.

APPENDIX 5.4 **A note from Miss PJJ showing use of MAGIC as a planning tool a year later**

MOTIVATE!
M=1: Explain that they are going to investigate a range of products related to the care and welfare of young and old people. Look at how they are designed need and how useful they are
- Display a collection of products for children to investigate
- Look at products - sketch + say how useful they are - do they fit the purpose?

ASSOCIATE
A=2: Give questionnaire to elderly person / mother about product which they would find useful
Using ideas from products seen - devise something that will help a parent with a new baby eg to transport or feed. It could be a new invention or their own version of a product already in use.
Sketch ideas. Think about appearance, materials comfort for child etc.

APPENDIX 5.5 **Example of informal communication – note from Mrs HDJ**

Dear Pamela,

Please find enclosed the children's work from their plasticine character session. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and couldn't wait to show their parents and the rest of the school their models.

Sorry that I couldn't attend the meeting last Friday, but you'd be pleased to know it went very well and the class were very pleased with themselves.

If you would like to arrange a new date to meet - call or write to me so we can arrange a new time. Also are we still meeting on December 10th?

The children are just about to start their Wishing Fish collages - we are running behind because of our assembly.

Hope to hear from you soon.

DO 21.11

APPENDIX 5.6 **Example 1 of an evaluation**

PRIMARY SCHOOL FABULOUS FIREBIRDS EVALUATION

1

The Evaluation

Please complete this case-study evaluation of the impact of imaginative thinking on your children's learning in this module by answering the questions and adding your own thoughts and ideas. A simple scoring device is given, together with space for your comments. A brief description of the module sessions is given to help you remember, but you might want to change some of the wording.

Essentially, I would be grateful if you would review your teaching of creativity and how you interpreted and enriched this module,

Thank you very much for taking part in the project and completing this evaluation. Please would you let me have artworks, writing, models etc - digital or originals - before the end of term (even if you think I have already had them!) to put on display at the EDC in September. I will use the work as part of the evaluation.

An **Overview of the Fabulous Firebird Module for Y5, Spring Term.**

The aim of this MAGIC module was to engage the children's creativity by asking them to use their imaginative thinking in reading and writing and making artworks. The children heard, read and responded to the story about the legendary firebird that was told in Russia long ago and has inspired musicians, writers, dancers and artists ever since.

In four weeks of literacy sessions they learned about oral storytelling, reading, writing and picture making so that they could tell their own Fabulous Firebird story in 3 different ways - in writing, as a told story and as an artwork. Their work in fulfilling the literacy learning objectives was enriched by a range of activities including drawing, collage, music and ICT.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
FABULOUS FIREBIRDS
EVALUATION
2

Motivating Ideas

They were motivated by the idea that they were going to tell a story about the legendary firebird.
Did this 'springboard for learning' seem to engage the children's imaginations?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Week One

Associating Ideas

They listened to and read the legend and identified features of the story opening
Did they use their imaginations to enjoy the story?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They discussed the effects of imagery & how culture & place are evoked in oral and written versions
Did they use their imaginations to respond to imagery?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They wrote an opening for their own version of the legend, adapting it for an identified reader
Did they use their imaginations to bring their own ideas to the story?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They drew their imagined Firebird - visualising what it looks like, feels like, sounds like, moves like
Did they use their imaginations to express their own ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

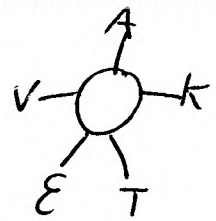
Did most of the children learn how writers and storytellers can set the scene in stories

(Yes) No

Did most of the children learn how artists research their ideas?

(Yes) No

Your comments about how you developed and enriched this part of the module:

Using 

imagination grid really got the children engaged and was a vital inspirational tool in preparing their ideas

Week Two

Generating Ideas

They listened to and read the legend and compared the narrative structure and theme in oral & written versions
Did they use their imaginations to investigate possibilities?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They prepared for oral storytelling by making notes of the story outline
Did they use their imaginations to investigate possibilities and try out ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They wrote a plan for their own version of the legend using structures & themes identified in reading
Did they use their imaginations to investigate possibilities and try out ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They designed part of the story of their imagined Firebird as a collage
Did they use their imaginations to investigate possibilities and try out materials and ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Did most of the children learn how writers and storytellers develop their story plotlines?

(Yes) No

Did most of the children learn how artists investigate materials, tools and techniques?

(Yes) No

Your comments about how you developed and enriched this part of the module:

Using AKTEV at every part of the storyline to imagine events, plots and characters.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
FABULOUS FIREBIRDS
EVALUATION
4

Week Three

Innovating Ideas

They read & responded to characters' different perspectives on action in oral & written stories
Did they use their imaginations to express their own ideas and opinions?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They wrote their own draft version of the legend considering characters viewpoint and how they are portrayed as heroes or villains
Did they use their imaginations to invent a way to express their own ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They made an artwork by choosing their best idea from all their research
Did they use their imaginations to invent a way to express their own ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They created their artwork by deciding which materials to use to make and decorate their design
Did they use their imaginations to invent a way to express their own ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Did most of the children learn how writers and storytellers develop story ideas and characters?
Yes No

Did most of the children learn how artists make their artworks original?
Yes No

Your comments about how you developed and enriched this part of the module:

using AKTEV again

PRIMARY SCHOOL
FABULOUS FIREBIRDS
EVALUATION
5

Week Four

Celebrating Ideas

They listened to and read each other's versions of the legend?
Did they use their imaginations to respond to each other's work?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They wrote their own final version & editing to match the needs of the audience
Did they use their imaginations to make sure that their events & endings made sense?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They evaluated each other's stories by talking with a 'response partner'
Did they use their imaginations to talk about the stories using sensitive and descriptive vocabulary?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

They evaluated each other's artwork by talking with a 'response partner'
Did they use their imaginations to talk about the artworks using sensitive and descriptive vocabulary?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Did most of the children learn how writers and storytellers edit and finish their stories?
Yes No

Did most of the children learn how artists finish and exhibit their work?
Yes No

Your comments about how you developed and enriched this part of the module:

Using paired and group/response partners and childrens routine of feedback/response marking by the teacher and children looking for + making improvements.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
FABULOUS FIREBIRDS
EVALUATION
6

Finally, please review your ideas on teaching for creativity:

This project really inspired the children, not only in literacy, but the connections they were able to develop and use in Music, Art and Dance. The Alster Imagination model has helped to improve their writing, it has been invaluable in doing this.

APPENDIX 5.4 **Example 2 of an evaluation**

articulate

JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
1

The Evaluation

I would be grateful if you would review your teaching of c... impact of imaginative thinking on your children's learning by completi... thoughts and ideas. A simple scoring device is given, together w...

Thank you very much for taking part in the project and comple... me have artworks, writing, models etc digital or originals be... have already had them!) to put on display at the EDC in Sep... evaluation.

Please choose a module of work, or a series of sessions, or a sin... your children's creativity.

Dear Pamela,
Here is the evaluation you asked for. Thanks for everything you did for the children. They enjoyed it greatly. Have a great Summer ♡

Motivating Ideas

What was the aim of the module, sessions or session?

To generate good story openings

How did you motivate the children to take part in their learning?

Discussions, pictures, questions, brain storming.

Did this 'springboard for learning' seem to engage the children's imaginations?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Your comments

The children were very keen to write and thought of a wide range of story openings using ARTEV.

articulate

JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
2

Associating Ideas

How did you help the children build on their learning?
Did the children draw, make diagrams, talk, role play, look at a picture, draft some writing, or some other thing(s)?

Drew pictures, looked at pictures, drafted some writing

Did they use their imaginations to discover patterns and similarities?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Did they find out what others think and realise one idea can lead to another?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Your comments about the imaginative thinking you noticed:

articulate

JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
3

Generating Ideas

How did the children try out ideas, possibilities, or 'stuff'?

Brainstorm ideas on paper

Did they use their imaginations to investigate possibilities?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Did they play with ideas and wonder 'what?', 'why?', 'how?', 'if'

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

.

Your comments about the imaginative thinking you noticed:

Children were very keen to share ideas with each other and the teacher. Ideas from most children were a lot more creative and detailed than usual.

articulate

JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
4

Innovating Ideas

How did they use their imaginations to invent a way to express their own ideas?

Brainstorming
Visualising places, characters.

Did they use their imaginations to invent a way to express their own ideas?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Your comments about the imaginative thinking you noticed:

Children enjoyed closing their ideas and imagining scenes - words seemed to flow out onto the page when they were asked to write what they had just seen.

articulate

JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
5

Celebrating Ideas

How did you manage to share ideas, enjoyment and learning?

Wrote story openings and shared them with each other, discussing positive points + points of improvement

Did they use their imaginations to respond to each other's work?

Yes, a lot — not much — No, not at all

Your comments about the imaginative thinking you noticed:

The stories the children wrote were of a very high standard, especially the lower and average ability children.
The children were very keen to continue writing and wanted to take their stories home to show their parents.

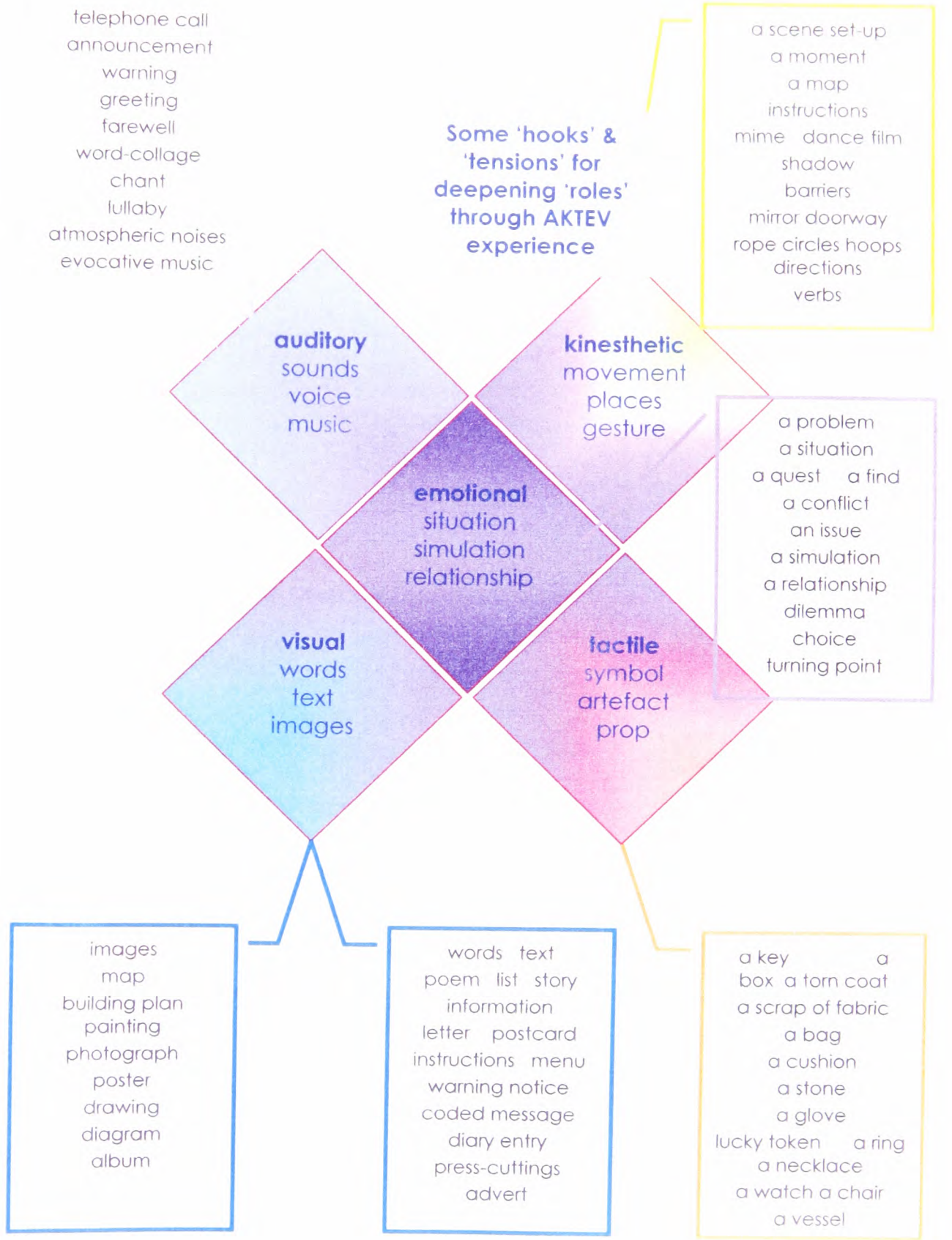
JUNIOR SCHOOL
IMAGINATIVE THINKING & CREATIVITY
EVALUATION
6

Finally, please review your ideas on teaching for creativity:

Have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and plan to use some of the ideas, especially ATCTEV with my new class in September.

The children have benefited greatly from it and this may be why we have had a rise in our level 5 SATs results.

APPENDIX 6.3 **Example of imaginative activities in AKTEV categories - drama**



APPENDIX 6.1 **Talk team roles**

AKTEV Looking in Talk Teams

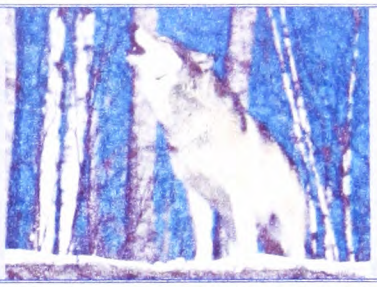
Talk Teams are small discussion groups who look at the same picture.

Personal response to the picture is the starting point of the discussion. They begin by all talking about the content – what they can see in the picture – people, places, animals, things.

Each pupil in the group then has a role to play in discussion. As they look and look again, they prepare to play their 'role' by finding clues about sounds, action, textures and feelings. They can make notes, lists, jottings on labels or post-its, diagrams or drawings to bring to the discussion.

When the group meets they share their findings in turn and discuss them.

This is a very powerful way of organising small-group structures for discussion and collaborative learning with the youngest children and the oldest. The tasks and prompts can also be differentiated so that everyone has access to the discussion. These are some of the roles you could give to your pupils – or think up some of your own – it is very adaptable.

Sound Seeker	Your job is to use your imagination to look for sounds and voices in the picture	
Action Catcher	Your job is to use your imagination to look for action and movement in the picture	
Touch Tapper	Your job is to use your imagination to look for textures and temperature in the picture	
Feeling Finder	Your job is to use your imagination to look for emotion and mood in the picture	

Drawing by Sarah age 6 with AKTEV annotations

Visual Imagination

The composition is balanced
Tree is central
The ladder is parallel to the tree
Both tree and ladder are on the vertical axis
Symbolic sunshine with rays and clouds

Kinaesthetic Imagination

The cat is alert and waiting, tail curling upward

Tactile Imagination

Warmth is implied by the rays of the sun

Kinaesthetic Imagination

Faces peer from the window in the doors of the fire truck.

Kinaesthetic Imagination

The rescuer is drawn in part-profile
Her arms stretch and reach sideward
Her hands hold the ladder
Her body is bent
Her legs are on the diagonal to reach the ladder
Both feet are on the ladder

Kinaesthetic Imagination

Exhaust fumes imply that the fire truck is moving

Tactile Imagination

Jagged lines for grass,
Differentiated colouring for the tree trunk
Extra branches and twigs hold the cat and the ladder
The crown of the tree has leaves and birds' nests

Auditory Imagination

This figure is saying, "You said you was looking for help" and "Help"

Auditory Imagination

The figure far right is open-mouthed and calling for help
The next figure is crying
The rescuer is saying, "Come cat"

APPENDIX 6.3 Example of annotations to show evidence of a repertoire of auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, emotional and visual imagination on a drawing by Sarah, aged 6

APPENDIX 8.1 **Example of writing to show how AKTEV was used to add precise informative details - by a Year 6 boy**

A dog's Choice

Beyond Kula Lake, there is a forest. Within it, branches rustle around, owls call, and squirrels embark on finding food. Distant birds swoop and dominate the sky. Faint tickles of light seep through the treetops. The forest is a beautiful place. ~~A~~ to There is also a gigantic tree on a hill in the centre of the park, a haven for wildlife. Millions of animals go about their daily business. Squirrels hop on across the criss-crossing trees. A blackish dog bounded through the trees. He was lost, and he needed to stay alive.

Ziggy (the dog) lay down and whimpered. He was remembering his past. Last night, he had bee running through a lake. He wasn't home then, but he was happy. He paused, remembering chasing, galloping through, towards rabbits. Before that, a whole year ago, Ziggy had been snuggled up with a cat on a sofa. Inside his mind, he longed to go home. Would he ever be back there?

A girl ran down the muddy path where Ziggy was. She was small and had brown hair and green eye To Ziggy, she seemed like an angel. When the girl reached Ziggy, she stopped, unsure of what

APPENDIX 8.2 **SAT results 2005 to 2009 showing an increase in Level 5 writing as a result of using MAGIC and AKTEV**

Write Ideas

Y6 Support for L5 Writing in Bromley Schools

2005 – 2006 Project	2005	2006
	8.9	28.4
	29.0	64.5
	16.1	43.8
	9.1	30.3
	6.1	51.5
	8.6	32.8
	2.9	8.3
	10.0	28.3
	8.4	6.6
2006 – 2007 Project	**2006**	**2007**
	0	10.6
	4	25
	13.5	23
	6.3	26
	32	21.8
	12.4	34.5
	5.6	17.3
	24	30.6
	27	30.0
	27.1	70
2007 – 2008 Project	**2007**	**2008**
	7.7 (disaggregated)	17.0 (disaggregated)
	15.6	21.3 (disputing)
	18.5	14.6
	13.8	34.1
	0	46.2
	14.8	27.1
	1.6	disputing + scripts lost
	4.9	14.6
	15.4	35.6
	25	16.7
	0	21.7
	3.2	5.0
	2.9	22.9