

**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY**

**Student and Teacher Identity Construction  
in New South Wales Years 7 - 10  
English classrooms**

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## **List of Transcript Abbreviations**

- [ ] Background information
- ... Pause
- (...) Edited material
- “ ” Direct quotations from reflection logs
- Italics* Conversations

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines student identity construction and teacher identity construction in the context of secondary English Years 7-10 classrooms in a comprehensive high school in Western Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. The research journey chronicles the teaching and learning experiences of a small group of students and teachers at Heartbreak High. The narrative provides insights into the factors responsible for creating teacher identity(s) and the identities of both engaged and disengaged students.

Previous studies have tended to focus on the construction of disaffected student identities. In contrast, this case study tells the stories of both engaged and disengaged students and of their teachers utilising a unique framework that adapts and combines a range of theoretical perspectives. These include ethnography as a narrative journey (Atkinson, 1990), Fourth Generation Evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1989), reflexivity (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995), Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Sugrue, 1974) and multiple realities (Stake, 1984).

The classical notion of the student-teacher dynamic is questioned in this inquiry. Students did not present powerless, passive, able-to-be motivated identities; they displayed significant agency in (re) creating 'self(s)' at Heartbreak High based largely on 'desires'. Engaged student identities reflected a teacher's culture and generally exhibited a "desire to know." In contrast, disaffected students exhibited a "desire for ignorance," rejecting the teacher's culture in order to fulfil their desire to belong to peer subculture(s). The capacity for critical reflection and empathy were also key factors in the process of their identity constructions. Disengaged students displayed limited capacity to empathise with, or to critically reflect about, those whom they perceived as "different". In contrast, engaged students exhibited a significant capacity to empathise with others and a desire to critically reflect on their own behaviour, abilities and learning.

This ethnographic narrative offers an alternate lens with which to view pedagogy from the perspectives that currently dominate educational debate. The findings of this study support a multifaceted model of teacher identity construction that integrates the personal 'self(s)' and the professional 'self(s)' that are underpinned by 'desires'. Current tensions inherent in the composition of teacher identities are portrayed in this thesis and it reveals the teacher self(s) as possessing concepts that are desirous of being efficacious, autonomous and valued but are diminished by disempowerment and fear.

## **Certificate**

I hereby certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution. Ethics Committee approval protocol number:  
HE26MAR2004-D02881

.....

**Dianne Frances Pizarro**

**10<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

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### **Those Gods Made Permanent**

And so the scenes unravel as they  
must do, some long, some so brief  
a glimpse encompasses them, and the story  
constructs itself by stacking up  
one incident against another,  
the agile puppets clashing together  
and interacting with these two-dimensional  
representations of a bank, a bottle shop,  
a clock, a loaded gun, and out of this  
tangle of particulars rendered by a camera  
the optic nerves fake a kind of motion -  
and you supply an ending and a moral scaffolding  
that locks the plot together in your brain.  
But that's the mad professor's method  
of looking at things - the obsessive neatness  
gives it away.

John Tranter

## **INTRODUCTION**

## Chapter 1

### Introduction to the thesis

#### 1.1 Rationale

Debate regarding the construction of effective teaching and learning identities is a dominant call in education in international and Australian spheres. In Australia, amidst increasing politicisation of education, the discourse focuses on the contentious areas of pedagogy, gender, curriculum and the recurring refrain of declining literacy standards (Ball, Kenny, & Gardiner, 1990; Green, Hodgins & Luke, 1994).

Student and teacher identity construction is also situated within a context of the increasing influence of economic rationalist theory and managerialism in education. McWilliams (2002) and O'Farrell (2002) argue persuasively that current school policies and practices are about "corporatising education". Parker and Meyenn (1991) also assert that economic managerialism is "dangerous" particularly as it involves the pursuit of the "goals of efficiency and effectiveness [which] can often become ends in themselves rather than the means by which social justice and equity can be realised for all people" (p.4). Sidorkin (2002) posits that economic rationalist theory, when applied to schools, is "exploitative" (p.5) of children and that productivity and efficiency "is not possible and not a good thing for schools" (p.32). Parker (1997) goes further and propounds that teacher identity is being impacted by two opposing perspectives that represent "a difference of entire world views" (p.3). One world view, Parker suggests, is "humanistic" (p.3) and believes in autonomy, emancipation, uniqueness, democracy and values (p.6); the other is "the positivist one of the corporate world" (p.3) and uses the language of the marketplace and a "vocabulary of means, efficiency, universals, law-like generalities and bureaucracy" (pp. 3 & 6).

English, as the only mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the New South Wales curriculum, enjoys a "privileged status" (Michaels, 2001, p. 4) and has historically been imbued with special significance because of its perceived role in imparting values, experiencing aesthetics, and literacy (see, for example, Peel, Patterson & Gerlach, 2000). The unique status of English has arguably resulted in the contested nature of the subject and the current politicisation of English is evident in unprecedented intervention by Australian governments and the media (Lucy & Mickler, 2006). The tension created by this politicisation is also reflected in debate about the nature of Subject English.

Politicisation of English has been particularly apparent in the media and the contemporary Australian political landscape (see for instance, Hodgens & Luke, 1994) and is readily evidenced by Commonwealth educational reforms including national curricula, testing and reporting. In 2008 national testing and reporting will be inaugurated despite the fact that N.S.W. education is already a terrain of extensive external state testing of English in years 3, 5, 7, 10, 12. Claims of falling literacy standards in the media and by successive Commonwealth Education ministers persist despite evidence to the contrary including OECD reports. Sawyer, in his article: *Just Add Progressivism and Stir, How we Cook Up Literacy Crises in Australia* (no date), highlights the influence of conservative media and political forces on Subject English:

Despite these results [three successive literacy Programs for International Student Assessments that placed Australian students at the highest level of performance], which indicated that Australian teachers of English and literacy ought to be lauded as among the world's very best, 2005 saw one of the most sustained public campaigns of teacher bashing and crises rhetoric around education that this country has ever seen – with the strongest focus on teachers and literacy (p. 2).

Green, Hodgens and Luke's study (1994) of four decades of media sources in Australia discovered that claims of 'literacy crises' in Australia were closely representative of conservative thinking including Anglo/Australian monoculturalism, nationalism, obedience to authority, employability and job competence and innate intellectual gifts. They found, on the other hand, that 'illiteracy' has been associated with negative values including subversive ideologies, anti social behaviour, sexual immorality, technological inadequacy, republicanism and moral decay. Marginson (1997) argues convincingly that declining standards, despite evidence to the contrary, has "strong public resonance" and that "Declining standards is a narrative ... strongly entrenched [in the mind of the public] to be negated with logic, surveys, and numbers" (p. 133).

Political interference in education and particularly in Subject English is also apparent in the plethora of educational reports and policy statements that have influenced Australian education at state and Commonwealth level particularly since the 1980s (Barcan, 1988; Connell, 1993). These include: *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling* (1989), joint statements and profiles; the Carrick (1989), Finn (1991), Mayer (1992), McGaw (1996), Ramsey (2000) reports, and *Quality Teaching* (N.S.W. Department of Education and Training [DET], 2003). Increased political interference through federal and state reforms, funding,

policies, claims of falling literacy standards and criticism of syllabuses have negatively impacted on teacher identity (Davis & Watson, 1990; Marginson, 1997).

Despite the controversial nature of Subject English, there is general agreement in the literature it can be viewed through the lens of models. These paradigms of English reflect deeply held teacher beliefs and provide a valuable opportunity to examine the relationship between paradigms of English, the curriculum, pedagogy, teacher identity construction and student identity construction in the classroom.

Teacher identity is frequently presented in the literature (see, for instance, Ramsey, 2000; Rowe, 2003) and in N.S.W. educational policies (see, for instance, *Quality Teaching*, 2003) as unproblematic. It is defined largely in terms of pedagogy as a set of attributes (teaching strategies and approaches). However, an alternative school of thought posits a subjective and complex interpretation of teacher identity as 'self(s)' that integrate the personal and the professional (see, for instance, Agne, 1999; Sachs, 1999). This is the definition of identity that informs this study.

Student identity construction has been extensively canvassed internationally (see, for instance, Wexler, 1992; Willis, 1977) and nationally (see, for instance, Jones, 1989; McFadden and Walker, 1994). Several schools of thought including Social/Cultural Reproduction, Resistance and Critical/Desire have dominated the research literature. Dissent, as McFadden (1992) points out, is evident within each of these broad schools of thought. Some researchers in the field argue that aspects of these theories of student identity construction need to be amalgamated in order to more fully understand the nature and role of identity construction in the classroom (see, instance, McFadden, 2000).

Investigations into student identity have predominantly focussed on disaffected students, and neglected the voices of engaged students and teachers. This ethnographic investigation, to a small degree, redresses this predisposition and provides a unique opportunity for examining 'self(s)' composed in the context of the English Years 7 - 10 N.S.W. classrooms.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This case study provides insights into the following questions:

What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

These questions are informed by asking:

- Why do students engage or disengage in learning?
- What role does pedagogy play?
- What role does curriculum (Subject English and *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus*, 2003) play?

## 1.3 Research Design and Method

This qualitative case study chronicles the auto/biographies of four teachers and sixteen students in Years 7 - 10 English classrooms in a Western Sydney comprehensive high school. The methodology of this qualitative research incorporates and adapts a range of theoretical perspectives that form a framework for analysis and discussion of the data. These include the metaphor of ethnography as a narrative journey (Atkinson, 1990) and research as a “composition” (Wexler, 1992); *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1989); reflexivity (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995); grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) & case study paradigm (Stake, 1974). This case study implements a constructivist paradigm that values “multiple realities” of stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p. 13).

The narrative of this case study is composed from a variety of sources collected during one school term by a researcher who was embedded in the site. These included: questionnaire, interviews, group discussions, accounts, reflection logs, informal conversations, teacher programs and observations of students and staff in various contexts at the school (see Appendix). The chronicle composed from these accounts attempts to persuade the “reader using description, data and narrative utilising various voices in the dialogue between the author, those depicted in the study and the reader” (Atkinson, 1990, p.15).

In this case study the data has been collected using an adaptation of Guba and Lincoln's *Fourth Generation Evaluation* paradigm to garner the "thick description" and to provide vivid accounts of the student and teacher self(s) in the context of the Years 7 – 10 English classroom. The researcher searched for "patterns of living" (Watts, 1993, p.p. 55-56) using Stake's (1974) process of "responsive focussing" and applied grounded theory to data analysis. The chronicler 'read' and recorded the tapestry of rich description and the journey ended with a consensus that responded to the central questions of the investigation:

What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

### **1.5 Organisation of this thesis**

This thesis is divided into five main sections: Research Context; Review of the Literature; Methodology; Research Analysis and Findings; and Discussion.

#### **Introduction to the thesis**

**The research context.** The purpose of chapter 2 is to contextualise the case study initially through a brief outline of the history of Australian public education and the current structure of education in New South Wales. Following this orientation is a discussion of the antecedents and recent history of Subject English. The contested nature of Subject English and models of English are also explored to provide valuable insights that will inform the circumstance of this qualitative investigation. This segment is followed by a discussion of the recent history of New South Wales syllabuses (1971, 1987, 2003) illuminating the role of curriculum in identity construction.

**Review of the Literature.** Chapter 3 provides an in-depth review of the literature concerning student identity construction and teacher identity construction. Subsequent to a general introduction to identity is an examination of the most influential schools of thought regarding identity construction (Social/Cultural Reproduction, Resistance Theory, Critical/Transformative/Desire Theory and alternative theories). The role of structure, agency, efficacy, achievement and gender is then reviewed. The chapter concludes with an assessment of teacher identity construction focussing on the theories framing the debate into student identity construction, as well as, the role of the professional and personal self(s), pedagogy-

including *Authentic Pedagogy* (1996), *Productive Pedagogy* (2001), and *Quality Teaching* (2003) and the role of critical reflection and empathy.

**Methodology.** Chapter 4 of this qualitative research composition describes the research question. It also explains the choice of a qualitative research paradigm and the framework of the methodology, which applies an adaptation, and amalgamation of various theoretical perspectives. A justification of research metaphors (narrative, chronicle and composition) is followed by discussion of reflexivity in ethnographies, auto/biographies, the case study approach and *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, which provides understanding of the nature of the methodology of this study.

The selection of evaluand, data collection and analysis procedure is also depicted in this chapter. A modification of the complex procedures used by Guba and Lincoln (1989) to select teacher and student participants in order to hear as many different voices as possible is presented. Profiles of engaged and disengaged students at Heartbreak High are described in this section, as well as, auto/biographies of the researcher, school site, and teacher and student participants. This is followed by an explanation of the of data collection methods utilised in the study (questionnaire, reflection logs, discussions, interviews and observations of lessons and staff meetings).

**Research Analysis and Findings.** Chapter 5 commences with an introduction that highlights the finding that students at Heartbreak High were displaying engaged or disengaged identities in English Years 7 - 10 classrooms and the influences and factors impacting on these identities. This chapter analyses ideal teacher identities, student perceptions of teachers, and the role of ability, achievement, self-concept, reflection and empathy in the creation of engaged or disengaged personas in the English Years 7 - 10 classroom. An examination of student attitudes to Subject English, culture, subcultures, agency and gender is also provided. The finding that disengaged female participants in the investigation portrayed stereotypical male personas is explored in this section. The nature of teacher identity is also considered firstly by scrutiny of personal and professional self(s) and then through a discussion of teacher agency, critical reflection and beliefs about Subject English, models of English and the *English 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003).

**Concluding Discussion.** Chapter 6 explores the stories told in this qualitative research. It chronicles the reflexive nature of this ethnographic case study into student and teacher

identity construction in English in a public, secondary high school in New South Wales. The reader is reminded that the researcher is involved in creating “neither truth nor fiction but a composition” (Watts, 1993, pp. 55-56). The complex, fluid and dynamic nature of identity construction where self(s) are constantly being (re) created in English at Heartbreak High is discussed in light of Social/Cultural Reproduction, Resistance and Desire Theories. The findings depicted in this chapter suggest alternative interpretations to those currently dominating the discourse regarding identity construction. The discussion reveals that desire was discovered to be a critical factor in whether students chose to engage or disengage in the classroom and sets forth the relationship between desire and student legitimizing the teacher’s culture or oppositional peer subcultures. Consideration of the role of student concludes that students are powerful entities in the classroom and that a classical notion of students as passively dependent personas completely dependent on the teacher for motivation is questioned. Student participant desires ‘to know’ (engaged) or ‘not to know’ (disengaged) are explored and incorporate the unexpected finding relating to gender and disengaged female students that will further inform debate in this area.

Teacher identity construction in terms of pedagogy, student identities, professional belief systems (the Growth Model) curriculum (Subject English and the English Years 7 - 10 syllabus) and personal ‘self(s) who are desirous of creating “spaces” (Giddens, 1999) is discussed in the latter section of this chapter. The tension between different definitions and assumptions of teacher identity is highlighted by a discussion of the impact of economic managerialism and economic rationalism.

This chapter concludes with an exploration of implications of this research that suggest a different way of conceptualizing student and teacher identity construction from those that have previously dominated discourse in this area. These include a re-evaluation of the classical premise underpinning literature regarding the role of the student and teacher, as well as, underscoring the role of empathy and critical reflection in creating autonomous and self-actualized identities in the classroom.

## **THE RESEARCH CONTEXT**

## **Chapter 2**

### **Background**

#### **2.1 Public Education and the Commonwealth**

In 1901 the Federation of Australian states separated government responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the individual states. Education (except for tertiary institutions) was allocated as a state responsibility. The state had over-riding responsibility for public and private infants/primary, secondary and Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Despite the fact that schools continue to be primarily the jurisdiction of the individual states, federal governments exert influence through monetary policy and through political pressure. Since World War 2 there has been increased interference by successive Commonwealth governments motivated by a desire to make Education a federal responsibility (Michaels, 2001). Federally funded reports and educational statements also evidence increasing Commonwealth interference in state education. The latter includes: Carrick (1989), Finn (1991), Mayer (1992), Ramsey (2000) and the Hobart Declaration (1989). The creation of national benchmarks and joint statements, profiles and benchmarking, national testing and recent Federal Government calls for a national curriculum and national reporting testify to the political nature of education and to the determination of successive federal governments to influence state education.

#### **2.2 Public Education in New South Wales Kindergarten to Year 12**

Primary and Secondary education in N.S.W. is viewed as a continuum of learning that is separated into Stages. It is recognised that students can be at various learning stages within these groupings. Infants/Primary schooling generally encompasses Early Stage 1 (kindergarten), Stage 1 (years one and two), Stage 2 (years three and four) and Stage 3 (years five and six). Stage 4 includes years 7 and 8 at high school (students are approximately 12 to 14 years of age); Stage 5 encompasses years 9 and 10, and years 11 and 12 equate to Stage 6 (post-compulsory years). English is the only mandatory subject of the curriculum from Early Stage 1 through to Stage 6. As of 2001, English is tested externally through state Basic Skills tests at years 3, 5, 7 and 8 and through the compulsory exit credential examinations at years 10 (School Certificate) and 12 (Higher School Certificate). In May 2008 national testing of years 7 and 9 replaced state basic skills testing in years 7 and 8 in English. There is also a

Certificate of Attainment awarded at Year 11 which is not externally examined and which is a prerequisite for study at year 12 level.

### **2.3 History of Subject English**

Subject English has a contested history in Australian education (see, for instance, Michaels, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Patterson, 2000). Sawyer and McFarlane (2000) note that “in the field of ‘English’ at the moment, very little is unproblematic” and “Even the very name of the subject is becoming increasingly problematic” (p. 3). A review of the relevant literature reveals inherent tensions at the heart of English. An exploration of the antecedents of this subject highlights competing beliefs about the nature and role of English that manifest in contemporary debate regarding definitions and models of English, curriculum, literacy, pedagogy and syllabuses.

Subject English, despite some dissent (Patterson, 1999), has historically and contemporaneously been viewed through the lens of models. New paradigms of English are constantly coming into being and competing with existing models (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000, pp. 3-4). These paradigms of English are in a constant state of flux, forming and re-forming, combining and being subsumed as they compete to influence and shape the theoretical basis for Subject English, the curriculum, pedagogy and in the classroom. Each model embraces moral and social values (Ball, Kenny & Gardiner, 1987), as well as, beliefs about Subject English and teaching and learning that are integral to the identity the English teacher brings to the classroom:

Each version of English contains and informs a particular epistemology, the learner is placed differently in relation to subject knowledge, their teachers and the state. Each produces different kinds of students (and citizens) with different kinds of abilities and relationships with peers. In each version the root paradigm of meanings *within* and *about* English differs (Ball, Kenny & Gardiner, 1990, p. 80).

### **2.4 Antecedents of Subject English in New South Wales**

Historical frameworks have been utilised by Little (1998), Shayer (1972) and Watson (1996) to address the problematic nature of English. While differences occur between these researchers, there is a degree of commonality in their views. They generally position English in N.S.W. as a product of British colonialism. These scholars argue that in the 1800s in England and in colonial N.S.W., English as an autonomous subject was resisted by influential university educational bodies and was only on the “periphery of the curriculum [to be taught

to] the dullest boys [while] the others learnt Latin and Greek” (Watson, 1996, p. 26). Homer (1973) focuses on the influence of the examination system, the pedagogy of Classics and the establishment of the English School at Oxford in defining English in terms of basic skills in his précis of the history of English. The inferior status of Subject English, it is effectively argued, was also reinforced and exemplified by the fact that it was being taught to girls attending secondary schools in the 1850s. The London University’s first official English examination paper in 1839 equated ‘English’ with ‘language’ and reflected the influence of a classics approach to content and pedagogy (Shayer, 1972, pp. 2-3). Shayer asserts convincingly that Cambridge and provincial universities viewed English as literature and “Oxford resisted the subject until almost the end of the [19th] century” (p.3). In 1904 the Board of Education included in its regulations a “directive requiring all State secondary schools to offer courses in English language and literature” because a significant number of schools ignored the subject (Shayer, 1972, p. 3). Sawyer (2002) comments perceptively that Shayer sees the whole period from 1900 to 1937 as:

characterised by a battle between the study of grammar and other approaches advocating things such as: the need to foster imagination, learning through doing, the importance of student interest, the importance of personal expression, writing as structuring experience and the lack of relationship between knowledge of grammar and writing ability (pp. 15-16).

Sawyer, while critical of aspects of Shayer’s analysis (1972), highlights the usefulness of his interpretation of the history of English in terms of a series of fallacies:

- The classical fallacy, which was an attempt to establish the credibility of English by teaching it as if it were the classics. Thus literary study became about allusions and grammatical analysis
- The Old English fallacy, which referred to the earliest university English courses’ emphasis on Old and Middle English
- The imitative fallacy, under which areas such as composition exercises consisted of imitating detailed outlines of how a whole story should be structured
- The moral fallacy in which literature was seen primarily as a means of conveying moral lessons
- The content fallacy, in which grammar was seen as providing a content that made the subject academic and examinable – thus respectable (Sawyer, 2002, p. 15).

The work of Shayer (1972), utilising these fallacies as a basis, positions debate regarding the antecedents of English in terms of models that contain motifs. These motifs include the role of literature, text, language, grammar, the role of the individual, pedagogy and the learning/teaching process. Debate in England regarding Subject English is historically transferred to Australia (Watson, 1998). Thus, the disputation in England regarding the nature and status of Subject English was reflected in N.S.W. throughout the late 1800s. It too focussed on whether English was an authentic, autonomous subject and this is mirrored in the volatile dispute of the time concerning whether Subject English should be subsumed by the ‘Classics’. Dixon (1975), Marginson (1998) and Watson (1998) assert that the residual effect of this contestation can be seen in the Basic Skills model and Back to Basics movement still extant.

## **2.5 Circa 1880s – 1920**

Little (1998) and Watson (1996) argue persuasively that the antecedents of the Basic Skills model (allied to the Back to Basics movement) has historically proved to be popular in Australia, Britain and the USA. These scholars claim that they are the legacy of Jeremy Bentham a “leading jurist and utilitarian philosopher” (Little, 1998, p. iii) and of mass schooling. Little states that the development of Subject English in colonial N.S.W. was dominated by the English Bentham model that focused on literacy taught through “mechanical drills which would work perfectly if teachers were not slack” (p. iv). Little asserts convincingly that Bentham’s attitude to teaching and learning was shaped by an economic managerial paradigm that viewed schools as production lines for the capitalist state. This paradigm, Little (1998) elucidates, featured a drill system suited to a compartmentalised pedagogy where teachers failed if they could not motivate students with the “carrot of later employment” and they deserved “instant dismissal” if they failed to engage students (p.iv).

Little (1998) refers to the work of Marginson (1997) in evidencing the influence of Bentham in Australian through the Colonial Education Acts. These acts organised elementary schooling into Basic Skills that focussed on content assessment by public examination. A ‘tripod’ system of English was utilised that organised English into three delineated elements: grammar, composition and literature (pp. ii- iii). Shayer (1972) concurs that English was compartmentalised and concentrated on basic skills during this period. Dixon (1975) also proposes a historical approach to Subject English by identifying periods of history with paradigms of English. In his seminal text, *Growth Through English* (1975), Dixon claims that

the Basic Skills model initially dominated definitions of English because mass education and industrialization demanded “*initial literacy*” (p.1).

The Basic Skills model of English manifests throughout Australia’s educational history and contemporaneously through renewed focus on teacher accountability, vocational literacy, centralised curricula, national testing, behaviourism and claims of falling literacy standards (see, for example, Davis and Watson, 1990; Marginson 1997). It has its origins in the Bentham model and in mass education. Its diffuse nature is more often apparent in the mind of the public than as a cohesive model of English (Marginson, 1997).

Embedded in the Basic Skills model is the notion that English is about knowing how to read and write; knowing the ‘basics’ equates with being able to function effectively in Australian society. Thus, proponents of the Basic Skills model define literacy in terms of being able to spell, using correct punctuation and grammar. Skills’ model advocates state that student competency in completing forms, following written instructions, reading fluently and with some comprehension equates with literacy (Watson, 1996, p.2). They see the object of being literate as being able to find employment and to ‘get on in the world.’ Critics of the Basic Skills model of English including Laslett (1991) and Little (1998) maintain that there is no convincing research to show that grammar and punctuation exercises improve literacy. Laslett (1991) also suggests that narrow, functional definitions of literacy are inappropriate “because they are more about social control of individuals than about ensuring that they have appropriate skills for today’s world” (p.21). Gill (1988) supports this contention by referring to accusations by Skills model supporters that the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) reflects “fads” and “the spirit of the permissive society, including the relativism in standards” (Gill, 1988, p. 5).

Pedagogical practice promoted by the Basic Skills model also supports the contention of critics of the model that English is seen in terms of producing a vocationally skilled workforce for the economic good of Australia. The Basic Skills Model has a paternalistic approach to pedagogy and purports that reading and writing literacy is best taught by traditional, pedagogical practices such as ‘drilling’, rote learning, phonics and the acquisition of rules or specific content or knowledge.

Curriculum histories of English (Brock, 1996; Dixon, 1975; Green, 1996; Shayer, 1972; Watson, 1996) suggest that by 1900 notions of the civilising effect of culture espoused by

Matthew Arnold became widespread in England and in N.S.W. in the curriculum as 'English' emerged as a subject in its own right. This belief in the moral value of literature challenged Bentham's ideas about the content, role and purpose of English. The New South Wales Board of Education's English Schedules (1900) advocated a more holistic view of Subject English than the Bentham or classical models (Shayer, 1972). Dixon (1975) posits that it is during this period that the Cultural Heritage model of English became increasingly dominant in defining English and was interrelated with the rise of mass schooling.

The complex birth of Subject English is further highlighted by debate regarding mass education. *The Public Instruction Act* of 1880 made education in N.S.W. compulsory up to the age of fourteen and led to a plethora of schools opening and the occurrence of 'mass education' phenomenon (Watson, 1996, p.27). These reforms, Watson suggests, saw a rise in the status and recognition of 'humanity' subjects and English was established in the progressive 1911 English Syllabus as mandatory and incorporated language and literature. Shayer (1972) contends that influential texts including George Samson's *English for English* (1921), *The New Teaching*, and Caldwell Cook's *The Play Way* (1917) impacted on how teachers perceived English teaching and curriculum. Watson (1996) posits that these texts promulgated pedagogical and curriculum values that saw student identity as central to the learning process, teaching to be about real life and English as the centrally humanizing element in the curriculum. Homer (1973), while acknowledging these positive influences, is critical of Caldwell Cook's legacy asserting that he perpetuated the Cultural Heritage model of English. Homer also contends that *The Newbolt Report* (1921) had a significant and negative influence on English. He contends that the report encouraged the establishment of the Cultural Heritage model through its elevation of literature about language; language was seen as useful only as a means of enhancing the study of literature (Homer, 1973, pp. 50-64).

Green (1990) presents an alternative perspective of the creation of Subject English from those previously discussed. He positions his thesis on the antecedents of English and mass education in light of the political, social and economic context of Australian Federation (1901). Green suggests that the central positioning of literature as a sacred canon (and the subsequent dominance of the Cultural Heritage model) was a direct response to what was perceived by the government of the day as the ideological crisis of educational-access for all classes. He propounds that this event created a perceived necessity to "'invent' literature as part of a general hegemonic strategy" (p.142). Green argues persuasively that it is

“imminently plausible” that the placing of literature at the heart of English represented society’s desire to “institutionalise certain forms of sensibility, discipline, behaviour and response in human beings... aimed at instilling a certain kind of morality” (p.145). Green (1990) asserts that the Cultural Heritage model not only focussed on literature as the means of nationalistic control, but it also became the means of inculcating white, western, middle class values. Corcoran (1995) goes further and claims that it inculcated Anglo white, middle class values. Dixon (1975) also suggests that the dominance of literature (reflecting the influence of Matthew Arnold) resulted in English being dominated by ‘canons’ of literature. The latter were valued for their moral worth and for their “civilising and socially unifying content” (p.1). The Cultural Heritage model, according to Dixon (1975) was “clearly intended to fill the vacuum left by the skills model” (p.2).

## **2.6 Circa 1920-1960**

Despite earlier ‘progressive’ views of English including those propounded by Mackanees and Samson (Watson, 1981) and, at times, the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training, the dominance of the Basic Skills/Classics/Cultural Heritage triad of English continued to command compliance in defining English after World War One (Little, 1998). The latter is evidenced in the 1944 English Syllabus that regimented English lessons into one period each for poetry and composition, half a period for grammar, half a period for novel, and two periods for Shakespeare; later this was increased to two periods for grammar (Watson, 1996). Green’s (1990) belief in the rise in the centrality of literature in definitions of English is evidenced by this mandating of the structure of the English curriculum and its subsequent impact on pedagogy.

Shayer (1972) contends that the history of English is largely a battle between different models of English. This battle, he suggests, dominated the teaching of English into the 1960s and manifested itself in the compartmentalisation of the subject into areas such as grammar, composition, novel and Shakespeare. Shayer (1972) points out that this ‘battle’ caused concern in educational quarters and was perceived by many as representing the close link between conservatism favouring control of education (particularly English) and the political climate. The influence of political conservatism is supported by Little (1998) and Marginson (1997) who draw analogies regarding economic managerial interpretations of Subject English during the 1950s Cold War period. The latter saw a resurgence in “The Back to The Basics movement in the USA, linked to the Cold War through the Sputnik scare in the 1950s, and

taken up in subsequent liaisons among various groups on the New Right, cultural conservatives, religious fundamentalists and [later] advocates for Reganomics” (Little, 1998, p.v). This impacted on the Australian interpretations of Subject English, the curriculum, pedagogy and teacher identities in the classroom.

The Cultural Heritage model of English, as previously stated, has its origins in nineteenth century England and still influences pedagogy, curriculum and English syllabuses in N.S.W. In English classrooms today, notions of the ‘civilising’ effect of culture espoused by Matthew Arnold are still influential (Anderson, 1986, p.19). Historically the Basic Skills model has aligned itself with some advocates of the Cultural Heritage model of English in Australia. Proponents of this model including Barry Spurr (2002) and Frank Whitehead (1978) advocate the importance of grammar and expression to facilitate literary studies of the ‘classic’ texts of English Literature including Shakespeare, Milton, The King James Bible and Yeats.

Proponents of the Cultural Heritage model have placed Anglo-Westernised 'literature' at the centre of Subject English (Corcoran, 1995). Contemporary Cultural Heritage proponents are supported by the traditional influence of some universities. The current Cultural Heritage model supporters stress the “civilizing and socially unifying content” of English teaching made available “through the ‘great works’ of English literature” (Corcoran, 1995, p.13). Some advocates of the Cultural Heritage model are critical of Growth model proponents such as James Britton, asserting that in the real world of English teaching:

Britton's influence has been disturbingly harmful and this is principally because it encourages a movement away from literature as the supreme source of enjoyment and the supreme creation of values (Whitehead, 1978, p. 15).

The Cultural Heritage model of English places the teacher in the role of the ‘expert’ who transmits knowledge about the ‘canon’ to the students often through literary criticism. Hodgson (1974) and Bernstein (1971, 1990) assert that English teaching, up until the 1930s, was dominated by transmission pedagogy and school knowledge. Others (see for example, Ball, Kenny & Gardener, 1987; 1990) contend that transmission pedagogy continued to dominate subjects including English up until the later 1980s. Dixon (1975) argues that the Cultural Heritage model reinforced “the average teacher in his attention to the written word (the point of strength in his training) as against the spoken word (the pupil's strength)” (p.3). This is of significance for the research as beliefs about the roles of the teacher and student;

notions of 'good' and 'bad' literature; “common literacy” and a “common culture” (Anderson, 1986, pp.19-20) impact on identity constructions within the English classroom.

## 2.7 Circa 1960 -1975

Little (1998) describes Australia in the years 1960 to 1975 as a “period of unprecedented federal-state co-operation on education policy supported by both sides of politics” (p.viii). This phenomenon coincided with the influential international Dartmouth and York conferences on English that were “milestones in providing a new and authoritative collective voice[s]” (Sawyer, 2002). These voices are identified by Hodgson (1974) as models of English:

- The personal expression model (“creative writing”) represented by Marjorie Hourd and David Holbrook
- A sociological model, dedicated to making the working – class child’s milieu relevant...
- A communications model, represented by the work of Douglas Barnes
- Drawing on the early work of M.A.K Halliday and the Language in Use materials of Doughty and others
- A synthesis – compromise model, marked by eclecticism and represented by Sydney Bolt’s The Right Response and Frank Whitehead’s The Disappearing Dais” (1974 Hodgson, as cited in Sawyer, 2002, pp. 15 – 16).

The international Dartmouth English conference in 1966 was about curriculum development in English teaching (Dixon, 1975, p.vii). It resulted in a theoretical approach to English (Personal Growth model) that was to significantly change the teaching of English in Australia, England and America through the ideas of not only John Dixon, but others including Britton, Bernstein, Stratta, Graves and Moffett. At Dartmouth new ways of defining English came into being and these had an immediate and enduring impact on teacher training, pedagogy, curriculum and teacher identity (Britton, 1970; Little, 1998). The latter is evident in today’s English classrooms (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000). Sawyer (1998) described Dixon’s text *Growth Through English* (1975) “as one of the most influential books on English teaching ever written” (p. 23). Other prominent, expert ‘voices’ including that of James Britton in his introduction to Dixon’s book says that it “helped to shape new teacher attitudes towards English teaching” and highlighted the impact of how “external social, economic and political events have forced teachers of English to interpret the ‘growth model’ in a broader context

than initially envisioned” (Dixon, 1975, p.xviii). Hodgson (1974) highlights the significance of the Growth model as an over – arching model that incorporates other models

Dixon (1975) defines Personal Growth as “the need to re-examine the learning process and the meaning to the individual of what he is doing in English lessons” (pp. 1-2). Sawyer (1998) argues that: “The revolution brought about by this model [Growth] was in re- defining English not in terms of curriculum content, but in terms of processes. English became defined as activity. Central activities were talking and writing and the ordering of experience that these involved” (p. 23). Awareness of the importance of context and language and learning and an integrated curriculum featured in the Growth model. The Growth model focussed on the importance the language of the child: “We can be almost sure that the language and meaning are both his, not a dummy run, and we have to make our classrooms places where pupils want to talk and write from impulses” (Dixon, 1975, pp.5-6). Dixon declares in *Growth Through English* that a “fundamental element of the Growth/Language and Learning model is the significance of meaning: 'What' the child has to say initially is regarded as more important than the form of expression. This does not mean a “blanket acceptance of ‘self-expression’ [as it] is no help to pupils and may prove worse hindrance to their growing self-knowledge than a blunt and limited response from the teacher” (p. 8).

The Growth model of English teaching focuses on “the right to talk about the creative potential of all children” (p. 27) because all children have something worth saying. It also states that given the right teacher/pupil relationship of trust, meaningful writing contexts and audiences, and the concept of process children will not only achieve, but will have the opportunity to use language that “has the capacity to bring elements from experience into a structure that stands for life not merely in particular but in general” (p. 27). Medway (1988) supports Dixon’s views on immersion in language and rejects a genrist approach because “It is enough for pupils to be placed in situations (ones essentially of dialogue) which generate different kinds of communication intentions...and to be exposed to many and varied examples of the sorts of writing which might meet their purposes”(p.75).

The Growth paradigm of English incorporated the work of Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, Parker (1976) who contributed the elements of audience, teacher as facilitator or guide, and of the concept of process being as important in relation to the product (Stratta & Dixon, 1991, p.1-2). Transactional, poetic and expressive functions of writing were espoused (Britton, 1970). Expressive writing assumed the writer is of personal interest to the reader and utterances,

outbursts and speculations are a part of this style of writing that relies on trust between the participants. Transactional writing was the language of intellectual inquiry, reporting, informing, instructing and poetic writing is where the “language is not being used instrumentally as a means of achieving something, but as an end to itself (Thomson, 1986, p.12).

Graham Little, a highly influential figure as Inspector of Schools and Chair of the N.S.W. English Syllabus Committee (1971), contends that the Growth model was a clearly delineated paradigm of English that had a significant and positive impact on the teaching of English in Australia. The latter was partly due to “influential post-Dartmouth books disseminated by the newly - formed English Teachers’ Association and their federation into the Australian Association for the Teaching of English” that resulted in the N.S.W. 1971 *English 7 – 10 Syllabus* (Little, 1998, p.viii). Little (1998) states that N.S.W. English teachers lobbied for one syllabus to replace the four-tiered system that had existed to stratify the subject “that saw English as a complex whole that should be considered from complementary points of view, rather than a set of discreet building blocks” (p ix).

A report that had significant impact on education in Australia, *Teaching English literacy: A project of national significance on the preservice preparation of teachers for teaching English literacy* (Christie, Devlin, Freebody, Luke, Martin, Threadgold & Walton, 1991) – commonly referred to as the Christie Report – decries the influence of the Growth model in N.S.W. schools from the 1970s onwards. The authors of the report assert that the Growth model marginalised language and gave pre-eminence to literature by bringing student literature into prominence in the English classroom. This resulted, according to Christie et al. (1991), in negative influences including: a focus on language as grammar and not as rhetoric, on the personal and not the social use of language, and on the teacher as “facilitator” (p.17). Scholars, including Little (1998) and Watson (1996) challenge this assertion arguing convincingly that the Growth model was clearly in conflict with fundamental tenets of the Skills and Heritage models in English classrooms.

The criticisms of Christie et al. (1991), regarding the role of language and the Growth model, are also questionable. Dixon (1975) did not reject language - only narrow definitions that reduced language “to new and superior grammars” (p. 75). Sawyer, in his doctoral thesis: *Simply Growth? A study of selected episodes in the history of Years 7 – 10 English in New South Wales from the 1970s to the 1990s* (2002), also challenges this assessment of the

Growth model in his analysis of the body of work of Frances Christie which Sawyer argues constitutes a “thesis” on the recent history of English in Australia. Sawyer (2002) concurs with Christie et al. (1991) regarding the rejection of parsing and analysis “as of little use in practical language development” but denies that teachers chose to reject “all language study” (p. 273). Sawyer (2002) reinforces his stance by highlighting the influence of Moffett (1968) and the rhetorical tradition on *English Years 7 – 10* (2003) in N.S.W. from the 1970s to the 1990s. Sawyer (2002) convincingly supports the view that the Growth model in N.S.W. was “characterised by all three arms of Halliday’s influential triad including, most importantly, by rhetorical approaches to the study of language” (p. 284). Sawyer insightfully concludes that: “Christie’s ‘thesis’ about the development of English in Australia since the early 1970s does not stand up to close examination in the context of N.S.W.” (p. 284).

The early seventies saw the development of the Language across the Curriculum movement inspired, amongst others, by Douglas Barnes (1974), James Britton (1970), Harold Rosen (1971) and Andrew Wilkinson (1975). England once again influenced Subject English in Australia. This movement placed language at the centre of Subject English, a stance epitomised by the words of Britton (1970):

we use language as a means of organizing a representation of the world-each for himself-and that the representations so created constitutes the world we operate in, the basis of all the predictions by which we set the course of our lives (p. 7).

Britton, Chair of the influential *Bullock Report* (1975), played a significant role in defining Subject English in both England and Australia. His original idea that talk is central to learning and how the “primary task for speech is to symbolise reality: we symbolize reality in order to handle it” (p. 20) was an important aspect of the Growth model of English that dominated the N.S.W. 1971 and 1987 N.S.W. English syllabuses (Sawyer, 2002).

During the 1970s and 1980s the Whole Language Approach (or Language and Learning movement) developed out of the notion of English as ‘communication’ and the belief that writing is a process that results in a product that communicates to authentic audiences. This process incorporates drafting, editing, rewriting and final drafts instead of the concept of first copy as final copy (Stratta & Dixon, 1991). The Language and Learning movement was easily incorporated in the Growth paradigm as it reflected the belief that learning activities need to be ‘real’ and students need to be risk takers participating actively in decision making in the classroom. Graves (1983) contends that Growth model pedagogy involves interaction

between teacher and student based on trust and mutual respect where “The child must lead; the teacher intelligently react” (p.127). This view of pedagogy is sharply contrasted with the patriarchal role of the teacher in the Basic Skills and Cultural Heritage model.

Cross Curriculum/Language across the Curriculum/Language and Learning/Negotiating the Curriculum model (referred to here as the Language across the Curriculum model) has been closely linked with the Growth model. It incorporates the work of Barnes (1976), Britton (1970), Boomer (1982), Cambourne (1987) and Wilkinson (1971; 1975). The Language across the Curriculum paradigm advocates the integral nature of language and learning and the increasing importance of reflexive reflection and the metacognitive world of the learner. Language is viewed as an instrument for learning. Barnes’ (1976) research in classrooms highlighted the importance of recognising the language of the student and the danger of pedagogy that positioned the teacher as the transmitter knowledge about language and marginalised opportunities for students to ‘interpret’ language. The latter Barnes termed “World - receivers” (concerned with memorising and skills knowledge) and the latter he called “World-Makers” (who internalised the structures and principles) (p. 115). Barnes perceived language as the means of understanding what students learn and he coined the phrase “language through learning” to symbolise this belief.

Barnes’ (1976) views about language and learning echo those of Britton (1970) and Wilkinson (1975). These views melded with those expressed by Moffett (1968) and others that language was not the sole province of Subject English and Boomer’s concept (1982) of negotiating the curriculum with students. The work of Cambourne (1987), particularly relating to the importance in the English classroom of “real operations” as opposed to “dummy runs” (for example, real audiences), was incorporated into the Language across the Curriculum movement. These elements fused with the Growth model of English in the 1970s and are still very much in evidence in pedagogy and curriculum in N.S.W. classrooms today (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000). Critics of Language across the Curriculum paradigm reject the view that language is “naturally learned” because it is “culturally learned” (Thomson, 1998, pp.5-6). In contrast, advocates of The Language across the Curriculum model defend their view of language and learning against criticism by asserting that their view of English “involves a move to a higher level of theoretical generality – from emphasising language and language processes to emphasising learning and learning processes – and a recognition of the

central importance of passing on the secrets of the curriculum to students” (Thomson, 1998, p.6).

Critics of the Growth model included supporters of the Cultural Heritage movement. This school of thought rejected the notion of student’s own writings as ‘literature’ and perceived that ‘literature’ had been displaced from its former central status by ‘language’ which they claimed lowered standards (Allen, 1980; Homer, 1979; Whitehead, 1978). In a witty though harsh comment, David Homer (1987) criticised the Growth Model claiming it represented “growth...towards egocentricity” and that Subject English has broadened to the extent that it had become impossible to teach (p.9). Homer is critical of Dixon’s *Growth through English* (1975), arguing that it avoided defining English except in terms of ‘doing’. Opponents of the Growth model also include proponents of the Critical Literacy/Cultural Studies model of English. Hilary Janks (1998) criticised the Growth model as being romantic because it focussed on the individual and failed to deal with issues of social justice and equity. The Growth paradigm of English is still highly influential in today’s N.S.W. English classrooms (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000) and impacts on the identities that are constructed in those classrooms.

## **2.8 Circa 1975-2007**

During this period Subject English continued to be a “battlefield” (Michaels, 2000) as new paradigms of English emerged to challenge the Skills, Cultural Heritage and Growth models. Disputations also included claims of falling literacy standards by proponents of the Back to the Basics movement because ‘drilling’ and ‘grammar’ were being neglected (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994). Decline theorists (see, for example, Badcock, 1974; Overman, 1978) largely attribute the ‘decline’ in literacy standards to neglect of grammar in the English classroom and the teaching of ‘new English’ by the implementation of the all-English syllabuses since 1971. The negative impact of the Skills model allied with the Back to the Basics/Decline theorists on the contemporary landscape of English in N.S.W. is convincingly explored in the work of Davis and Watson (1990) and Marginson (1997). Both researchers stress the influence of the Australian Council for Educational Standards (ACES) in criticisms of ‘new English’ (Davis & Watson, 1990, p.162) exemplified in criticism of English syllabuses since 1971. Marginson (1997) compellingly contends that the media, ACES and conservative politicians have alleged literacy crises and the urgent need to return to what is in effect a Bentham model of English to address these ‘crises’:

*The Bulletin* and *The Australian* allowed themselves to function as the *Black Papers* of Australia...the standards debate was hardly a debate at all...it took the form of a binary interaction between the media as the 'prime definers', a select group of institutional heads, conservative leaders and politicians led by the cultural conservative educators in the Australian Council of Educational Standards...The primary definers used the media to legitimate their position, while the media used their statements to frame the debate" (p. 131).

Dixon's Growth model was also criticised by advocates of the Cultural Heritage model asserting the centrality of 'classic' literature had been usurped. A heated debate concerning the Socio-Linguistic/Constructionist/ Genre model of English (see, for example, Christie, Martin & Rothery, 1989; Kress 1989) emerged in the 1980s in N.S.W. Kress later distanced himself from the other genre theorists and argued that there were two divergent philosophies underpinning a Genre model of English (Richardson, 1998, p. 235). The Genre/Social Constructionists argued for the need to achieve equity through teaching students the dominant types of discourses. This relegates personal writing of the Growth model a low priority because "Allowing pupils freedom to write of their own experience only reinforces the success of those already dominant and does nothing to aid the disenfranchisement to improve their position" (Sawyer, 1998, p. 28).

The Social Power model (Genre) that emerged in the 1980s regards language as a fundamental resource for the social construction of experience and contends that equity or social power comes from the student's ability to read, write and utilise the powerful genres of society. Gunther Kress prefers the title "modes of writing" to that of genre. The Social Power model of English is based on a linguistic theory and "the act of using language" that focuses on the influence of context of the situation and the register specific to that context" (Christie, et al., 1989, p.4). Christie, Rothery and Martin (1989) stress that genre is an aspect of an individual's social theory and state that genres are not "historically fixed as they have evolved in such a way that they introduce of kind of stability into a culture at the same time being flexible enough to participate in social change" (p. 4).

Social Power theorists maintain that "Genres are semiotic systems - ways of 'getting things done' in a culture and thus genres are functional and goal orientated" (Christie, et al., 1989, pp.45-46). Therefore, they claim, children need to be taught the most powerful genres in order to succeed in society: "We argue that learning the genres of one's cultures is a necessary part of becoming a successful participant in the culture" (p.5). The focus of pedagogy in the Genrist model is on empowering the student through the teaching of those language modes

that are most powerful including those of commerce, industry, government and trade. Christie, Rothery and Martin in their article *Genres Make Meaning* (1989) advocate very explicit pedagogy in which the teacher will do “much of the work” in modelling and teaching specific genres. This stance raises the potential criticism that Genre teaching equates with a transmission style of pedagogy where the ‘expert’ teacher imparts the ‘knowledge’ (Bernstein, 1990) of ‘legitimate’ models of genres. However, genre theorists refute this claim, arguing that their pedagogy involves the student and teacher in the creation of a product. Proponents of this model, as discussed previously, are critical of the Growth model's attention to the individual rather than to the social context in which we live. Grey (1987) asserts that Growth pedagogy fails to address student equity issues by not teaching the powerful genres of society. A criticism of the Genre movement is that it has resulted in N.S.W. in the influence of “text-type pedagogy” (Sawyer, 2002, p. 283) where form becomes paramount. These concerns appear valid in light of the *K – 6 English Syllabus* (1998) and through its association with *Quality Teaching* policy (2003) and training and development initiatives.

Critics of the Social Power model, including Stratta and Dixon (1991) argue that definitions of genre and other elements of the model have emerged “piecemeal” (p. 4). They also declare that the Social Power model lacks a “systematic linguistic theory” (pp. 5-6) and that it fails to address “the fact that different listeners, or different readers may well construe the 'same' situation and linguistic signs in different ways, in other words, no writing theory worth serious consideration can go on ignoring the problems of readers' constructions” (p. 9). Dixon (1988) criticises the Social Power model because it ignores what writers “really do [which] is to select not a genre which will inform their composition in its entirety but a series of generic strategies... at different points of their writing” (p.77). This view is reinforced by Sawyer and Watson (1987) who found that “students acquired a new genre in the performance of it - in the processes of create meaning” (p. 5). It is therefore evident that genre is not ignored by Growth Model advocates, but it is seen as an aspect of the language repertoire an individual experiences through immersion, demonstration and engagement (Cambourne, 1987).

Another valid concern regarding genre theory is that it values a “hierarchy of genres” (Sawyer & Watson, 1987, p. 9) that may lead to children believing one kind of writing is more important than another. Furthermore, Sawyer and Watson (1987) are critical of the Genre paradigm of English because it ignores the fact that “learning is facilitated when children are

allowed to use their own language rather than be forced to conform to the particular conventions of a specific genre” (p.4).

Annette Patterson (2000) argues that the Social Power model of the 1980s was “one attempt to rearrange the terrain of English in Australia by reintroducing a focus on rhetoric by the genre theorists [this] was met generally with hostility in secondary schools” (p. 263).

Elements of the genre model feature in both the Stage 4 - 5 and Stage 6 Secondary English Syllabuses supporting Patterson’s belief that teachers mostly ignored the debate surrounding the Social Power Model and did what they have always done “mixed and matched from the available approaches, selecting the best of each and combining them in creative and stimulating ways in their classrooms...through what Mountford (1996) describes as ‘informed eclecticism’” (Patterson, 2000, p. 267).

The next notable controversy regarding defining English in Australia involved the emergence of the Cultural Studies or Critical Literacy model of Subject English that came to prominence in New South Wales in the 1990s. Supporters of this model emphasise the group/community over the individual and highlight the relationship between power and knowledge in society and “the social reproduction of injustice” (Sawyer, 1998, p. 28). Critical Literacy advocates contend that texts need to be critically taught as social constructs so that alternative voices and perspectives are no longer marginalised or silenced. This model also highlights the value-laden nature of texts and explicitly teaches how the composer is positioning the responder.

Cultural Studies originated in England and Critical Literacy originated in Australia but they are essentially the same model of English (Janks, 1998): “Cultural Studies emerged in a recognisable form in Birmingham, England, when the Centre for Contemporary Studies was founded in 1964. From the beginning, its approach showed the influence of the founder, Richard Hoggart, and two Marxist critics from the British New Left: Raymond Williams and EP Thompson” (p. 76). Cultural Studies had an eclectic beginning but extensively utilised “post-structuralist theory and incorporated the theories of Strauss, Althusser, Foucault, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Lacan, Derrida, Giroux and others” (Janks, 1998, p. 76). Social conscience is central to educational practice for Cultural Studies theorists (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993). The Cultural Studies/Critical Literacy English paradigm attempts to redress social inequalities experienced by groups who have been defined as ‘different’ and who have been subsequently disadvantaged and marginalised by organisations and structures in society. Cultural Studies/Critical Literacy is a stance that “emphasises the social and economic reproduction of

injustice. Linking knowledge with power, it aims to produce a ‘critical literacy’. In such a literacy, the unit of analysis is not the individual, but social, and the key concern is not with individual and collective empowerment.” (Sawyer, 1998, p. 28)

Supporters of the Critical Literacy/Cultural Studies paradigm argue that it “provides a spectrum of approaches to questions that are raised in today’s global, multiclassed, multiracial, and multicultural societies” (Munns & Rajan, 1995, p.2). Janks (1998) enunciates five attributes of a Critical Literacy/Cultural Studies model of pedagogy including: the widest definition of ‘culture’ and ‘text’; an incorporation of sociology, politics and semiotics; Marxist and Gramscian criticism “which is assumed to have a social purpose”; “cultural products” that are “global” in nature; and the “importance of specifics such as the historical moment, gender, class and race must be attended to in any discussion of the way cultural products are conceptualised and represented” (pp. 76-77).

Obvious implications of the Critical Literacy model of English include the rejection of the Cultural Heritage notion of the canonical text as texts are drawn from any aspect of culture. Thomson (1998) sees the Cultural Studies model as valuable because it places English “in a wider cultural context to incorporate a greatly enlarged definition of ‘literature’ and a greatly enlarged range of texts considered appropriate for students to read and write... [and includes] all of the sign systems of high, popular and mass culture that can be read for their social purposes” (p.13). Cultural Studies adherents value texts that are an integral part of peoples’ lives and this includes popular culture. They claim that popular culture provides a forum for exploring why texts are popular and for evaluating “the value (or lack of) in a text” and thereby address the pitfall of “binary categorisations that the cultural heritage believers promote” (Misson, 1998, p. 89).

Supporters of the Cultural Studies paradigm of English redefine ‘text’ not only in terms of ‘status’ but also in terms of pedagogy. Traditionally, texts have been taught to discover authorial intent and to “discover the author through the text, and tie down the play of textual meaning through reference to her/him” (Misson, 1998, p. 4). Critical literacy adherents, on the other hand, tend to favour the position that “There is nothing behind the text: there is only the ever-shifting surface of the text itself which we move across making what we will of the multiplicity of meaning available (Misson, 1998, p.147) Wendy Morgan (1998) asserts that a wider definition of ‘text’ is not sufficient in itself to ensure critical literacy is occurring in the English classroom and argues that pedagogical practice must reflect Cultural Literacy beliefs

about society and language and the values inherent in these texts. The Critical Literacy model “values different kinds of knowledge from that promoted by the literary and cultural establishment; and is interested in different kinds of outcomes for individuals and society from the shaping of adults with finely tuned aesthetic sensibilities or competencies in using language in ways that society presently rewards” (Morgan, 1998, p.154). The concept of ‘text’ replaces ‘literary heritage’ and pedagogy focuses upon “‘literatures’ and ‘languages’ instead of ‘Literature and Language’” (Janks, 1998, p.77)

Critics of the Critical Literacy model challenge assertions that it is the only model that empowers students, as well as, querying whether the critical literacy demands restrict the ability of one to read for enjoyment and the importance of students’ own writings (Sawyer, 1998). Sawyer (1998), whilst welcoming the interrogation “of economic-rationalist values of society” (p.3) also questions whether students will engage in texts “let alone take the detached kind of stance that a critical literacy demands” and whether the student articulation or voices “real or imagined” will be lost (p. 4). Other critics including Spurr (2002) criticise the model both for its content (texts chosen for political correctness) and for its increased dependence on literary theory.

A valid concern regarding the Critical Literacy model is its susceptibility to perpetuating injustice and inequality rather than addressing these social ills. While making explicit that texts are value – laden, culturally constructed and contextualised, the emphasis on empowering students through deconstructing and imitating the dominant genres runs the risk of restricting responses to a narrow range of ideas and forms that disempower and devalue the individuality of the student. A reductionist interpretation of the model is in danger of presenting English as a series of text – types that require adherence and mastery and encourages ‘transmission’ pedagogy (Barnes & Shemilt, 1974) that creates the role of the teacher as the repository of ‘knowledge’ who holds the key to critical literacies. The students’ own literature can also be devalued in the Critical Literacy model of English.

Jack Thomson (1998) proposed a model of English provisionally titled the Rhetorical/Ethical model that would combine different elements of a variety of English paradigms. These would include: aspects of the Growth paradigm, Andrews’ (1994) rhetorics of a culture, the social constructedness of texts, and a recognition that some texts are ‘linguistically, stylistically, aesthetically, psychologically and /or philosophically more significant than others’ (p. 14). Thomson (1998) argues that Australia needs a model of

English that “supports egalitarianism and ethical responsibility rather than social division and competitive managerialism” because of the widening gap between rich and poor (p. 15).

Patterson (2000) questions the validity of models of English and challenges assumptions that English models exist. She criticises reports such as the *Martin Report* (1980), *The Christie Report* (1991) and in *The Cox Report* (1989) for presenting models of English as unproblematic. Patterson (2000) claims that a models approach “tucks English too neatly into historical periods by suggesting, for instance, that in the 1920s skills dominated English, while in the 1940s, heritage or the canon dominated, and then in the 1960s and 1970s the New English emerged, followed by cultural studies in the 1980s and 1990s as the preferred model” (p. 265). Patterson (2000) also rejects the assertion that English emerged from a battle with the Classics and simultaneously a class struggle as propounded by Eagleton (1991), Shayer (1972) and Watson (1991). Patterson also dismisses Dixon’s theory (1975) regarding the antecedents of English, largely on the grounds of her interpretation of the Growth model as “a set of practices arranged around the figure of ‘the reader of literature,’ a figure who developed out of the desire of ordinary people to derive pleasure and self-understanding through literary study” (p. 250). Instead, Patterson argues that English theory needs to be viewed in “terms of its stated preoccupations with more fundamental themes such as aesthetics, ethics and rhetoric with “different ones dominant at different historical times” (p. 266). These have, she asserts, “emphasised the attainment of techniques related to ‘person formation’ or ‘development’ – expressed in terms such as ‘sensitivity’, ‘appreciation’, ‘personal growth’ and ‘critical consciousness’- implying a high degree of personal autonomy and freedom for the learner”(p. 238). Patterson applies Foucault’s philosophical-historical approach (1981) to examine Subject English. She asserts that the primary role of English historically and contemporarily is to create children with moral and social values. Patterson (2000) presents a cogent argument that there were key pedagogical differences between English and other subjects as “it was (and is) a subject where students learn to relate to themselves, to others and to the world in particular ways” (p. 238) and where the goals and techniques of English “are arranged around the cultivation of the personality of the child, and around the construction of conduct befitting the citizen of the modern state” (p. 240). A view of Subject English in Patterson’s schema focuses on “what it is to be human” (Patterson, 2000, p. 266).

Patterson (2000) raises valid concerns about the constructed nature of models of English – they are more nebulous than some scholars assert. However, it is apparent from this investigation of the history of English in New South Wales that there is clear evidence of different modes of thinking about and defining Subject English that warrant conceptualising in models in order to explore “a quicksilver among metals” (Britton in Dixon, 1975, p. 1). Patterson is convincing in her argument in defining English in terms of aesthetics, ethics and rhetoric, however, elements and models of English are not mutually exclusive and investigation into the role of each in various paradigms of English would offer rewarding insights.

## **Recent History of N.S.W. Years 7 - 10 Syllabuses**

### **2.9 1971 English Syllabus for Forms 1 – 1V**

Scholars (see, for instance, Christie, 1991; Little, 1989; Sawyer, 2002) agree that the 1971 English syllabus for twelve to sixteen year olds, implemented between 1971 and 1986, was a departure from previous ones primarily because of the influence of Dixon (1975), the Dartmouth conference and the Personal Growth theorists. Both Christie (1991) and Sawyer (2002) contend that the “growth model was transferred more or less wholesale into Australia [from Britain]” (Sawyer, 2002, p. 271). Brock (1983) perceives the 1971 N.S.W. English Syllabus positively largely because it provided a conduit for implementing Dixon’s revolutionary ideas. Brock also suggests that the Syllabus was important because it affirmed the professional integrity of teachers in programming contextually relevant lessons and because it signaled a move away from behaviourism. However, he argues that the 1971 English Syllabus was only partly implemented due to lack of support (Brock, 1983, pp. 30-31). Sawyer (2002) asserts that ‘new English’ was given “official endorsement through Syllabuses” and “Such endorsement was followed by the appointment of state and regional consultants, who were potent change agents” (p. 41). Sawyer notes the influence of the English Teachers Association (ETA) and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) in promulgating the ideas of Dartmouth conference and the conceptualisation of Subject English as process and not only as content. Watson (1994) also emphasises the influence of Dixon (1975) and other Growth theorists on the 1971 syllabus, arguing persuasively that it revolutionised English teaching and challenged previous stratifications of English that had focussed teaching on grammar, examinations and textbooks.

Graham Little, Chair of the 1971 Syllabus Committee, was influenced by Dixon and promoted the Growth model of English (Little, 1998). Little and co-authors of the syllabus emphasised the role of English in promoting democratic ideals in classrooms where the values of Matthew Arnold were evidenced in discussions where “people might agree to differ while recognising that others have a right to different views” (Little, 1998, p. x). This syllabus defined English also in terms of the questions asked about texts “Who is saying what to whom? When, where, why and how? With what effects?” (Little, 1998, p. x).

However, not all scholars view the influence of the Growth model and Dixon (1975) on the 1971 N.S.W. English Syllabus in a positive light. Christie et al. (1991) decry the lost opportunity to study language as rhetoric and argue that the 1971 N.S.W. English Syllabus’ preoccupation with the Growth model resulted in the rejection of language and the rhetorical aspects of English. Sawyer (2002) effectively counters this argument:

Probably the most important evidence on the issue of Christie’s claims about a lack of rhetorical perspective is in Little’s “WH” – schema (“WHO says WHAT to WHOM? WHY? HOW? With WHAT EFFECTS” [N.S.W. Secondary School Board, 1971 p. 5] which echoed Moffett’s formulations of the totality of discourse and the totality of concerns of English. A syllabus which aims at defining English in those terms would seem to be placing rhetoric-in-action at the centre of its concerns” (p. 273).

The schema of the N.S.W. 1971 English Syllabus was predicated on notions of the inter-relatedness of audience, purpose and meaning in context and on the belief of the centrality of language. Sawyer (2002) reinforces the central role of language (in Dixon’s terms) in the English Syllabus (1971) by highlighting the relationship between language and literary study. The 1971 English Syllabus’ focus on the language of the student, in Dixon’s terms, “the personal culture” (1967, p.3) of students, urged teaches to “lead pupils to recognise ‘the contribution of (language) to ... total meaning and value’ [N.S.W. Secondary Schools Board, 1971:13]” (pp. 273-274). Sawyer argues convincingly that the 1971 and 1987 English syllabuses were “steeped in rhetoric” and “the inter-relationship of audience, purpose and meaning)” (p. 271). Sawyer’s contention is supported explicitly in the following schema that featured in both the 1971 and 1987 N.S.W. English syllabuses.

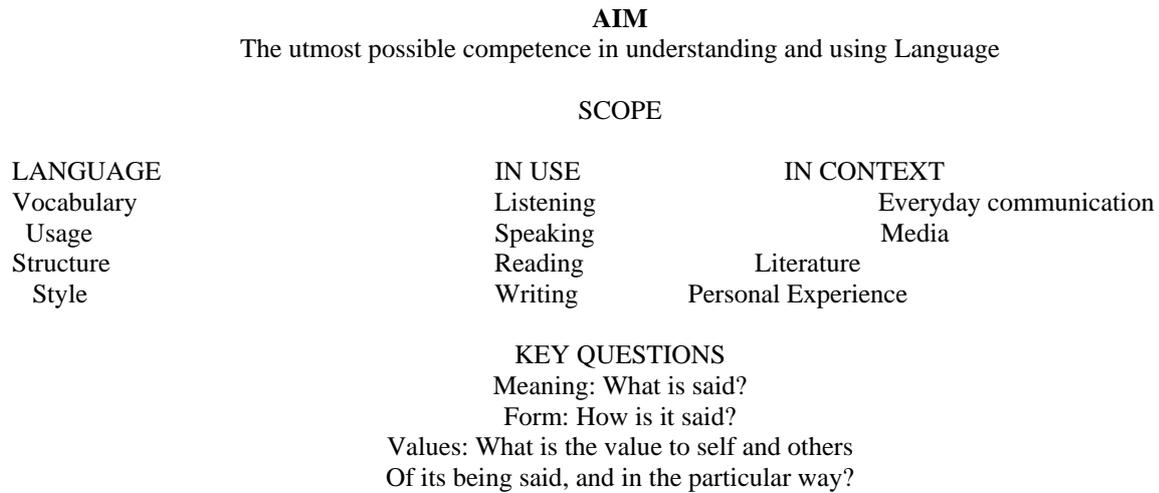


Figure 1 Schema of English underpinning the 1971 and 1987 English syllabuses (Little, 1998, p. ix)

### 2.10 English Syllabus Years 7 - 10 (1987)

The 1987 English syllabus was almost identical to the 1971 English syllabus. The rationale of the syllabus highlights the continuing influence of the Growth model of English:

A1 This syllabus is based on the following principles:

1. Growth in language is integral to the student's personal growth as a thinking, feeling person.
2. It is mainly through language that human beings explore their public and private worlds, organise their experience and form their values.
3. Language is best developed by having all students engage in an abundance of purposeful language activities that are appropriate to their needs, interests and capacities.
4. The contexts in which students should engage in language learning activities are everyday communication and personal expression, both formal and informal, literature and the mass media.
5. While students do learn in other ways, learning for the most part occurs as students use language, as they talk, listen, read, write, observe and reflect upon the processes of their own learning. Hence English is central to the achievement of the aims of the total curriculum (English Syllabus, Board of Secondary Education N.S.W., 1987, p.5)

The 1987 English Syllabus Years 7-10 continued to place the student at the centre of the English curriculum. This is evident in statements that the English syllabus was "student-centered" (p. 1) and "The aim of the English 7 - 10 is to enable students to strive towards personal excellence in using language" (p.11). The Language across the curriculum movement was influential in the syllabus as is apparent in the focus on the learning process, process-writing in both spectator and participant roles (Britton 1970), reader response theory,

language in use, a wide definition of literature (including student work and popular culture) and a rejection of the dominance of testing underlie the English Syllabi (1971 and 1987).

The Back to the Basic/Skills model proponents criticised the 1987 English syllabus arguing that the ‘basics’ were not included in the syllabus and therefore would not be taught.

Examination of the 1987 English syllabus indicates that this is incorrect: “Teaching particular grammatical concepts can improve students’ writings if undertaken in context and at time of need [but] Teaching an isolated course in grammar does not necessarily improve students’ ability to write’ (p. 41) More poignantly perhaps this point is made in the Bruce Dawe poem that is symbolically placed at the start of the syllabus document:

I have to be careful with my boy,  
That I don’t crumple his immediate-delivery-genuine-fold-up-and-extensible world into  
Correct English forever, petrify its wonder  
With a stone gaze of grammar (*English Syllabus Years 7 - 10, 1987*)

This 1987 English syllabus was also criticised by supporters of the Heritage model of English who expressed concerns regarding the marginalising of literature; literature narrowly defined often in terms of the ‘great canon’. The latter is inaccurate as the teaching of literature is explicitly referred to in the English Years 7 - 10 (1987) syllabus. Short story, novel, poetry, non-fiction, drama and film, as well as, student literature are genres that require teaching according to this English syllabus. Thus, the syllabus provided ample opportunity for the ‘classics’ to be explored, however, the emphasis on student literature and culture also required teachers to include student enjoyment and engagement as a priority in their teaching. This contrasted with the focus on literary criticism in the English syllabuses prior to those of 1971 and 1987.

### **2.11 English Syllabus Years 7 - 10 (2003) available at [www.nswboardofstudies](http://www.nswboardofstudies)**

Implementation of the *English Syllabus Years 7 - 10* (2003) commenced in 2004. The rationale of this current syllabus clearly expresses the significance of Subject English in the N.S.W. curriculum and in Australian society: “Skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students in N.S.W. Developing proficiency in English enables student to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and active participants in Australian society” (p.7).

The syllabus explicitly acknowledges the role of models of English in constructing teacher and student identities in the English classroom: “The syllabus enables teachers to draw on the

methods of different theoretical perspectives and models for the teaching of English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels” (p.7). A report commissioned by the New South Wales Board of Studies entitled *Reviewing English in Years 7 - 10* by Sawyer and McFarlane (2000) informed the writing of the syllabus. The report reviewed international and national syllabuses and writings focussing on the period 1995 – 2000. The existence of models in the consciousness of English teachers is testified to by the work of Sawyer and McFarlane (2000) who assert the importance of approaches to teaching and curriculum design that “allow teachers to make conscious and reflective choices between aspects of models suitable to the kinds of learning intended” (p. 41).

Sawyer and McFarlane (2000) state that “[although] the dominant paradigm of the subject in terms of curriculum discussion in the 1990s, especially in this country, has undoubtedly been critical literacy” (p. 3) an eclectic paradigm of English is needed to “encompass emerging as well as currently dominant paradigms, while retaining some valuable continuity with “growth” and with both the current K – 6 and Stage 6 English Syllabuses in N.S.W.” (p. 4). Such an approach would involve programs in English that “revolve around questions of language as social practice in different situations and allow for an understanding of genre as something dynamic to be adapted to different social contexts” (p. 4). An eclectic model of English would also, according to the report, respond to the need for Subject English to be grounded in the ‘fluidity’ of the context of each lesson and allow for pedagogical choices in:

The world in which teachers operate differs from class to class and, indeed, from day to day, let alone from school to school. While pragmatic “mixing” may conjure up images of anti – intellectualism and contradiction, context is critical in teaching” (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000, p. 4).

The recommendations from this report are evidenced in the *English Years 7 - 10 2003* syllabus. The syllabus advocates: a wide range of texts selected from a range of media; a balance between balance between responding (critical analysis of language) and composing (creative use of language); integration of the modes of English (reading writing, speaking, listening, viewing and representing); awareness that texts are constructed with a “view to achieving a desired result with a particular audience” (p.11); the significance of context, and the importance of multi-literacies. The syllabus also propounds a “nuanced and complex understanding of genre that brings together a range of theories [that] can be used to help students [to] read and write flexibly, with an eye to the rhetorical function of discourse but without becoming fixed in a single set of formal conventions,” (p. 5).

The *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus (2003)* promotes a constructivist approach to learning where reflective, metacognitive learners are at the centre of the process:

Middle years of schooling indicate that students learn at different rates and in different ways. Middle years students can be effectively engaged through and English curriculum, which allows students to discover, construct and incorporate new knowledge, skills and understanding from the basis of their current understanding. Learning and the acquisition of strategies for learning need to occur in a context of high expectations” (Sawyer & McFarlane, 2000, p. 7).

The rationale for *English Years 7 - 10 (2003)* states “Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world, and is the primary means by which we relate to others” (p. 7). The authors clearly believe that Subject English is crucial in the development of the whole child and enabling them to develop “a system of personal values based on students’ understanding of moral, ethical and spiritual matters and gives expression to their hopes and ideals” (p. 7). Inclusivity is a key concept of the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* because English is viewed as a privileged subject with a very significant role to play in the development of effective Australian identities. These identities, it is asserted in the syllabus, will find personal fulfilment as “independent learners” who “work with each other” and who “reflect on their learning” (p. 7).

The *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus (2003)* is more prescriptive than its immediate antecedents. It stipulates a minimum number of fiction, poetry, film, or film on DVD or video, non-fiction and drama to be undertaken at stage 4 (years 7 and 8) and stage 5 (years 9 and 10). Teachers are also required to study spoken, print, visual and media/multi media texts (internet, CD - ROMS/internet, newspaper, television and radio), as well as, Australian literature (including Aboriginal), literature from different times and countries, picture books, cultural heritage and popular and youth cultures; workday and everyday texts and a range of social, gender and cultural perspectives. In stage 5 studying Shakespeare is also compulsory. Viewing and representing joint speaking, reading, writing and listening as language modes of English in the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus (2003)*. The syllabus, to a much greater extent than previous English syllabuses “is informed by contemporary research about how people learn and about how learning outcomes can be enhanced by teaching practice” (N.S.W., BOS, *A Guide to the New Years 7 - 10 Syllabus*, 2004, p. 1) and links objectives, outcomes and content.

The milieu of this study has been presented through a depiction of the history of Subject English, paradigms or models of English, and the three most recent New South Wales English

syllabuses in this chapter. The following chapter (Chapter 3) presents of review of the relevant literature pertaining to this qualitative investigation including theories of student and teacher identity construction.

## **Review of the Literature**

## Chapter 3

### Identity

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature relevant to the factors implicated in student identity construction and teacher identity construction. An examination of the most influential schools of thought (Social/Cultural Reproduction, Resistance Theory, Desire Theory and hybrid theories) forms the framework (grounded theory) for this study's analysis of the 'self(s)' (both teacher and student) constructed at Heartbreak high in English 7 - 10 classrooms.

Teacher identity has frequently been presented in the literature (see, for instance, Lingard, et al., 1998; Ramsey, 2000; Rowe, 2003) as unproblematic, as incorporating a set of identifiable pedagogical attributes, and in relatively simplistic dichotomies (effective/ineffective, good/bad). A persuasive alternative definition of teacher identity is also reviewed in this chapter. This body of work (see, for example, Agne, 1999; Felman, 1997, Hamachek, 1997) values a multifaceted view of teacher identity that incorporates personal and professional elements, and defines pedagogy as a complex phenomenon based on desires. This school of thought (advocated predominantly but not exclusively by Desire theorists) supports a very different notion of student identity from the one that underpins currently influential research epitomized by N.S.W. Department and Training policies such as *Quality Teaching* (2003) which believe students have little agency in comparison to the teacher. This alternative view imbues students with considerable agency in creating identity(s) based on desire(s) in the teacher-student dyad.

#### 3.2 Defining Identity

Researchers have employed a multitude of definitions of 'identity'. The following dimensions of identity inform this ethnographic study. A generally accepted definition of identity is encapsulated by Ehle (1989) who sees identity as: "how one sees oneself (self-concept), how one evaluates himself (sic) (self-esteem), how one desires to be (self-ideal), and how assured one is at meeting life (self-confidence)" (p. 46). To Epstein (1978) identity "represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his (sic) various statuses and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self" (p.101).

The personal aspect of teaching ('self') has been emphasised by various researchers of teacher identity construction who see the professional and personal as inseparable (see, for example,

Agne, 1999; Borich, 1999; Lipka & Brinthaupt 1999). It includes self-concept/esteem, self-fulfilment and self-efficacy (Tusin, 1999). Holland (1975) conceptualises teacher identity formation in terms of ‘personality types’ and preferences for certain environments. Agne (1999) sees identity construction in terms of fear and argues for consideration of human imperfections, whereas, Atkinson (1990), Bernstein (1996) and McLean (1999) suggest the centrality of ‘narratives’ in identity. Bernstein (1996) utilises the terms ‘retrospective’ and ‘prospective’ identities. Retrospective identities utilise past narratives as models with which to judge current and future conduct, and prospective identities focus on the future. Bernstein’s concept (1996) of narratives echoes Hodkinson (1994)’s notion of “hidden injuries” that suggests that student identity is influenced by past negative experiences of schooling. Student and teacher narratives provide fertile ground for research into the construction of teacher identities, and into the influence of teachers and other influences and factors on the creation of student identities in English Years 7 - 10 classrooms at Heartbreak High.

### **Student Identity Construction**

Student identity construction has been dominated by research about disaffected students and by theories of Social/Cultural Reproduction, Resistance, Critical, and more recently, Desire Theory. Dissent, however, is evident within each of these broad schools of thought (McFadden, 1992). Some theorists have blended aspects of these theories in order to explore the nature and role of identity construction in the classroom (see, for instance, McFadden, 2000; McRobbie, 1991; Walker 1993).

#### **3.3 Social/Cultural Reproduction and Student Identity Construction**

Social/Cultural Reproduction Theory (see, for example, Althuser, 1971; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976) posits that schools are responsible for the transmission and legitimisation of the social/cultural knowledge, values and processes of the dominant middle class culture thereby alienating and marginalising certain groups and perpetuating inequalities in sites such as the classroom.

Dissent within the Social/Cultural Reproduction school of thought stems from two major sources. Firstly Social/Cultural Reproduction advocates including Bowles and Gintis (1976) focus on the structures of schools ignoring “Issues such as what is taught, and the concrete experience of children and teachers in schools becomes less important than rates of return to schooling or, more radically, the reproduction of the division of labour” (Weiss, 1982, p.

486). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), on the other hand, reject Bowles' and Gintis' (1976) notion that schools directly reproduce oppressive capitalistic inequalities, in favour of a view that recognises different cultures exist in the classroom. These cultures can be ignored or devalued thereby denying children the right to "Become somebody" (Wexler, 1992, p. 7). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) are Social/Cultural Reproductionists who believe that students who resist or reject the dominant pedagogy and curriculum are those whose culture(s) are not reflected in the dominant capitalistic society. Critics of Social/Cultural Reproduction Theory (see, for instance, McFadden, 1992; Weiss, 1982) suggest that proponents fail to recognise the ability of students to create 'successful' or empowered identities in the classroom or to effect change in society.

### **3.3.1 Resistance Theory and Student Identity Construction**

Resistance Theory evolved in the 1980s, as a reaction against Social/Cultural Reproduction Theory challenging the latter's views:

[if] 'reproduction' occurs it is not at all straightforward, and that students in fact resist the demands, pressures and offers of schools. It is problematic whether the result of this resistance is that they escape from the social structures and cultural patterns in which they are presently located, or whether despite or even because of their resistance to school finish up in the same location (McFadden & Walker, 1994, p.18).

Resistance Theorists such as Willis (1977, 1981, 1983, 1997) argue that students reject what and how they are taught because they are denied autonomy by the dominant economic culture of the school. Students reflect this devaluing of their identity in resistance and eventual rejection of schools and schooling. Willis (1997) believes that resistance is an on-going process that eventually leads to a moment of realisation when the student consciously and wholeheartedly rejects the dominant culture thereby achieving freedom and power. The latter would appear to be a fleeting victory because it only acts to reinforce the 'lads' existing class position (McFadden, 1992; Munns, et al., 1998).

Resistance Theory neglects the role and power of the student in identity construction by separating structure and agency (Giddens, 1979; Walker, 1986). Some Resistance Theorists have rightly been criticised for romanticising working class culture and ignoring the role of sub/cultures including race, gender and peer in forming identities in the classroom (McFadden, 1992; McFadden & Walker, 1994; Walker, 1993). Walker (1993) found student subculture/s exerted considerable influence on the identities young people constructed in the

classroom. He discovered that many young people “are unable to take responsibility for their thoughts and behaviour, or decide just to go along with ‘what everyone else does’ (p. 1). Walker suggests that the influence of the subcultures frequently goes unacknowledged by young people, often operating below the level of consciousness and placing other cultures (for example, teacher and family) in oppositional roles that young people judge to have little value. Walker also found that microcultures (small group support units lead by a facilitator and a program of team building initiatives and values) effectively countered the negative peer culture attitudes and assisted students to create successful student identities.

Willis (1977) assumes, like Social/Cultural Reproductionists, that teachers are a homogenous monoculture busily inculcating dominant capitalistic values and retaining class inequalities. Studies, for example, Pizarro (1996), Wexler (1992) and Walker (1986), suggest that class is not the over-riding factor influencing identity construction, nor in determining student engagement or disengagement in learning. Walker (1988) found that any class culture impact on student identity construction was not as ‘clear cut’ as mainstream Resistance Theory suggests. Walker (1988) found that peer subcultures and contextual factors play an important part in identity creation and students “affected each other’s development sometimes powerfully” (Walker, 1988, p.xii).

The bulk of research into identity construction has assumed that resistance is negative and disempowering. Foucault (1997), on the other hand, maintains that resistance can be construed as empowering because it provides individuals or groups with space to exercise freedom and negotiation. Foucault argues that “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality” (p.194). Watkins (1999) employs Foucault’s concept of “spaces” in her work on ‘reading’ student agency in the learning process and exploring notions of ‘spaces’ in schools. Giddens (1979) and Freire (1987) (whose work will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter) also suggest that there are ‘safe places’ within schools. Freire sees spaces as enabling students to create identity(s), which provide the means for students to change social systems or cultures.

### **3.3.2 Alternatives to Reproduction and Resistance Theories and Student Identity Construction**

Wexler (1992) presents a theory of student identity as a “structured narrative [of] social life in three schools [that is] neither truth nor fiction, but a composition” (p.2) as an alternative

viewpoint to that presented by Resistance and Reproduction Theorists. However, his theory contains both Resistance and Social/Cultural Reproduction elements. Wexler found that students all have the common goal: “They wanted to be somebody, a real and presentable self, and one anchored in the verifying eyes of the friends whom they came to school to meet” (p. 7).

In his research, Wexler (1992) argues “becoming somebody was an organisationally patterned process of production that used cultural resources deeply ingrained in pervasive societal structures of inequality and difference” (p.7). He believes that attaining an identity is a process or journey to selfhood attained through school interactions with images that are reciprocally defined by and defining of friends, teachers and parents. “These images of self are stereotypes - almost caricatured types of social identities. But students and teachers work with them and produce them in the course of their interactions” (Wexler, 1992, p.9).

Wexler argues that the origin of these identities is found in the school and by the students themselves through highly structured practices that include the central image of the school, procedures, physical organization, curriculum, psychological services, and student language, speech, dress and actions (Wexler, 1992, 90). The school itself is stratified and divided along class lines and forces students into being 'winners' or 'losers'; 'good' or 'evil' (p 10). Students, Wexler maintains, contribute to their own identity by what they do when resisting the school. The key factor in resistance, according to Wexler’s research, is the ‘soullessness’ of schools that he describes as the “vortex of a central social dynamic of 'emptying' [in which] social relation itself is being emptied, and identity processes are class specific compensatory efforts made against and in the ambit of a central lack” (p.109). Wexler asserts that ‘social emptying’ in schools is a reflection of other institutions including the family and leads to the construction of a “compensatory identity” (Wexler, 1992, p.109).

It is therefore evident that for Wexler identity formation is a complex and fluid process that students consciously and unconsciously undertake when experiencing the reproduction of the dominant culture of the classroom, one that the student often chooses to resist. His account is highly dependent on social interaction but ironically student identity construction is also about creating ‘compensatory’ identities to fill a void in which students feel uncared for and unloved. Students, Wexler argues, yearn for a sense of belonging in the school that they experience if the school has a ‘soul’ and if teachers care. Wexler (1992) claims the role of the teacher is an over – riding factor in student identity formation but Wexler fails to

acknowledge how teachers construct and perceive their identities and how this in turn affects student identity construction.

Jones (1989), in her investigations into resistance and student identity, endows students with a significant sense of agency in the pedagogic encounter and challenges traditional views that assert teachers create and control pedagogy, teaching and learning in the classroom. Jones (1989) sees students as having the power to construct themselves as resistant or engaging learners who exert considerable influence in the classroom through behaviour including what they will or will not do and the timing of learning. Jones advocates pedagogy that requires “an understanding of the structured, collective cultural interpretations of the pupils” (p. 22) because teachers do not “solely control the classroom” (McFadden, & Munns, 2000). Jones also raises the issue of students’ perceptions of ideal teacher identity that has been neglected in examinations of identity construction. According to Jones, students appear to resist learning because of their perception of what does or doesn’t constitute legitimate teaching. This finding is supported by other research including that of Bernstein (1990) and McFadden and Munns (2000).

There appears to be a divide amongst researchers regarding agency and power in student and teacher identity construction. The bulk of the literature reviewed (see, for instance, Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Denzin, 1984; Juhasz, 1992) assert the dominant role of the teacher in the formation of engaged or disengaged students - those embracing or resisting learning. However, the work of Jones (1989) and Walker (1993) suggests that this process is more complex and that students have considerable agency in shaping their classroom identities. In addition there appears to be little awareness in the literature reviewed of the influence of the student on teacher identity construction and this is an area where this ethnographic study may make a useful contribution.

Student identity construction theories of Resistance and Social/Cultural Reproduction have arguably ignored the ‘psychological’ and ‘emotional’ dimensions of Identity in their constructs. McFadden and Walker (1993) found that students were not resisting the dominant culture of the school but were “working out solutions to social and personal problems encountered in their lives” (p. 19). The researchers also reported that disaffected school students experienced a sense of insecurity, instability and personal ‘fracture’. This finding supports the position of Furlong (1991) who asserts that any “reconstruction of a sociological perspective on deviance must be at a psychological and particularly at an emotional

level”(1991, p.295). Thus, the personal and subjective (the ‘self’) is integral to the identities constructed and require consideration in this examination of student identity construction.

The research of Furlong (1991) highlights the importance of the ‘self’ in student identity construction. He believes that previous sociological models have incorrectly classified young people as “rational and knowing individuals [who] logically and rationally appraise the situation they are in and then devise an appropriate strategy whether that be deviance or conformity” (p. 295). Furlong states that once students have experienced the highly emotionally charged experience of schooling “they are expected to construct themselves both objectively and subjectively in ways made available through the school” (p. 298). In other words, students are expected to comprehend and conform to the dominant culture of the school that objectifies them and ignores the ‘self’. Furlong suggests the construct of ‘sociology of emotion’ as a means of examining if ‘hidden injuries’ are the basis for student resistance at the school site (p. 298). These injuries, Furlong convincingly claims, result in “most children living with these ‘injuries’ [and] repress[ing] the emotion and carry[ing] on with the business of schooling” (p. 305). Furlong’s notion of ‘hidden injuries’ is an area that will be investigated in this case study in order to explore its role in identity construction in the English classroom.

### **3.3.3 Pedagogy and Student Identity Construction**

There is general agreement that pedagogy impacts on student identity construction (Foley, 1991; McFadden, 1995a; Meyenn, 1980) but researchers differ as to whether the effect is emancipatory or responsible for reproducing inequities. Researchers into student identity are also polarised by their conceptualisation of pedagogy. For example, Furlong (1991) presents a deficit model of pedagogy by positioning the teacher as exceedingly powerful and potentially able to damage students throughout their lives via “hidden injuries”. Hodkinson (1994), on the other hand, emphasises the positive role of teachers whom he sees as the means of empowering students and changing cultures. Wexler (1992), in his multifaceted model of student identity construction, claims that the “interaction between teacher and student is the quintessential social relation” and if this emotional commitment is absent then students will choose a subculture identity because “nobody cares” (p.35). Pedagogy and teacher identity construction will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **3.3.4 Teacher Identity through student eyes**

At the national level teacher identity has been researched extensively from the perspective of students. Slade and Trent (2000), for example, asked students to define 'good' teachers. Students reported that good teachers were fair; cared and encouraged them; were enthusiastic about what they taught and wanted to share in their enjoyment of learning (as cited in Ramsey, 2000, p.12). Interestingly, Slade and Trent (2000) found that males emphasised teacher personality (interest and ability to create respectful relationships in a friendly, democratic, emancipatory environment) as the distinguishing factor separating 'good' and 'bad' teachers. A 'bad' teacher is summed up as being uninterested, out-of-date and authoritarian. 'Good' teachers, on the other hand, are ones who "professionally and personally, are taking risks by listening, responding, respecting, trusting and valuing their students more than the rules, the policies, the legal precedents, their training, careers, the reputation of the school, and in some cases, small but vocal groups of parents" (p.12). Slade and Trent conclude that 'good' teachers: "display a genuine, practical commitment to the democratization and liberalization of the young" (Slade & Trent, 2000, p.12) thereby promoting positive student identities and a sense of equity.

### **3.3.5 Critical/ Desire Theory and Student Identity Construction**

Critical Pedagogues suggest that identity formation can only be understood in terms of the wider social/cultural contexts. Critical Pedagogy amalgamates Psychoanalytic Theory, particularly the work of Lacan (1990) and Desire Theory, with the work of Freire (1972, 1975). Freire is concerned with social justice and issues of equity and explores ways in which this can be achieved through education. Freire utilises the term 'dialogue' in which teacher and student work together in mutual respect in contrast with what he perceives to be traditional, capitalist education in which the educator deposits knowledge in the student. Freire's model sees student identity as a liberating force.

Dissent within Critical Pedagogy has its roots in the debates about the degree of agency that students have, the nature of desire in the learning process, and the language used to describe teacher/student relationship. For example, Felman (1997), Finke (1997) and Gallop (1997) utilise very explicit sexual imagery in asserting the dominant role of the teacher in student identity construction. This approach "tends to simply sexualise desire...[and] to obscure more productive interpretations of its role in learning which, while involving affect and stimulation, is not simply sexual" (Watkins, 1999). Misson (2002), Mackward (1997) and others utilise

Critical Literacy Theory to explore student identity. Misson (2003) argues that identity is all about embedded desires and suggests that students can be ‘read’ like texts and when students resist learning it is because it does not fulfil a desire within the student. Mackward (1997) also sees students as ones who continually construct themselves as texts, but emphasises the cultural/social world which they inhabit – one in which the dominant culture can disempower young people if they are not overtly taught to ‘read’ cultural texts, for example, racism. Mackward suggests the inseparability of the social world, texts and desire and the concept of identity formations, reformations and transformations claiming: “Texts teach us how” to read them, in doing so they construct who we are as readers; texts desire and construct us as we desire and construct them (Mackward, 1997, pp.167-168).

Critical/Transformative/Radical Theory has been accused of romanticising class culture (McFadden, 1992), sexualising identity (Watkins, 1999), relying too heavily on tertiary research (Watkins, 1999) and demonising the role of teachers (see for example, the work of Gallop, 1997). These criticisms appear valid and there is some merit in the claim that this paradigm can ignore the social constructedness of learning and education if an essentialist view of desire is applied (Watkins, 1999).

### **3.3.6 Structure, Agency and Efficacy and Student Identity Construction**

Assumptions about agency and power are inherent in models of student identity. As previously mentioned, Social Reproduction supporters broadly speaking, imbue students with little power in constructing their identity in the classroom. Students are viewed as passive beings that have little say in what and how they learn. Indeed, the argument goes, students can be alienated or marginalised if their cultural identity is not legitimised by the dominant culture/s in the classroom (Althuser, 1971; Bernstein, 1990; Giddens, 1979). This view is opposed by ‘hard line’ Resistance theorists like Willis (1977) who claim that emancipation, empowerment and agency can be seen in working class kids’ ‘moment’ of rejection of the dominant culture of the school and classroom (Weiss, 1982). The irony of this situation has been pointed out by McFadden (1992) by rejecting middle class values and the educational means to advance themselves in society, the ‘lads’ in Willis’ study doom themselves to living ‘working class’ lives thereby perpetuating inequities in education. Willis (1997), however, appears to significantly limit student agency almost as much as the Social/Reproduction theorists – the dominant middleclass/capitalist culture prevents the empowerment of the working class ‘lads’.

Furlong (1991) argues that teachers can use their power in fundamental ways - simultaneously demanding students become themselves whilst conforming to the school's dominant values and beliefs. The term 'abilitied' is utilised by Furlong (1991) in his theory of student identity to explain the legitimising of differences (class, gender and race) among students. He claims "for all of us the view our teachers had of our ability has become part of our subjective view of ourselves" (p. 299). The production of ability is the process whereby the values of education, knowledge, behaviour and aspirations of the future are enshrined and according to Furlong, these are of white, middle class society (p. 301). These values are promulgated through curriculum (what is taught), pedagogy (how it is taught) and evaluation (how it is valued). Some students, Furlong claims, negotiate the production of ability, the production of occupational identity and certain values of the school and "come to feel valued, have a sense of achievement and inclusion" (p. 304) but those who do not "can feel excluded, devalued, and a sense of loss" (p. 304). The case study of Heartbreak High will explore whether the process of being 'abilitied' in Furlong's terms is occurring in the student identities constructed in years 7 – 10 English classrooms.

Some scholars believe the 'self' is not passive as Cultural/Social Reproductionists and some Resistance Theorists suggest. Giddens (1984) and Hodkinson (1994) believe the constructing of identity involves "dynamic interaction between the individual and social systems "[where] no matter how local their specific contexts of action; individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications" (Hodkinson, 1994, p. 493). Walker (1993) perceives that dynamic interactions form the 'self(s)' but he highlights the influence of students have their own subcultures and countercultures in student identity construction. In this process, Walker argues persuasively, students consciously or unconsciously structure their identity against the backdrop of dominant culture(s). Thus, young people have the potential to choose "a self that will be satisfying to themselves and more or less satisfactory to the society in which they live" (Hodkinson, 1994, p.492).

Hodkinson (1994) presents a model that places agency at its centre. The model has three integrated and overlapping dimensions: "Personal effectiveness, critical autonomy and community" (p. 498). Personal effectiveness is "the ability to do things for oneself" and "to be productive and to initiate activity, it is about collaboration as well as individuality." Critical autonomy is concerned with assisting young people to think for themselves. It focuses on theory as 'fact' and helps "young people to examine critically the contexts within which

they live, work and study [as] they need to be helped to understand politics and power distribution, and enabled to make up their own minds” (Hodkinson, 1994, p.500).

Community, the third element of Hodkinson’s model (1994), negates the dangers of a society dominated by the individual and provides young people with the ability to understand and to criticise the inequalities and uneven power-relations in society as they affect themselves and others in their search for their identity” (p. 500). Hodkinson’s (1994) model is useful as it acknowledges the powerful role of agency in identity construction while challenging the determinist perspectives presented by Willis (1977, 1981, 1983, 1997) and others. Students, in Hodkinson’s paradigm (1994), can be empowered in the classroom by being taught as a framework to critique their school context. Most importantly this model recognises the role of ‘critical autonomy (p.500) which is of particular relevance to the Heartbreak High case study because it emphasises the function of self-reflection in identity construction.

Critical/ Desire Theory offers several insights into student identity construction: it focuses on the individual in light of desire(s); identity is constructed in subjective, value-laden contexts (close to Foucault’s notion that ‘everything is dangerous, nothing is innocent’); individuals are texts to be ‘read’; and young people have power to change society and to be themselves in ‘spaces’ - Freire (1987) calls it “a space for change” (p.126). Proponents of Critical/Desire pedagogy (see, for example, Felman, 1997; Finke, 1997; Todd, 1997) cite the work of Freire and psychoanalytic theory as a means of exploring and activating agency in student identity. There is disagreement among Critical Pedagogy theorists regarding the role of agency. McFadden (1992) highlights the sense of personal agency involved in Freire’s notion of conscientization: “Conscientization emphasises an awareness of social, political and economic contradictions so as to help people to better understand themselves and their potential to initiate action to redress social inequities” (p. 4). Critical/ Desire theorists including Gallop (1997), Mackward (1997), and Todd (1987) (although attributing a degree of agency to young people if they experience ‘conscientization’) portray students as powerless victims of the dominant culture of the classroom. These Critical theorists often utilize psychoanalytical, sexual metaphors that emphasise their patriarchal view of teacher identity and position students as victims (Watkins, 1999).

Some Critical theorists (see, for instance, Felman, 1997) argue that students have potential to create their identity because they have desires and these desires can affect, for example, what they choose to learn. Felman (1997) presents a very cogent discussion that student identity

has a great deal to do with young people's desire not to know, or as she puts it: "the passion for ignorance" (p. 23). Watkins (1999) also persuasively rejects the assumption that student identity is one which inherently 'wants to know', or can be motivated to 'want to know' (p.23). The work of Desire theorists has much to offer in an exploration of student and teacher identity construction. Significantly, Desire theorists such as Watkins challenge traditional assumptions about the identity of students and the role of teachers, assumptions that underpin educational reforms regarding teaching and learning in N.S.W., epitomised for example in *Quality Teaching* (DET, 2003). *Quality Teaching* equates teacher identity with professional identities that are effective or ineffective according to the following categories: intellectual quality; connectedness to the real world; supportive learning environments and recognition of student differences (refer to Table 1). Desire theorists also envisage teacher identity as problematic, complex and incorporating both the professional and personal 'self'. Desire Theory will be an extremely useful lens in researching the student and teacher identities constructed in the English Years 7 - 10 Heartbreak High classrooms.

### **Gender and Student Identity Construction**

As this research involves both male and female participants it requires exploration of the role of gender in the teaching and learning process, as well as, the 'gendered' nature of Subject English. English has frequently been presented in the literature as being inherently more accessible to females than males (see, for example, Lingard, et al., 1998; Martino, 1988). Research into student perceptions of masculinity and femininity and how these influence identity construction and how this, in turn, contributes to resisting or embracing learning are also discussed here.

Currently in N.S.W. there is considerable discussion regarding the relationship of gender, achievement and engagement in learning in schools, especially in light of what is perceived as poor performance trends for boys from Kindergarten to Year 12.

The N.S.W. *Inquiry into Boys' Education* (O'Doherty, 1994) reports significant trends in education that directly influence male performance in schools and have particular importance for teachers of English. These include poor male retention rates in comparison to females, the undertaking of the 'least academic' English courses and poorer academic performance in some external examinations. In recent years gender has been a priority of education in Australia through programs and policies concerned about sexism, equity in promotional positions, harassment, and girls' education.

### 3.4 (Re) production of Gender

Many researchers (see, for example, Buchbinder, 1994; Clatterbaugh, 1990) argue that gender is constructed by social practice, which is determined by values, behaviours and attributes. Buchbinder (1994) claims that historical, social and cultural factors are the ingredients that construct gender at given times in a culture's history (p.4) and these are transmitted via “codes by which masculinity may be represented [which] are both formal and informal” (p.74). Informal codes include such things as folklore, whilst formal codes include elements such as law (p.75). Researchers have noted that boys perceive the whole curriculum to be ‘feminised’ (see, for instance, Martin, 2003; Martino 1988). Rowe (2003) argues that to compensate for feeling alienated by the literacy – orientated curriculum, ‘[boys] place a premium on success in sport and some of the more macho (and often delinquent) activities that yield positive feedback from their peers, rather than recognition from school staff – most of whom (the boys note) are women’ (Rowe, 2003, p.16).

Schools are often perceived as being integral to creating and reproducing gendered stereotypes (O’Doherty, 1994; Gaskell, 1992; Willis, 1991). Gaskell (1994) argues that in schools there are processes that “construct and reinforce boundaries between what is acceptable as masculinity and femininity” (p.4). Integral to these processes are procedures such as timetabling, texts, examinations and peer language. These processes are not fixed, they are continuously being negotiated, and are subject to changes such as personnel, but they produce “patterns of practices that construct various kinds of masculinity and femininity among staff and students, order them in terms of prestige and power, and construct a sexual division of labour within the institution” (Gaskell, 1992, p.5). These school processes, Gaskell asserts, separate students into categories and thus are a part of gender identity creation where, “children are divided into groups based ostensibly on age, sex, ability, interest, destination; often these turn out to coincide conspicuously with sex, social class, and race”(p. 4). However, Gaskell also suggests that students have agency in reinforcing the social reproduction of stereotypes, that is, they sometimes choose to adopt stereotypical gender traits and roles (p.2). O’Doherty (1994) reinforces Gaskell’s view and suggests that schools emphasise feminine traditional traits of “obedience, conformity and passive learning” and these “favour and reinforce the behaviour of those girls who conform to the traditional stereotype” (p.22). This leads, O’Doherty maintains, to boys coming into conflict with schools that do not cater for their aggressive, active and independent gender traits and this leads to “dissatisfaction, lower achievement [than girls] and poor self-esteem” (p. 22).

### 3.4.1 Gender, Attentiveness and Achievement

Rowe (2003) examines concerns regarding the underachievement of boys (in comparison to girls) in the context of teacher quality and ‘student experiences and outcomes of schooling’ (p. 8). He asserts that “boys, on average, achieve at significantly lower levels than girls on ALL areas of the assessed *cognitive* curriculum throughout their primary and secondary schooling is not in dispute... [and] there is a widening gap between the academic performances of boys and girls in Australia, as well as in English-speaking countries world wide.”(p. 9). Rowe’s research summarises a large body of work regarding student engagement and underachievement of boys in Australia. He notes that boys are: “significantly more disengaged”, “exhibit significantly greater externalizing behaviour problems in the classroom and at home,” dominate disciplinary measures including school expulsions, account for “Fifty percent of consultations to pediatricians at tertiary referral hospitals” for behavioural problems dominate the lowest categories of achievement in state literacy tests in grade one and that “Boys are more likely to ‘drop out’ of school prematurely” (p.9). Rowe (2003) cites a large body of research in his argument that the underachievement of boys over the last twenty five years on achievement tests and public examinations internationally and nationally is in response to “the demand for higher levels of operational literacy and especially *verbal processing* and *written communication skills* in school education – areas in which girls, on average, have distinct maturational and socialization advantages” (pp.12-13).

Attentiveness in the classroom has been explored nationally in the research of Martin (2003), Martino (1988), Martino, Mills and Bahr (2002) and others. This body of research has found that attentiveness is a key factor in gender performance and particularly in literacy achievement in the classroom. Rowe (2003) found that the greatest “predictor of *Attentiveness* was gender, with female students being significantly more attentive than male students” ([original emphasis] p.15). Rowe suggests that because school tasks require, ‘increasingly higher levels of verbal reasoning skills – activities which girls have a well – established achievement and maturation level’ this may have impacted on pedagogy that has in turn inadvertently placed, ‘greater premium on *attentiveness* that has contributed to the phenomenon of substantial gender differences in students’ literacy progress’ (Rowe, 2003, p.15).

Rowe (2003) and others state that quality teaching and teachers are the most important factors affecting student achievement. He categorises teachers as “good/bad” and

“effective/ineffective” (p.23). Good teachers: know and understand their subject(s); treat each student as an individual; treat each student fairly, make learning the core of what happens in the classroom; and manage distractions that disrupt and prevent learning, one who makes the work relevant to the real world. Slade (2002) adds to this framework teacher enthusiasm and the sharing of that enjoyment. An “ideal” teacher for Lingard, Martino, Mills and Bahr (2002) includes those aforementioned qualities noted by Rowe (2003) and Slade (2002), but also reflects a “caring attitude”, “spending time with students”, a “commitment to teaching”, “a sense of responsibility” for students, engenders equity in a learning environment of “mutual respect” (p. 23).

Lingard, et al. (2002), among others, extensively canvasses the influence of the curriculum on gender. The evidence of the report, *Addressing the Educational Needs of Boys*, suggest that teacher attitudes to males exacerbate non – engagement and resistance in the classroom because, “teachers treat boys more harshly than girls for similar behaviour” (Lingard, et al., 2002, p.16) and that is possibly because “[some] teachers’ conceptions of the ideal student are closer to stereotypical perceptions of a girl rather than a boy” (p. 16). The researchers found pedagogy rather than gender was the crucial factor in male student engagement in the classroom. *Productive Pedagogies* (2003) and the body of work from the *Queensland Reform Longitudinal Study* (2001) is highlighted in the report as being very useful in informing teaching practices and engaging both males and females in the classroom. The work of Lingard et al. (2002) is useful when considering the role of gender in constructing identities in the English Years 7 - 10 classrooms.

### **3.4.2 Gender and Subject English**

A significant number of scholars assert that English is a 'gendered subject' (see, for example, Clatterbaugh, 1990; Gaskell, 1992; Lingard, et al., 2002). This body of work presents English as inherently 'feminine' with regards to its curriculum and pedagogy. The research report, *Addressing the Educational Needs of Boys* (Lingard, et al., 2002), for example, found that boys in general rated English “as more difficult and less relevant than did girls [because] Boys also seemed to identify English as a girls’ subject” (p.24). In some of the case study schools the humanities did not have the prestige of Mathematics and Science which were viewed by some boys as being useful in accessing tertiary institutions and future careers (Lingard, et al., 2002 p.19). It is also a perception of the community and of some teachers that girls are 'naturally' better at English than are boys (Ramsey, 2000). These perceptions have

their roots in social and institutional constructs about masculinity and femininity that can be argued to be themselves stereotypes.

Andrew J. Martin's research (2003) explores key gender differences in motivation using qualitative and quantitative perspectives by examining boys' perceptions of motivating teachers and motivating pedagogy. The research was conducted in 3,773 N.S.W. and ACT government and non-government high schools (years 7 and 8 40%, Years 9 and 10 (42%), and Years 11 and 12 (18%) (p. 45). Martin found that girls valued school more highly than boys. He also found boys scoring significantly higher than girls in 'self-sabotaging /self-handicapping', however, girls rated significantly higher in anxiety'. Martin (2003) identifies the importance of boys' perceptions and motivation. Boys thought that, 'a good relationship between student and teacher, the teacher's enjoyment of teaching and working with young people, providing boys with choices and input into the lesson, making schoolwork interesting and/or relevant, providing variety in content and methods, and respecting boys' opinions and perspectives' (p.43). Martin's study also highlights that despite key gender differences regarding motivation, boys and girls also show 'noteworthy parallels' (p. 43).

Martin's 'Student Motivation Wheel' divides motivation factors into 'Boosters' and 'Guzzlers.' 'Boosters' include traits such as: self-belief, learning focus, value of schooling, persistence, planning and study management. 'Guzzlers' reduce motivation and include the following character traits: self-sabotage, failure avoidance, uncertain control and anxiety (Martin, 2003, p.45). Martin found a correlation between academic year and decline in motivation – in years 9 and 10 both boys and girls value schooling less, lose learning focus and self-belief. Martin found that girls recover their motivation and self-belief in years 11 and 12 but boys' motivation does not. Years 7 and 8 did not reflect this trend (p. 52). Martin agrees with O'Doherty (1994) and Connell (1998) that fear of failure; having their sexuality questioned and failing to conform to 'popular images of masculinity' are key issues in boys choosing to be 'Guzzlers' (p.59). Martin's research supports the findings of Mills (2002) that gender is a significant factor on pedagogy and student behaviour and highlights the possibility that engagement and motivation may be influenced by student academic years.

Martino (1988) explores boys' notions of masculinity and male student resistance to English utilising a critical literacy approach. Martino (1988) and others (see, for example, Cox, 1995; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2002) express concern regarding the oversimplification of the complexity of the issue of gender, literacy and success in schools that have identified boys as 'competing

victims' (Cox, 1995). Martino contends that a great deal of the rhetoric regarding boys' underachievement in schooling in the international and national arena focuses on "straight, white, middle-class boys and, in this sense, offers only a very limited and monocultural perspective on the ways in which masculinity is acted out in boys' lives" (p.2).

Martino (1988) advocates interrogation of masculinity and power structures within the English classroom through critical literacy reading practices. While acknowledging the factors of interest and involvement in engaging boys he fears that policies and practices that focus on reinforcing male self-concept "runs the risk of reinforcing only existing forms of masculinity which is about 'acting tough' or 'being cool' " (p. 2). Martino sees discussions about heterosexism and homophobia as essential elements of the English classroom where dominant stereotypes of masculinity result in those "boys who don't measure up, in the sense that they don't play sport are perceived as effeminate" (Martino, 1988, p.2) and are consequently bullied. Martino's research highlights "how boys' perceptions of English are linked to the ways in which they have learnt to define their masculinity" (p. 3).

The issue of homophobia is closely linked with bullying and with boys' concepts of what is acceptable masculine behaviour (see, for example, Lingard, et al., 2002; Martin, 2003). Martino's study (1988) supports the notion that English is perceived as a 'gendered' subject. Some boys view English as 'feminine': passive, language-orientated, biased towards girls, irrelevant (not about sport, computers or real life), and a subject that wants one to expose one's inner thoughts and feelings to others. Boys who did not conform to the dominant concept definition of masculinity were seen as 'other' and alienated (p. 1). Those boys who do not fit the model of masculinity were called 'gay,' 'nerd,' 'faggot,' 'dickhead' and 'poof' and were perceived to have something wrong with them that they could easily fix by conforming. Studies have also found that girls bully boys who do not conform to masculine stereotypes and this bullying takes many forms including 'put downs' (Lingard, et al., 2002, p.83). Martino argues for the use of "critical literacy and the overt teaching of gender issues to interrogate boys' definitions of masculinity and to challenge disengagement in English an in learning" (p.9).

A review of the literature illuminates the role of gender in student identity construction. It reveals the potentially gendered nature of English and of the curriculum in general and the possibility that Subject English is inherently responsible for disengagement of boys in the classroom. The research explored suggests that pedagogy reflects a feminised and passive

approach to teaching and learning and that this alienates some males. The work of Martino (1988) and others highlight the role of masculine stereotypes that alienate boys who do not conform to this identity. This has significant ramifications for student identity construction in the English Years 7 - 10 classrooms and for teachers of English.

### **Teacher Identity Construction**

A review of the literature reveals that there are four main schools of thought regarding the factors that influence teacher identity construction. These mirror those discussed in the previous examination of student identity construction and include: Social/Cultural Reproduction Theory, Resistance Theory, Critical / Desire/Transformative Theory and Productive Pedagogy/Authentic Pedagogy. These broad theoretical perspectives will be used as the framework to explore teacher identity formation in this conversation.

The various interpretations of the concept of pedagogy are a refrain within research regarding teacher identity construction and one that will be explored in this section. One influential school of thought perceives teaching identities, to a large extent, through a vocational lens that focuses on pedagogy as a set of universal attributes (see, for instance, Ramsey, 2000) or teaching approaches and strategies. These scholars also see teachers mainly in terms of objective and unproblematic dichotomies (good/ bad, effective/ ineffective) and are concerned with universal, professional identities.

A large body of research argues persuasively for a complex and subjective view of teacher identity based on a more multifaceted definition of pedagogy. This work will be reviewed in this discussion. These scholars embrace the subjective or personal dimension of teacher identity construction and acknowledge the importance of the 'self'. Theorists belonging to this stance challenge traditional notions of pedagogy, which they believe as simplistic and based on false premises. Pedagogy, they posit, is integral to teaching 'self(s)' and as such it is a complex and contextualised phenomenon that is underpinned by desire. Scholars who belong to this position reject traditional positioning of teachers and students in the learning process, as well as, challenging widespread educational views those 'good' teaching identities can be created by teaching teachers a set of teaching strategies and approaches.

There appears to be two further discourses currently shaping teacher identity construction in the context of the classroom in N.S.W. Sachs (1999) refers to these as Democratic/Activist and Managerial Professionalism [entrepreneurial]" (p.2). The democratic discourse, according

to Sachs, is emerging from the profession itself and is based on “collaborative cultures [that] are an integral part of teachers’ work practices” (p.2). These democratic discourses provide the conditions for the development of communities of practice and value teacher autonomy, self-reflection and efficacy. This model portrays teacher identity as a complex phenomenon as opposed to the second discourse that perceives teacher identity in relatively simplistic terms.

The economic managerialist discourse, Sachs (1999) argues, is highly influential in N.S.W. schools and presents effective teaching as pedagogy that equates to a “set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the teaching fraternity itself” (p.2). It utilises a corporate model that manifests at the local level in teacher stereotypes of “good’ and “bad” teachers (p.2). Sachs (1999) suggests that “issues of accountability, economy, efficiency and effectiveness” (p.2) are shaping teacher identities. She advocates the rejection of managerial discourse in favour of one that engenders ‘Democratic/Activist’ teacher identities: “Activist identities can be learned and grow in the richness and complexity of teaching based on democratic ideals, collegiality, mutual respect and negotiation” (p. 3). The influence that school and educational culture has on teacher identity construction is further examined in this case study.

Economic rationalist rhetoric and assumptions about teacher identity currently shape the corporate model of teaching and is evidenced in N.S.W. departmental documents including *Quality Teaching in N.S.W. public schools* (2003). This policy was influenced by a N.S.W. report, *Quality Matters Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices*, is an influential N.S.W. government report into teaching (Ramsey, 2000). Teacher identity in *Quality Teaching in N.S.W. public schools* (2003) is placed within the context of teaching as a set of pedagogical attributes and as a core business: “While teachers work in extremely complex environments, with a host of factors affecting their work, the nature and quality of pedagogy is their core business” (p. 4). In addition, the policy states, the role of teachers is to ‘serve’ by setting quality tasks that promote, guide and develop student learning and outcomes (p.4); catering for difference and groups (p.5) and engendering principles such as social justice and equity (p.5). Teacher ‘service’ is perceived as a means of instilling and fostering a love of learning; shaping values and attitudes, for example, democracy and equity; and developing and maintaining social cohesion (Ramsey, 2000, p. 3). According to this perspective, teacher identity equates with a universal, professional pedagogy:

The core business of the profession of teaching is pedagogy. As the art and science of teaching, pedagogy is evident both in the activity that takes place in classrooms or other educational settings and in the nature or quality of the tasks set by teachers to guide and develop student learning. Pedagogy focuses attention on the processes through which knowledge is constructed, produced and critiqued. Crucially, the term *pedagogy* recognises that how one teaches is inseparable from what one teaches, from what and how one assesses and from how one learns (N.S.W. Department of Education and Training [DET], 2003, p. 4).

Ramsey (2000), echoing current prevailing viewpoints on education nationally and internationally, rationalises economic managerialist perspectives on teacher identity on the grounds that these are “lenses through which increasingly teachers and teacher educators are being forced to view the world” and because “they are not going to disappear just because we do not like them” (p. 3). Ramsey’s (2000) research depicts teacher identities who are isolated, unconfident, misunderstood and who feel “a lack of confidence in their capacity to make the kinds of differences in the lives of children and young people which first motivated them to become teachers” (pp.9-10). While acknowledging the decline of the status of teaching and the negative impact on teacher ‘self(s)’ where “many experienced teachers feel the authority and respect they once enjoyed as teachers is now declining” (pp.9-10), Ramsey identifies no causal relationship between the influence of economic rationalist theory and poor teacher ‘self(s)’. This is an area that will be explored in the case study of Heartbreak High.

Another influential report reflecting current beliefs and perceptions about teaching identities in New South Wales was chaired by Tony Vinson (2002) and was commissioned by the N.S.W. Teachers Federation and N.S.W. Parents and Citizens Association. The inquiry had “broad terms of reference amounting to a comprehensive audit of the state and of public education in N.S.W.” (Vinson Inquiry, *Interim Report*, 2002, p.1). This inquiry reflected some of the findings of those of Ramsey (2000). It too highlighted teacher perceptions that the teaching profession is not respected as it once was in N.S.W. classrooms and subsequent feelings of low self-esteem affect teacher identities in the classroom. Teachers reported feeling “disproportionate fear” (p.3) of being the subject of complaints about their behavior. This fear was perceived as “distorting the professional work of teachers” (p.3). Teacher self-concept and the possible role of ‘fear’ in the formation of teaching identities in the English 7 - 10 classrooms will be examined in this thesis.

This Vinson Inquiry (2002) recognised the significance of teacher autonomy, reflection and positive self-concepts for effective teaching, for example, it found peer-assisted reflection

from principals to novice teachers enhanced teacher performance. Tony Vinson also views teacher identities largely as professional self(s) that are effective or ineffective according to the *Quality Teaching* (2003) and *Productive Pedagogy paradigms* (1998, 2001). Interestingly, Vinson notes teacher concern regarding the rate of change occurring in education and resultant stress, uncertainty and fear experienced by practitioners. The report records teacher feelings of marginalization in the change process which is “not motivated by a need to reaffirm the role of the teacher, that is, their pedagogic centrality but more by a belief that such emphasis will remove obstacles to student learning; an important theoretical difference” (Vinson, 2002, p. 10). Other scholars (see, for instance, Sachs, 1999; Watkins, 1999) reflect the Vincent Report’s disquiet regarding the apparent increasing marginalization of teachers in educational debates in N.S.W. and elsewhere and the subsequent negative effect on teacher self-confidence and self-belief.

### **3.5 The concept of the subjective ‘Self’ in creating teacher identities**

Lipka and Brinthaupt (1999) contend that being a teacher is as a process of implementing a “concept of self as teacher” (pp. 2-3). Sparks and Lipka (1992) support this contention through their observation that “it is impossible to separate the person from the professional” (p. 310). Boy and Pine (1971), Jersold (1955) and Tusin (1999) also highlight the personal dimension of teacher identity. They argue that teachers must have a “personal sense of self to be actualised to the point that they can enter into meaningful and growth-facilitating relationships with students” (Tusin, 1999, p.168). This viewpoint is supported by the work of Borich (1999) who found that positive self-concept and self-esteem were critical factors in the creation and maintenance of effective teacher identities that integrated the professional and the personal self(s). Borich (1999) suggests that students respond positively to integrated and self-aware teacher identities and perceive them as being effective and important, imbue them with legitimacy and generally engage with them in learning rather than resist it.

#### **3.5.1 Critical reflection, empathy and effective teaching self(s)**

There is broad agreement both nationally and internationally that efficacious teacher self(s) requires the ability to self-reflect. McLean (1999) and Schon (1983) advocate the central role of on-going self-reflection and self-analysis in establishing teacher self-perception, self-esteem, positive self-concepts and effective teaching identities. Hamachek (1999) believes that “self-reflection, self-evaluation, self-awareness, unconscious processes, mood management, self-maturation, empathetic skill, and relationship skills” underpin the concepts

of “intrapersonal intelligence” and “emotional intelligence” (p. 8). Further to this argument, Hamachek presents a strong case regarding the role self-awareness plays in finding the effective teacher “within” (p.8). Hamachek (1999), however, while supporting the importance of reflection, cautions that “self-understanding is no panacea, no magic potion that automatically turns a person into a good teacher. It is, however, a door that may lead to useful insights about oneself and others that positively affect teaching practices” (p. 215). The role of self-reflection for teacher and student identity formation will be investigated in this ethnographic case study.

Agne (1999) and Aspy and Roebuck (1977) perceive having an effective teaching identity as dependent upon two personal, subjective factors of the self: caring and fear. Caring is “a way of being, perceiving, thinking, and believing; a state of mind that directs effective teaching behaviors. It is the precursor to the decision making and the performance that produces the master teacher” (Agne, 1999, p.176). Agne (1999) also adds that caring must be seen in terms of “other-orientedness” (p.176) and a trusting, accepting, respectful, democratic, self-disciplined relationship between student and teacher. She sees teachers having joy and happiness in their lives as a means of addressing “fear” (Agne, 1999, p.183) and for engendering acceptance of teacher and student imperfections.

In Agne’s schema (1999) of teacher identity construction ‘fear’ is the opposite of ‘caring.’ Agne asserts that teacher fears have tremendous impact on their behaviour, the learning environment and their ability to like his or her students. Teacher fear is represented by questions such as “What if I don’t find a way to motivate students? What if this class never settles down? How will student scores on standardized achievement tests affect me? What forms of neglect or atrocity occur with my students when they leave this classroom? What can I legally do about it? What abuses can I expect from students, parents, the principal, the superintendent, the janitor, the school board, politicians, society?”(p. 183). Aspy and Roebuck (1977) support Agne’s main contentions and suggest that fear can distort the “teacher self” (p.181) and create a controlling teacher who causes resistance instead of one who acts compassionately with “loving actions” (p. 181). Exploration of the role of ‘fear’ and ‘caring’ in constructing identities in the Heartbreak High classrooms will provide further insights into the role of ‘self’ and identity construction.

Hamachek (1999) concurs with Agne that effective teacher identities enjoy life and “are reasonably at peace with themselves and they possess realistic yet high expectations for

themselves and their students” (p. 209). He concludes that efficacious teachers: generally enjoy their work, are energetic, sincerely interested in their subject, have a sense of humour, and are seen by their students as firm but fair. Hamachek proposes that a teacher’s ‘self’ is always present as “the second, private curriculum in the classroom” and “is reflected in their body language; tone of voice, and in their attitudes toward themselves and others. These two “‘curriculums’ play a significant part in sharing - for better or worse - how students feel about themselves and school” (p.209). Hamachek (1999), in concurrence with Agne (1999) and Aspy and Roebuck (1977), believes the personality of the teacher is the key factor in the teaching/learning relationship and the definition of teaching self: “Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are” (p.209).

### **3.5.2 Desire/Critical/Transformative Pedagogy and Teacher Identity**

Desire Theory is an umbrella term for many pedagogical perspectives including “Neo-Marxist and other politically and economically orientated scholarship, feminism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, post-structuralism, and historical discussions of the field of curriculum” (Todd, 1997, pp. 219-220). Arguably, Critical Pedagogy represents “most fundamental attack on orthodox models of pedagogical work” and is “characterised *by/within/against* interrogations of postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism ([original emphasis] Todd, 1997, pp.219-220). Desire Theory’s eclecticism accounts for a great deal of the dissent within this body of scholars. However, despite differences, Desire theorists share the belief that traditional pedagogies have promoted inequality and promulgated the “absurd” notion of objective curriculum because “education is always a moral and political endeavor” (Todd, 1997, p.10) that involves the personal, sexual and emotional. Desire pedagogy calls for a shift away from the “erotic framing of the teacher-student relationship as a penetrative to a more lateral view of desire as an exchange of mutuality, of fluidity” (Todd, 1997, p.3). That is, teacher identities are not uncomplicated or objective - they are constructed in highly emotive, personal and political contexts.

Proponents of Desire Theory view teacher identity as a complex and subjective phenomenon that equally recognises and respects teacher and student desire in the learning process. Pedagogy is seen as integral to teacher identity, but is defined in very different terms from that dominating current educational discourse in N.S.W:

Pedagogy is for two people...or three...sometimes more. In pedagogy, there’s an exchange, something circulates, something mobilizes – hands, bodies, minds, and the actions/words that go between.

Pedagogy is a practice, an event. Something happens to do with power and energy between people and desires that live inside. It can be witnessed. It can be experienced. It can be felt as something delicious or, in bad times, something that hurts. When the time of pedagogy is over, the learner and teacher can feel a deep loss. Desire has lost its partner and doesn't want to dance alone. Desire in pedagogy leaves traces of joy and sorrow on people and events and the world (Robertson, 1997, pp.76-77).

In challenging classical, western views of pedagogy some Desire Theorists, including Gallop (1997), offer alternative interpretations of the teacher-student pedagogical relationship; one that imbues students with significant agency in constructing identities in the classroom. Desire Theorists disagree with traditional beliefs that teachers can motivate students if the correct pedagogy (teaching strategies) are utilised. Gallop (1997) criticises this position calling it “pederasty” (p.2) and disputes portrayals of students as innocent, empty receptacles, lacking in desires (or motivations) and having desires “introduced to him by the teacher” (p.2). These desires include the desire to learn or the desire not to learn. Watkins (1999) also asserts the traditional views of children as learners presents a “simplistic and essentialist view” (p.3) that acknowledges desire only as “a child’s innate desire to know and one which relegates the teacher to the periphery of the experience whilst centralising that of the child” (p.3). In her examination of teacher identity in terms of Desire Theory, Watkins argues that “valorisation of student desire” has lead to educationalists ignoring teacher desire except in terms of love of one’s subject and motivation and pleads for a more complex view of teacher identity and respect for both the role of the teacher and the student:

Teacher desire as such remains displaced. The current adjustment to the teacher's role perpetuates the bifurcation of teaching and learning through a continued privileging of student motivation and the effacement of the role of the teacher in shaping this. A productive pedagogy requires not a privileging of either teacher or student desire but rather their dynamic union (Watkins, 1999, p.10).

Felman (1997) criticises traditional portrayals of teacher identity through his concept of the “desire not to know” (p.8) Lacan calls this phenomenon the “desire to ignorance” and “the passion for ignorance” (Lacan, cited in Todd, ed., 1997, p.23). Felman (1997) argues that conceptualisations of effective teaching identities need to acknowledge the powerful role of student desire and the notion of “*resistances* to knowledge” and “ignorance” (p. 23). Ignorance, Felman (1997) explains, “is nothing other than a desire to ignore: its nature is less cognitive than performative...it is not a simple lack of information but the incapacity – or the refusal - to acknowledge *one’s own implication* in the information” (p. 23) in a pedagogic phenomena that is not “linear-cumulative and progressive-temporality of learning, as traditionally been conceived by pedagogical theory and practice” (p.23). Instead, Felman

(1997) suggests pedagogy that recognises that learning involves “breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action, the analytic learning-process puts indeed in question the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectability, the progressistic view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge” (p. 23).

### **3.5.3 Desire Theory and Reading Pedagogy**

Ray Misson in his 2002 address to the N.S.W. English Teachers Association, *A Brief Introduction to Literary Theory*, explores the role of desire in light of Desire Theory and Roland Barthes’ Literary Theory in the context of classroom identities, pedagogy and curriculum. He hypothesises that non-engagement in the classroom may “have to do with the complexity of desires of our subconscious and the essence of what we know”. Misson argues that deeply embedded desires, reading and pedagogy have a great deal in common. People become engaged in reading, proposes Misson, because their desire for affirmation, for intense emotional experience and because they wish to create a new sense of being. Misson utilises Barthes’ definition of text as “weaving together discourses” and suggests that “anything that is constructed to carry a meaning” can be “read”. Critical Literacy is a model of English that Misson suggests provides opportunities for teachers to ‘read’ students and engage them in learning Mackward (1997) also suggests that reading and pedagogy are closely linked: “practices and performances of reading, like practices and performances of pedagogy, produce desire, identity, and knowledge as they stage possible scenes for these performances”. The central purpose of desire, according to Mackward, is the teacher’s or the student’s desire to answer the question: “Who am I in this relationship?” (p. 176). The findings of Misson (2002) and Mackward (1997) offer an occasion for examining specific teaching approaches and their relationship to student identity.

### **3.5.4 Social/Cultural Reproduction Pedagogy and Teacher Identity**

The identity of the teacher is perceived by Social Reproduction Theorists as central to the process of (re) producing social and cultural values. The seminal work of Basil Bernstein (1990, 1996) offers insights into the role of the teacher and the inter-relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, teacher identity and equity in the classroom. Bernstein is “interested in the consequences of different pedagogic practice for different social classes” (Sadovnik, 2001, p.6).

Bernstein (1990) imbues teachers with identities that are powerful; he believes pedagogy is a “uniquely human device for both the reproduction and the production of culture” (p.64). Pedagogic discourse, in Bernstein’s model of teacher identity, has rules and practices that are visible or explicit, and invisible or implicit (p. 64), as well as, codes. A code is a principle that has the power to determine legitimate or illegitimate forms of realization, contexts and communication in a classroom (Bernstein, 1990, p. 15). Teachers, Reproduction theorists including Bernstein, claim, are in the business of legitimizing and transmitting knowledge through hierarchical rules that “establish the conditions for order, character, and manner” (p.65) of learning; through sequencing rules which control how much you have to learn in a given amount of time; via criterial rules which “enable the acquirer to understand what counts as a legitimate or illegitimate communication, social relation or position” (p. 66). Visible pedagogies, Bernstein argues, emphasise performance, teacher-dominated assessment, the product as opposed to the process, and is aimed at (re) producing differences and perpetuating inequities in the classroom (p. 70). Invisible pedagogies, on the other hand, give students (acquirers) “pedagogic space” where the focus is on the student’s cognitive, linguistic, affective, and motivational self (Bernstein, 1990, p.75).

Bernstein (1990, 1996) imbues teachers with significant agency maintaining that teachers empower or disempower students by their pedagogical practices that are influenced by the nature of the subject they teach. The concept of ‘classification’ is utilised by Bernstein to explain the “degree of boundary maintenance between contents” (Atkinson, 1985, pp.132-133) and relates to the organization of knowledge to curricula and educational activity. In simpler terms this means that Subject English by its very nature has the potential to engender teacher identities that challenge the (re) production of dominant cultures in the classroom. “Classification” is paralleled by Bernstein’s notion of “framing” which relates to the context of knowledge transmission and pedagogy (Atkinson, 1985, p.135). Where framing is strong “the transmitter explicitly regulates the distinguishing features of the interactional and principles, which constitute the communicative context. Where framing is weak, the acquirer has a greater degree of regulation over the distinguishing features of the interaction and locational principles that constitute the communicative context” (Bernstein, 1990, p.36).

The earlier research of Barnes and Shemilt (1974) echoes Bernstein’s (1990) later notion of framing and sheds valuable light on the relationship between teacher identity, pedagogy and curriculum. The study examined how teachers differed in their tacit assumptions about

written work (why they set it, marking procedures and follow up). Barnes and Shemilt (1974) found that the responses fitted into two categories. The teachers belonging to group one emphasised the importance of cognitive development; personal development; the significance of context; provided feedback and personal advice; showed concern for pupils' attitudes; published student work and used their writing in other lessons. Group two teachers thought of writing in terms of recording; acquisition of knowledge; product; corrections (punctuation and grammar); assessment was equated with testing and marks and gave no or minimal feedback. Barnes and Shemilt called the former group 'Interpretation' teachers, and the latter group 'Transmission' teachers. According to this classification:

Interpretation teachers tend to view writing as a productive dialogue between pupil and self. Transmission teachers, on the other hand, tend to view writing as an opportunity for pupils to memorise what has been taught to them, and as a means of finding out whether they have done so (Barnes & Shemilt, 1974, p.7).

Barnes and Shemilt (1974), as did Bernstein (1990), found that the subject influenced the teacher's pedagogical style. Subjects that were heavily knowledge based such as Science and History encouraged Transmission teaching styles, whereas, English encouraged Interpretation teaching. However, Barnes and Shemilt stated that Transmission type teachers are found in English faculties, and Interpretation teachers are found in faculties such as Science. The ground-breaking work of Barnes and Shemilt highlights the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy and provides a base for another area to be explored in this ethnographic study into teacher identity formation in the 7 - 10 English classroom.

### **3.5.5 Resistance Theory**

Resistance Theorists (see, for example, Freire 1975; Wexler, 1992; Willis, 1983, 1977) have focussed on teacher identity through the eyes of disaffected students and this limits the scope of their research. However, Resistance Theory offers insights into the pedagogical process especially in light of notions of agency and empowerment. Munns and McFadden (1997) highlight an important contribution of Resistance Theory which they attribute to Willis (1977): "[Willis] introduced the concept of resistance, changing the debate about student disaffection and moving it forward from overly deterministic views of social and cultural production to a consideration of the interrelationship between social structures and agency at a local level" (Munns & McFadden, 1997, p. 2).

Resistance Theorist Paulo Freire (1975) argues effectively that through analysing, theorising and intellectually engaging with the world the reproduction of knowledge (in institutions like schools) can be challenged and the cause of social equity forwarded. Freire (1975) asserts the need for a respectful, equal relationship between those involved in learning in order to make a difference to the world in which we live (dialogue) as opposed to capitalist (banking) notions of pedagogy involving the depositing of knowledge by the expert in the educatee (Mackie, 2004, p.5). Freire promulgates the notion of praxis as informed action to create social change and justice. He referred to this model as “a pedagogy of the oppressed” or a “pedagogy of hope” in which one develops a consciousness (conscientization) that has the “power to transform reality” (Taylor, 1993, p. 52). McFadden (1992) highlights the sense of personal agency involved in ‘conscientization’: “Conscientization emphasises an awareness of social, political and economic contradictions so as to help people to better understand themselves and their potential to initiate action to redress social inequities” (p. 4). Todd (1987) attributes Freire with raising “awareness of social equity issues, identity, location and social agency” (Todd, 1987, pp.3-4) through his theories.

Freire’s (1975) work has ramifications for this case study into student identity construction and teacher identity construction in N.S.W English 7 - 10 classrooms. He instills in the role of the teacher the power to transform the reality of social inequality in the classroom and to create change in society by challenging traditional pedagogical paradigms. Freire’s ideal teacher is one who rejects the economic rationalist (banking) patriarchal view of pedagogy with one based on equal respect between the teacher and the student.

The research of McFadden and Munns (2000) informs the debate regarding student resistance, agency and the role of the teacher. They propose “persistent” and “culturally supported” resistance to engaging in learning in students from low socio-economic backgrounds is “often directed at, or in opposition to the actions of teachers in concrete educational contexts ... [and is a part of a] continuum of resistance organised around the moment when students finally withdraw their allegiance from their school, and by extension education” (pp.1 & 4). This finding suggests that student resistance involves the personal choices of the student – who at a crisis point rejects the *teacher* (“actions of the teacher”) and this suggests an alternative view from that of Willis (1977) and others that it is the teacher’s culture or class that is rejected. Personal and emotional factors involved in the pedagogical process, McFadden and Munns (2000) propose, also need to be considered in research and in the classroom, in order to avoid

the danger of focussing on “teaching paradigms alone in order to engage students in effective learning” (p.6). The work of McFadden and Munns (2000) also suggest the limitations of focussing on teacher identity in terms of set tasks and paradigms by their finding that “educationally disadvantaged students are more likely ... to reject approaches emphasising intellectual quality in favour of repetitive, non-challenging and educationally debilitating work (p.6). The relevance of these findings for research into teacher identity at Heartbreak High revolves around the danger of defining teacher identity in the narrow pedagogical terms of a set of attributes.

Resistance Theory conceptualisation of the role of the teacher as the dominant class cultural influence of the classroom, is contested by researchers including Furlong (1991), Jones (1989) and Shilling (1992). These researchers ascribe less power to the teacher and significant agency to students in the pedagogical process. Jones (1989) states that pedagogy requires “an understanding of the structured, collective cultural interpretations of the pupils”(p.22). She points out that even though teachers have control of content, the pupils can decide what work they want to do and at what pace. Thus students use “their own definition of the pedagogical situation, relying on their own perceptions of what counts as teaching” (McFadden & Munns, 2000, p. 4). Shilling (1992) presents the argument “that people choose to fulfil certain roles and behave in certain ways out of the need for “ontological security”” (p.83) and students can and do make a difference because teachers and students are “actors interacting with others through time and space in their daily lives” (pp.77-78). The interrelatedness of identities constructed in the classroom and the cultural experience that each student brings to the pedagogical relationship will be carefully considered in this study.

### **3.5.6 Authentic Pedagogy/Productive Pedagogy/Quality Teaching**

A large, impressive body of work that focuses on the professional identity of the teacher and views pedagogy largely in terms of a set of attributes, is currently impacting on educational policy and practice in N.S.W. Its antecedents are found internationally in the research of Newmann and Wehlage (1993, 1995) and Newmann and Associates (1996) and nationally in the work of Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig (2001) and *The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study* [QSRLS] (1998, 2001) and Ramsey (2000).

Newmann and Wehlage (1995, 1993) conceptualised their paradigm of *Authentic Pedagogy* in order to address their concerns regarding the dominance of examinations in American teaching and learning contexts. The research of Newmann and Wehlage attempted to devise

an authentic and meaningful curriculum that explored real problems and issues and shifted the role of the teacher from the examiner to the facilitator. Newmann and Associates (1996) define pedagogy in narrower terms than Desire theorists and focus on teacher identity as a set of teaching and learning techniques, approaches and contexts. These researchers advocate “authentic learning” as a means of ensuring quality teacher instruction that engages students, improves student achievement and nurtures independent “critical thinking students [in order to] help students to appreciate, live with, and experience the joy of working with cognitively complex problems” (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p.2).

Although it can be argued that the research of Newmann and associates (1996) and Newmann and Wehlage (1993) neglect the affective and subjective aspects of teacher identity, their research offers worthwhile areas for investigation regarding the role of teachers in the classroom. Firstly, Newmann and Wehlage (1993) value an inquiry approach to learning utilising a constructivist view of the “student as a meaning-making person who continuously weighs new information against prior experience” (p.1). A second valuable insight offered by their research is the assertion that students need to see value in what they are learning before they will engage. Thirdly, Authentic Pedagogy propounds the notion of ‘exhibition’ where students create products that have value beyond school success. These findings support the work of educational researchers who have long argued for learning to be seen as a process, not a product; the teacher as a guide; not an omniscient being, the student as an equal partner; not one to be ‘filled up’ with ‘school knowledge’ (see, for example, Bernstein, 1990; Dewey, 1935). Newmann and Wehlage (1993, 1995) and Newmann and Associates (1996) also found that effective teaching focussed on “authentic assessment” (p.9) and when higher-order thinking, deep knowledge, connectedness to the world, substantive conversation and social support were integral to the classroom in which the learner is involved in real problems that can be of value to the world (p.10).

*The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study [QSRLS]* (1998, 2001) adapted and refined the work of Newmann and Associates (1996) in their investigation of teaching in Queensland, Australia. They devised the Productive Pedagogy model based on the research premise that enhancement of student learning “required quality classroom pedagogical and assessment practices” (QSRLS, 2001, p.xi). The authors of the research utilised a design that mapped backwards from desirable student academic and social outcomes to the classroom and finally to school/system reform/restructure. QSRLS (1998, 2001) identified the following

Productive Pedagogies: Intellectual Quality, Connectedness, Recognition of Difference and Supportive Classroom Environment. *Productive Pedagogy* extended Newmann and Associates' "construct of Authentic Pedagogy [which] was found to promote both overall increases in student learning outcomes and significant improvements in terms of social justice through a lessening of traditional equity-based gaps in student achievement" (Gore, et al., 2001, p. 3).

The QSRLS (1998, 2001) found that the following factors in a school helped to create student identities that engaged and achieved:

- Teachers had a 'strong sense of efficacy and responsibility for student learning' (p., xiii)
- There are high levels of student social support
- Teachers make intellectual engagement a high priority
- Teachers have a pedagogical repertoire that effectively deals with diversity
- There is alignment between pedagogy, assessment and curriculum
- Connectedness to the world is emphasised
- Teachers have adequate knowledge of their subject
- Professional learning communities thrive
- Effective leadership demonstrated with a focus on teaching and learning
- Are engaged in productive pedagogies
- Resources for teacher professional development are adequately provided

A finding of the inquiry was that productive pedagogy was low and this was especially true of low socio-economic areas (p.xxiii). The researchers found that "social support" was being addressed in classrooms, teachers perceived it as oppositional to "intellectual demandingness" (p. xxiii). The authors of the research argue that there is a misalignment between assessment, teaching practices and educational systems and policies. QSRLS recommends the establishment of learning communities that deprivatise the role of the teacher and "encourage collaboration and reflective dialogue around classroom practices" (p. xxvii). QSRLS final report also recommends expanding teacher understanding of how students learn and the importance of whole-school responsibility for student learning. An outcome of QSRLS (1998, 2001) in practice is a continuing conceptualisation of pedagogy as a set of teaching attributes. (see Table 1).

<b>Intellectual quality</b>	<b>Connectedness</b>	<b>Supportive classroom environment</b>	<b>Recognition of difference</b>
Higher order thinking Deep knowledge	Knowledge integration Background knowledge	Student control Social support	Cultural knowledge Representative participation Narrative
Deep understanding	Connectedness beyond the classroom	Engagement	
Substantive conversation Knowledge as problematic Metalanguage	Problem – based curriculum	Explicit criteria Self-regulation	Group identity Citizenship

Table 1. Productive Pedagogies executive summary QSRLS (2001, p. xiii)

Gore, et al. (2001) in their paper *Productive Pedagogy as a Framework for Teacher*

*Education: Towards Better Teaching*, explore effective teaching identities in tertiary teacher education. They utilise a productive pedagogy framework as a “comprehensive and multi-dimensional construct” (p. 3) in their investigation. These scholars conclude critics of Productive Pedagogy are wrong to suggest that they present a simple model of teaching because “highly complex decisions need to be made by the teachers who employ PP, both in their preparation of lessons and in their momentary decisions in the classroom, in relation to the specific social and cultural context of their teaching” (3). Gore, et.al. (2001) believe it is essential that practitioners perceive *Productive Pedagogy* as a philosophy that is “integral to participants’ understanding of teaching” as opposed to being a “valuable guide” (p.4). They warn that *Productive Pedagogy* is not a checklist for good teaching, nor a ‘magic bullet’ (Newmann & Wehlage, 1996). However, there is potential that the models will be used in this manner. This concern has been raised nationally by researchers including Hill (2002) and Wilson and Klein (2002).

Wilson and Klein (2002) utilised the Productive Pedagogy model in their examination of fourth year university teacher education students and concluded “there is no perfect pedagogy to model there are only potentially productive interactions and relationships to be fostered or ignored. There is no teaching style to hold in derision or contempt; all are experienced as learning encounters that can empower and damage” (p.v). Hill (2002) also expresses reservations about the Productive Pedagogy paradigm and the findings of the QSLS. His research explores the responses of teachers who participated in the inaugural Queensland research and their lack of agency. Teachers in the research expressed feeling “intimidated”, “alienated”, “mistrustful” and “inferior” as a direct result of the methodology utilised in the QSLS (1998, 2001). Hill (2002) symbolises the negative attitude of some participants involved in the research by commenting that they derogatorily referred to researchers as “crows on the fence” (p.4).

Productive Pedagogy is mandated in Queensland curriculum (Hill, 2002) and has been vigorously propounded in N.S.W. schools through the Quality Teaching model, which adapted the Queensland model to the N.S.W context through further research. The Quality Teaching model is N.S.W departmental policy and includes the following dimensions: Intellectual quality, Quality learning environment and Significance (DET, *Quality Teaching in N.S.W. Public Schools*, 2003, p. 9). It defines teacher identity largely in terms of a set of

professional strategies, techniques and approaches. This model is currently very influential in N.S.W. Government schools. *Quality Teaching in N.S.W. Schools* (2003) has been energetically implemented in schools and assumes that teacher identity is largely a matter of professional, objectified pedagogical practices that can be taught to produce effective or quality teachers who in turn produce engaged student identities in the classroom. Quality Teaching is a model that requires investigation in this case study, particularly as it reflects the classical model of the teacher-student dyad and a focus on professional (as opposed to personal) teacher self(s). It is also important to investigate the Quality Teaching model in terms of its implementation in N.S.W schools in the current climate of economic-managerialism. The N.S.W. model of pedagogy, based heavily on the Queensland Research and sharing some of the same authors (Ladwig and Gore) is shown in Table 2.

	<b>Intellectual quality</b>	<b>Quality learning environment</b>	<b>Significance</b>
<b>Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deep knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Deep understanding</b></li> <li>• <b>Problematic knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher order thinking</b></li> <li>• <b>Metalanguage</b></li> <li>• <b>Substantive conversation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Explicit quality criteria</b></li> <li>• <b>Engagement</b></li> <li>• <b>High expectations</b></li> <li>• <b>Social support</b></li> <li>• <b>Students' self-regulation</b></li> <li>• <b>Student direction</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Background knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Cultural knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Knowledge integration</b></li> <li>• <b>Inclusivity</b></li> <li>• <b>Narrative</b></li> </ul>

Table 2. NSW Quality Teaching model (*Quality Teaching in NSW public schools*, Discussion paper, DEET, May, 2003, p.9).

This chapter has reviewed research that illuminates the processes implicated in student and teacher identity construction. It has highlighted the various influential viewpoints in the debate including those presented by Social/Cultural Reproduction Theory, Resistance Theory, Critical/Desire Theory and Productive Pedagogy/Authentic Pedagogy. An exploration of gender has also been undertaken. This section has also examined professional and

personal teacher identities or self(s). The theories reviewed in this chapter, reflecting the theoretical stance of grounded theory, form a conceptual framework for the methodology and analysis of the data discussed in the following chapter.

## **METHODOLOGY**

## Chapter 4

### Research Design and Method

#### 4.1 General research issue

This case study has posed the following central questions:

What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English 7 - 10 classrooms?

What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in N.S.W. English 7 - 10 classrooms?

These questions are informed by asking:

- Why do students engage or disengage in learning?
- What role does pedagogy play?
- What role does curriculum (Subject English and *English 7 - 10 Syllabus*, 2003) play?

#### 4.1.1 Qualitative research paradigm

A qualitative paradigm is utilised in this research to investigate these questions as the researcher takes the view that the social worlds we explore are constructions of realities dependent on our accounts. These accounts or narratives should be “interactive, hermeneutic, at times intuitive, and most certainly open” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.183). The methodology of this investigation is based on a number of theoretical perspectives. These include the metaphor of ethnography as a narrative journey (see for example, Atkinson, 1990), *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba and Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln and Guba, 1989), reflexivity (see for instance, Jordan and Yeomans, 1995), grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and the concept of multiple realities (Stake, 1984). These theoretical perspectives are explained in this chapter and underpin the methodology, analysis, findings and discussion of this thesis.

#### 4.1.2 Ethnography as Narrative Journeys

The metaphor of research as a narrative journey forms the framework of this case study of Heartbreak High. The narrative of this thesis focusses on a very small group of individuals - a microcosm of interaction that is explored through subjective autobiographical and biographical accounts. These discourses create a chronicle aimed at “persuading the reader

using description, data and narrative utilising various voices in the dialogue between the author, those depicted in the study and the reader” (Atkinson, 1990, p.15). The narrative of this case study is constructed from a questionnaire (Appendix A), reflection logs (Appendix B & C), observation of lessons (Appendix D), interviews and small group discussions (Appendix E), teacher programs and units of work (Appendix G & H).

Watts (1993) persuasively advocates the value of metaphors in research as the “primary way through which we organise our experiences into temporally significant episodes” (pp. 56-57). The experiences of the students, teacher and researcher and the identities formed in this case study of 7 - 10 English at Heartbreak High exemplify such “episodes.” The intent of the author of this thesis is to persuade the reader of the veracity of the story as she immerses him/her in the detail of the narrative of four English teachers, one researcher and sixteen students at the research site. Watts (1993) also asserts that such narratives are valuable “because it is through narratives that we constitute ourselves and our identity, and much if not all of our social activity is expressive of the ‘who’ we are” (p.57).

Guba and Lincoln (1990), whose ethnographic paradigm *Fourth Generation Evaluation* is adapted in this case study, label the researcher a narrator or “Human instrument” (p.39) who is engaged in the research. A perspective such as this sees “objectivity” as an “intrusion” as this research paradigm values “intimacy,” “interaction,” the “intuitive or felt” and the “tacit knowledge” that exists in the interaction between the researcher and other stakeholders (Lincoln & Guba, 1989, pp. 39-40). This describes the role of the author of this research narrative of Subject English and teacher and student identity construction at Heartbreak High. The value of this approach is expressed by Steier (1991):

By holding our own assumed research structures and logics as themselves researchable and not immutable, and by examining how we are a part of our data, our research becomes, not a self-centered product, but a reciprocal process. The voices of those with whom we interact, our reciprocators (a calling I prefer), respondents, informants and subjects, are enhanced rather than lessened. Rather than being narcissistic, we become, through taking reflexivity seriously, social constructionist researchers. (p. 7)

Atkinson (1990) is concerned specifically with the texts produced from research that he calls “ethnographies” (p.1). He emphasises the need for the researcher to take note of the conventions or ‘poetics’ of the texts that the sociologist creates to convey her/his findings. Atkinson also alerts one to the notion of reality construction or “reflexivity” (1990, p. 3) that is an important precept of this research. He asserts that “texts do not simply and transparently

report an independent order of reality; rather, the texts themselves are implicated in the work of reality-construction” (p.7). Atkinson (1990) argues that narratives are “strengthened, not weakened, by the inclusion of the autobiographical accounts that form a contractual agreement with the reader” (pp. 109-110) and this study reflects these beliefs. The researcher embedded the methodology of Fourth Generation Evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1990) in order to gather the subjective realities of research participants and craft them into a persuasive narrative depicting identity construction in English classrooms at Heartbreak High.

Although acknowledging the debate about ethnographic definitions, Watts (1993) maintains that ethnography has three main characteristics. Firstly, it produces “highly specific, small scale and richly descriptive accounts of people’s lives” (p.55); secondly the ethnographer observes “patterns of living” (pp.55-56) and thirdly, it does not “value causal explanatory theories” (pp.55-56) that are found in scientific paradigms of research. The research narrative explored in this thesis reflects these aspects of ethnography. Watts (1993), like Stake (1984) and Atkinson (1990), believes that the ethnographer must “catch as much of that rich, textured ethnographic data’ (Watts, 1993) or “thick description that re-presents the members’ perspectives on the structured experiences and meanings of social world” (Watts, 1993, p.56). This research aims to present the ‘thick description’ of the research narrative journey. Watts (1993), like the composer of this thesis, is particularly concerned with capturing “behaviours, values, and attitudes...[and] by establishing what these actions and thoughts mean for those we are encountering in terms which are comprehensible to ‘us’ both as subjects of research and as researchers and theorists”(Watts, 1993, p.54). This is a significant aspect of this case study into student and identity construction in the context of the N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms. The reader needs to be aware that the researcher is embedded in the story that unfolds to create the narrative.

Scholars including Guba and Lincoln (1990), Atkinson (1990) and Jordan and Yeomans (1995) are rightly concerned about naivety resulting from ethnographic narratives and propose the concepts of reflexivity and grounded research as a means of addressing potential weaknesses in the research methodology. Grounded research and reflexivity have been adapted in this case study in attempt to overcome the dualism(s) inherent in narrative case studies and utilises the “dialectic between the researcher, research process and its product” (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995, p. 394). Atkinson (1990) asserts that reflexivity has a central role in effective ethnography because research is about reality construction. Objective reporting,

argues Atkinson, is a fallacy because researchers are all in the business of *persuading people* (p.7). Atkinson further challenges positivist assumptions about research advocating the importance of the way researchers write and the details they include are essential to effective research.

Sugrue (1974) too suggests that reflexive engagement “[allows one] to explore the interconnectedness of grounded middle-range and grand theory in the process of classroom research” (p. 1). Strauss and Corbin (1990) believe that grounded theory pays attention to contexts where theory is built on the basis of a pattern model that emerges from the data collected. Sugrue defends the validity of his paradigm by arguing it recognises theoretical frameworks, unconscious socialised traditions and the infinite number of possibilities that could arise in the research that could not be accounted for by a priori theory (p.2). Grounded Theory permits the researcher to “have the substantive theory emerge from (be grounded in) the data because the mutual shaping found in a particular context may be explicable only in terms of the contextual elements found there” (Lincoln & Guba, 1989, p.41). Grounded theory argues that no “p priori theory could encompass the multiple realities likely to be encountered” in the research process. This case study employs Grounded Theory in the processes involved in the collection and analysis of data.

Another potential weakness of research narratives is expressed by Rosaldo (1987) who reflects “Human subjects have often reacted with bemused puzzlement over the ways they have been depicted in anthropological studies” (p.91). Renaldo suggests valuing descriptions of those involved in the narratives offset the misrepresentation of research participants. This study will employ the notion of “negotiated outcomes” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) discussed earlier in this chapter, as one means of combating the potential weaknesses of story telling in narrative ethnographies. The concept of negotiated outcomes entails creating meanings through interactive processes between all of the participants in the research; it is about constructions of reality that the inquirer seeks to reconstruct because inquiry outcomes depend “upon the nature and quality of the interaction between the knower and the known, epitomised in negotiation about the meaning” (Lincoln & Guba, 1990, p. 41). Eisner (1991), as does Watts (1993), suggests “recurring messages” are inductively construed from narratives where one is “telling of any story, theme, plot, and point of view” and this is a valuable source by which the researcher can “distill the major themes that would provide a

structure for the writing” (p. 189) and the researcher can have confidence in the research findings.

The Fourth Generation (Guba & Lincoln, 1990) inquiry model consciously and explicitly addresses stakeholder equity and subjectivity issues and provides valuable opportunities for the different stories (truths) to be heard and the final narrative to be composed. The depth and breadth of data collection (a questionnaire, interviews, reflection logs, staff meetings, observation of lessons and review of the English Faculty Programs, units of work, contracts) are also integral to ensuring the “trustworthiness” (Sugrue, 1974, p.5) of the methodology of this case study. The use of different forms of data also addresses potential weaknesses in the ethnographic approach utilised in this thesis as it enables triangulation. Triangulation (Denzin, 1978, p.6462) minimises the “distortions inherent in any one kind of data collection” (Ball, 1994, p. 4316) and provides a “strategy whereby confidence can be gained from the knowledge that different perspectives are complementary rather than contradictory” but does not equate with “correctness” (McFadden, 1996, p. 171).

#### **4.1.3 The Case Study Approach**

The case study method is the most appropriate for answering the research questions posed in this investigation. The case study methodology is utilised in the research because it is “adapted to a description of the multiple realities encountered at any given site...because it can picture the value positions of investigator, substantive theory, methodological paradigm, and local contextual values” (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p.41). Case studies value the intuitive and recognise the subjective/personal whilst searching for “patterns of meaning” (Stake, 1974) and “moral emotions” (Watts, 1993) which are “frequently experienced as powerful, even peremptory motives or pressures to act in a particular way because they have to do with quite basic, moral feelings. They appear to be always invoked or aroused in social settings” (Watts, 1993, pp.57-58). Questions such as Am I respected? Am I valued? Is my sense of identity being respected? are at the forefront of the interaction between the researcher and the student participants in this case studies.

A case study approach assists the design of the study to emerge because focus-determined boundaries let the researcher choose to allow the focus of the inquiry to evolve based on a rudimentary initial idea, in other words it provides for “emergent design” (Sugrue, 1994) that enables the researcher to adapt his/her methodology to specific contexts. Emergent design is a research approach that begins with a loose participatory framework, which is used to define

the roles and relations of those involved, but not to prescribe the research process as a whole. In a case study, research is valued as an exciting and worthwhile narrative journey that ensures equity between all involved and where “it is incumbent on the evaluator to interact with those humans in a manner respecting their dignity, their integrity, and their privacy” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.6).

A positivist perspective of validity is not used in this research because the focus of the case study is on the reality that the stakeholders perceive to exist. The latter is reached immersing oneself (Lincoln and Guba, 1990) in the rich tapestry of the narrative journey harvested from interviews, discussions, researcher/teacher/student interaction, observations, anecdotes, autobiographies and journals creating consensus of opinion about the case. Stake's term (discussed previously) for this process is “triangulation” (Stake, 1974). Triangulation, as stated previously, is used in this research to give the reader confidence in the distillation of the multiple realities of the classroom into a consensual reality.

Grounded research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) is integral to this case study. It is an invaluable part exploring learning and teaching in the classroom because “context gives life to and is given life by the constructions that people come to form and hold” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p. 9). These constructions emerge over time and those who inhabit them come to hold a consensus - a reality pertinent that to time, place and to those involved in the research journey. Stake (1994) argues that interpretive methodology, despite the researcher's mind-set, is valuable in researching the human sciences because the “unique case helps us to understand the more typical case (Stake, 1994, p.261). Sugrue (1994) asserts that his notion of “transferability” and “naturalistic generalisations” allow a single study to have “applicability beyond the bounds of its own particularity” (p.5).

#### **4.1.4 Fourth Generation Evaluation**

The research undertaken in this case study is based on the methodology of *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (1990) and the “ontological assumption that realities, certainly social/behavioural realities, are mental constructions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.19). This research paradigm has been adapted to the specific context of the English classrooms of Heartbreak High and the idiosyncrasies of the researcher. The latter acknowledges that choosing research paradigms is inherently subjective, that is, researchers select methodologies that appeals to their self, their belief systems and values. The first element of *Fourth Generation Evaluation* is the element of empowerment and equality. This evaluation (research) esteems the subjective and the

intimate ‘truths’ that are consensually constructed and depicted in the narrative research journey. It rejects the ontological position that predicates an “objective reality driven by immutable laws” and epistemological assumptions that there is a “duality between observer and the observed” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.12). Instead, this case study implements a constructivist paradigm that values ‘open-endedness’ and the “multiple realities” of stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p. 13). These realities could be narrated in this investigation because the researcher was intimately familiar with the research site and enjoyed an excellent rapport and relationship with both teachers and students involved in the study at Heartbreak High.

*Fourth Generation Evaluation* “moves beyond previously existing generations, characterizable as measurement-orientated description-orientated and judgement-orientated [research], to a new level whose key dynamic is Negotiation’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.8). The concept of ‘negotiation’ in this thesis addresses concerns also expressed by other scholars including Jordan & Yeomans (1995) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) about equality in the research process. Guba and Lincoln (1990) note that evaluations (research) can be “shaped to enfranchise or disenfranchise stake-holding groups” (p.10). The case study of Heartbreak High recognises the significance of equal ownership among participants and the importance of respecting participant “dignity, their integrity and their privacy” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p.10) whilst acknowledging the problematic role of the researcher as narrator. The students, teachers and researcher of this investigation “place their claims, concerns, and issues on the table for consideration, irrespective of the value system they adhere.” Robert Stake (1994) called this principle “responsive focusing” (1994) and this is a precept of this evaluation.

Disenfranchisement of stakeholders occurs, according to Guba and Lincoln (1990), in a variety of ways including: the selection of stakeholders; the selection of questions; empowerment of one stakeholder over another (for example the researcher) and selective dissemination of evaluation findings. *Fourth Generation Evaluation* addresses these concerns through a complex procedure (described later in the chapter) of subject selection, valuing of different participants, providing opportunities for different stories to be told, an intimate context that values subjectivity, and a depth of data collection. These elements ensure that this research narrative journey will be composed through a collaborative process where participants “construct context bound consensual “reality/s through interaction” (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, pp.8-9).

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

### **4.2 Analysis of Documentation**

Initially the researcher undertook an examination of Heartbreak High's *Annual School Report* (a mandatory document) produced by each school of the N.S.W. Department of Education to evaluate its context and performance. The wider community can access these reports in order to evaluate the quality of the school. The Principal of a school is the primary author of the School Report. The *Annual School Report* of Heartbreak High was used to contextualise the site. It contained information relevant to this case study including: school location, school population, teacher and student numbers, socio-economic status and cultural population. These are utilised in the context section of this thesis (Chapter 5) and provided a general description of the setting of this research narrative. The English Faculty Program and teaching contracts/units of work were also examined in order "to include the myriad of human, social, cultural and contextual elements that are involved" (Guba & Lincoln, 1990, p. 8) in this research narrative journey. These documents were analysed for material, motifs and commentary on notions of 'self', teacher identity, pedagogy, curriculum, belief systems and models of English teaching. Document analysis is a significant aspect of triangulation for this research (Denzin, 1978; Stake, 1974).

#### **4.2.1 Selection of the Site and Evaluand**

The researcher's priori knowledge of Heartbreak High was central to the selection of the site. Both students and teachers knew the researcher well and the trust established between the participants enhanced the quality of responses, access to participants and the honesty of their narratives. This personal relationship was not viewed as a limitation to the study because the selected methodology encourages and values subjectivity and places the researcher as a composer of consensual realities. The researcher informally approached the Heartbreak High English Faculty and inquired if they would be prepared to participate in a case study investigating the factors responsible for teacher identity construction and student identity construction in the context of the current N.S.W. *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus*. The Macquarie University Ethics committee, N.S.W. Department of Education and Training, the Principal, English faculty members, students and their parents gave formal permission for the research.

	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School term begins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering of school census data from school annual report</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial briefing of teachers re: context</li> <li>• Permission notes to parents/student</li> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Selection of students</li> <li>• Briefing of parents/students.</li> <li>• Distribution of log books &amp; guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of sample teaching contracts</li> <li>• First teacher log entries</li> <li>• Initial interviews of students</li> <li>• Sample student work collection begins.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student interviews</li> <li>• Student log entries</li> <li>• Teacher log entries</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student interviews</li> <li>• Reflection log reflection update</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher interviews</li> <li>• Student interviews</li> <li>• Lesson observation</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher/Student interviews continue</li> <li>• Lesson observation</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher interviews/Student interviews</li> <li>• Staff meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9 -10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of reflection logs from</li> <li>• Group debriefing</li> <li>• Collection of units needed at this point.</li> <li>• Transcripts make &amp; analysis begins.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>School Term End</b></p>

Table 3. Chronology of data collection at Heartbreak High

#### **4.2.2 Teacher Selection**

Teachers were fully informed of the parameters of the research, the methodological process to be undertaken and the timing of the investigation. Five of the eight teachers volunteered enthusiastically. From this pool of volunteers, the researcher asked the teachers to privately record the name of a teacher whom they perceived to be *most* like themselves and one whom they perceived to be *least* like themselves as teachers of English (philosophically and pedagogically). Thus the initial group of teachers separated themselves into two groups. The researcher selected four teachers (two male and two female in order to accommodate possible gender factors) according to the alike/unlike divide. Four teachers were deemed to be the most appropriate number because it balanced the gender ratio and would enable a detailed study of four classrooms, which was manageable given time constraints. This process adapted from *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1990) resulted in two female teachers and two male teachers being selected—one male and one female teaching year 7 or 8 English (11 to 14 year olds) and one male and one female teaching year 9 or 10 (14 to 16 year olds) who were implementing the 7 - 10 English syllabus (2003). The smaller number of teacher participants would also enable the researcher to chronicle the thick description and “rich tapestry” (Watts, 1993) of the research site.

#### **4.2.3 Student Selection**

The researcher visited the classrooms of the four participating teachers and explained the research to be undertaken at Heartbreak High. Students were very enthusiastic about taking part and equated their participation with being important. This enthusiasm appeared to be due to the fact that research was a novel experience at Heartbreak High. Most students readily volunteered. Potential student participants were then asked to confidentially record the names of fellow class members whom they perceived as being very “different” students from themselves in English. Then they were required to record the name of students in their class who were “most like themselves” as English students. The student selection process reflected that of the teacher selection process. The researcher was keen to obtain students who would provide a plethora of experiences and stories about themselves, their teachers and Subject English. This process was integral to collecting the different stories (or narratives) that needed to be heard in this research journey.

The next step in the student selection process required the teacher participants to individually record their beliefs about the characteristics of engaged and disengaged students. The researcher facilitated discussions among the teachers who used their individual lists as a starting point for creating a consensual list of the major characteristics of engaged and disengaged students (note that each characteristic is quoted as expressed by the participants).

According to teacher participants, Engaged Students were:

- Motivated
- Co operative
- Collaborative
- Respectful to each other and to the teacher
- Usually abided by classroom rules
- Tried hard
- Independent (behaviour wise) workers
- Prepared to ask for help and take advice
- Well equipped and organised
- Positive
- Pleasant
- Active listeners
- Caring about others
- Attentive
- Supportive of the teacher
- Prepared to “have a go”
- Thoughtful
- Flexible
- Focussed
- Well behaved
- Completed most work
- There to learn

Disengaged Students were:

- Disruptive
- Rude
- Aggressive
- Focussed on themselves
- Bullies
- Passively resisted
- Loudly resisted
- Unmotivated
- Poor listeners
- Talkative
- Inattentive
- Good at wasting time
- Disrespectful of teachers and other students
- Persistently disorganised and had no/few pieces of equipment (books, pens)

- Usually produced poor quality work
- Required constant supervision
- Not interested
- Unable or unwilling to recognise they were wrong
- There not to learn

Teachers then identified students in their classes as engaged (E) or disengaged (D) in their English Stage 4 (years 7 or 8) or Stage 5 class (years 9 or 10) classrooms (refer to table 4). The final step in this methodology was to cross reference the names the students had recorded, with the data from the student questionnaire with the teachers' list of engaged and disengaged students.

This complicated process resulted in the selection of four students (two male and two female) from each of the participating teachers' classes from either Stage 4 (years 7 or 8) or Stage 5 English (years 9 or 10) (see Table 4). Sixteen students from years 7 to 10 were selected. The parents of these students granted permission for them to participate in the study.

Teacher	Year	Syllabus Stage of English	Engaged students	Gender	Disengaged students	Gender
Mrs S	9 (14 – 16 years old)	5	Kareena	Female	Steve Clein	Male
			Isabel	Female	Mike	Male
Mr V	9 (14 – 16 years old)	5	Leah	Female	McKayala	Female
			Nick	Male	Roger	Male
Mr K	7 (13 – 14 years old)	4	John Howard	Male	Moria Sack	Female
			Beyonce/Bianca	Female	Twitch	Male
Mrs C	7 (13 – 14 years old)	4	Fred	Female	Leyla	Female
			Bob	Male	XXX	Male

Table 4. Teacher participants and engaged/disengaged student participants.

#### **4.2.4 Questionnaire**

All student participants completed a questionnaire (Appendix A) during class time aimed at garnering initial insights into student perceptions about themselves in relation to Subject English and what, how and why they were being taught during the trial implementation of the new *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003).

#### **4.2.5 Reflection Logs**

Reflection logs are an integral aspect of the English classrooms at Heartbreak High and student reflection is featured as an important outcome in the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003). This meant that keeping a reflection log was a familiar process for the students and teachers stakeholders in this investigation. Each student and teacher participant was given an exercise book to record their reflections, as well as, guidelines and questions to use as a starting point for their responses (Appendix B & C) to use as a starting point for reflecting on how they perceive themselves and each other as teachers and students of English in the context of the English 7 - 10 classroom. Students wrote in these logs during journal writing time that occurred in each classroom in the first ten minutes of every lesson to ensure that the reflection process was not a burden and to reduce interruptions to the normal classroom routine. Teachers were at all times very amenable about access to student participants.

#### **4.2.6 Initial discussions**

The first meeting with each participant, both teacher and student alike, involved individual interviews with the researcher. During these meetings the researcher explained the methodology, proposed timeline, process of data collection and undertook preliminary discussions. In keeping with the values of this case study (equity, intimacy, subjectivity, uniqueness and differing voices) students were asked if they would like to choose a name that reflected their identities and they enthusiastically responded to this request. Teachers, on the other hand, decided they preferred to be allocated pseudonyms by the researcher. They were comfortable with their own identities and, as Mr K remarked, “we’re not romantic like the kids. You can give us a name and it will be fine.”

Through this process students began to feel empowered in the research process and it engendered a sense of ownership of the investigation that *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1990) highlights as essential. The researcher then talked with the participants about their backgrounds gleaning data for the biographies that are briefly

recorded later in this chapter. Biographies, as Atkinson (1994) posits, are integral to the research narrative.

#### **4.2.7 Teacher Interviews**

At a fundamental level, interviews are conversations. Kvale (1996) defines qualitative research interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations." Teacher participants in the research were interviewed twice during the course of the research, once at the start of the study and again towards the end. The teacher participants were initially individually interviewed informally after having two weeks to reflect upon their responses to questions. These questions were utilised as a springboard for discussing the 'thick description' revealed in the preliminary data collection session: teacher autobiographies, why they became teachers, philosophies of teaching and learning, and their attitude to the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003). The second interview with teacher participants was conducted in a group situation in order to 'hear' the different 'voices' or perceptions of these stakeholders on a range of issues that had emerged during the research process. The role of the teacher, teacher identity, pressures on teachers, student engagement or non-engagement, economic managerialism and other pertinent areas were explored during this discussion. The initial interviews were an important means of establishing teacher stakeholder ownership and equity with the researcher. In addition, this time was used to outline the purpose, procedure and ethical issues of the research and to respond to any questions or concerns. The interviews were very informative and very relaxed. Transcriptions were later made of interviews (Appendix E).

#### **4.2.8 Student Interviews**

Three interviews with student stakeholders (at first on their own, then in pairs with another participant whom they saw as 'most alike', and then with larger groups) were conducted over three school terms (thirty weeks). Interview information gathering involved responsive focussing and mirrored the method utilised for teacher data collection – an organic process where the data gleaned from one interview formed the basis of the next participant's interview until a consensual, contextualised 'reality' or narrative was realised (Guba & Lincoln, 1990). During interviews the researcher was cognizant of the importance of valuing the subjective, intimate and personal realities of the student evaluands (participants). This concern, in part,

reflected the work of Hodkinson (1994) and others that found that adolescent identity constructs are subjective and emotional rather than objective and rational.

#### **4.2.9 Staff Meeting Observation**

The researcher attended a dozen staff meetings, some of which included training and development sessions on the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training *Quality Teaching* (2003) framework and recorded observations of these meetings.

##### **4.2.1.0 Informal Conversations**

Informal conversations during recess and lunch breaks were added to the data collection process after it initially began for two reasons. Firstly, the staff suggested the researcher might like to use these conversations because they wanted to have more opportunities to give voice to their concerns and beliefs than would have been afforded in more formal interviews. Secondly, the researcher had become very aware of the “thick description” revealed in these more informal faculty gatherings and the wealth of data that would otherwise be omitted. This process reflects the emergent design of the methodology of this case study.

##### **4.2.1.1 Observation Lessons**

Two lessons per student and teacher participant were observed during the course of the research into student and teacher identity construction in N.S.W. 7 - 10 English classrooms at Heartbreak High. An observation framework (Appendix D) was used to record researcher impressions and to provide thick description regarding how teachers and students in the study interacted and behaved in the English classroom. Observation data was also a valuable tool for the process of triangulation in this ethnographic investigation.

##### **4.2.1.2 Analysis Methodology**

The researcher applied Guba and Lincoln's *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (1990) principles and gathered detailed data from a variety of sources that provide “richly descriptive accounts” about the self, about Subject English and about student and teacher perceptions of each other at Heartbreak High searching for “patterns of living” (Watts, 1993, p.p. 55-56). Aspects of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were used by the researcher who explored and recorded repeating motifs and themes in light of the research presented in the review of the literature. The result of this narrative research journey was a consensual truth or chronicle that responded to the central questions of this investigation:

What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English 7 - 10 classrooms?

What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in the N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

The researcher of this ethnographic case study engaged in a cycle of “responsive focussing” (Stake, 1974) featuring reflections on biographical and autobiographical accounts (Atkinson, 1990) of research participants, as well as, responses based on initial stimulus of questions about themselves. These responses, as previously noted, led the researcher to formulate further questions, and student responses to these questions raised further issues for exploration and the cycle of “responsive focussing” (Stake, 1974) continued and the researcher searched for “recurring messages” (Eisner, 1991) and themes. The student selection process based on an adaptation of the work of Guba and Lincoln (1990) - the dichotomy of “alike” and “unlike” - ensured a rich diversity of ideas and perceptions were gathered during the research process.

The veracity of the data collection procedure was sustained by the use of responsive focussing which also maintained equity among stakeholders as it was their responses that directed the next field of inquiry. Veracity was also enhanced through the use of triangulation made possible by the choice of a range of data collection tools including a questionnaire, reflection logs, interviews, observations of students in class, student with each other to compose this ethnographic chronicle. These narratives communicate their sense of self as an individual, as a student, and as student of English. For teachers, the analysis of the data in many ways replicated that of the students – formulation of initial questions that elicited initial responses, followed by new questions composed by the researcher arising from the teacher participants. The data was ‘read’ by the researcher who continuously searched for repeating motifs that formed the findings. The emerging stories and motifs that were based on examining the central questions of this thesis: What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms? What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms?

The reoccurring motifs that emerged from analysis of the data formed the framework for portraying the analysis and findings of this study.

These included:

- Ability, self-concept, critical reflection and (dis) engaged students;
- Empathy and (dis) engaged students;
- Perceptions of the value of Subject English in (dis) engaged students;
- Culture/s, sub-cultures, agency and (dis) engaged students;
- Gender;
- The role of the teacher in student identity construction;
- Personal ‘self’ and professional ‘self’;
- The role of agency; and
- Subject English, model of English and teacher.

## **Auto/biographies**

### **4.3 The School Site**

The school research site has a population of about 920 male and female students and 60 teachers. The latter have an average of 20 years teaching experience. Heartbreak High caters for years 7 to 12 (students of approximately 11 years to 18 years of age) and is a comprehensive, public school. The school is situated in a suburb 60 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

The student population is ethnically eclectic and draws mainly from what could be loosely called working and middle class families, a high proportion of which are single parent families and blended families. The majority of students have Anglo Saxon origins but the student population also includes students whose parents were born in Asia and the Middle East. In very recent years there has been a slight increase in the number of students who come from the Solomon Islands and Maori New Zealanders.

An examination of the school census data showed that the average economic income of the candidature had dropped significantly since the advent of the selective state schools and the proliferation of independent private schools in the area. It is also important to note that a school survey of student out-of-school-employment hours showed that the majority of students undertook an average of 12 hours per week and 10% were undertaking in excess of 20 hours per week. Shift work was common, with some students working at fast food outlets until 4am.

The school is divided into faculties with a Head Teacher for each of the larger subject areas. The school day is divided into 53 minute periods; generally each day has two periods (lessons), recess, (two periods) lunch, one period (home). There is a whole school assembly once a week, with year assemblies operating every few weeks supervised by the welfare/year co-ordinators.

#### **4.4 The English Faculty**

The following biography of the Heartbreak High English Faculty was derived from the researcher's prior knowledge of the site, interviews and observations. The faculty has a staff of eight whose ages range from mid forties to mid fifties. There are four men and four women. The average age of teaching experience in general is twenty-seven years. The last teacher to join the faculty came approximately ten years prior to this study.

The research site's English Faculty has a history of exposure to expertise from educationalists - some of whom have become world-renowned; they also have strong educational beliefs that they enunciated clearly during discussions and interviews. The Heartbreak High English Faculty had prior to this research, been awarded the *Excellence in English* state education award in recognition of their contribution to teaching English. All faculty members believe in the central position of Subject English in the curriculum. The model of English that is predominant in the faculty is the 'Growth' English teaching paradigm (Dixon, 1975) but faculty members demonstrated, to varying degrees, awareness of the other paradigms of Subject English and utilised concepts and pedagogical practices like those encapsulated in the Critical Literacy model and tended to use them "when appropriate."

The English Faculty members shared similar political beliefs and were used to a strong, autonomous position with regards to Faculty decisions; they would state clearly their position but would not impose it on others, however, they fiercely resisted 'school decisions' that they believed to infringe on their educational values. The degree to which the members of this faculty were used to being consulted and to being democratically heard is evidenced by the fact that they wrote the job description for the Head Teacher English position when it was advertised. The members of the English Faculty are vociferous in their support of the New South Wales Teachers Federation Union.

The English Faculty is well respected in the District and within the school for its expertise. The members of the faculty were all very experienced external examination markers at both

the *School Certificate* and *Higher School Certificate*; some were Judges and Senior Markers. This faculty is the only English Faculty in N.S.W. where every teacher marked the state external examinations. Another example of this faculty's professionalism is evidenced in their 2000 initiative in organising the first training and development district conference for the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) with the assistance of the then Principal in 2000 using the draft syllabus. The English Faculty, together with the District Superintendent, organised and conducted the first school workshops on the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) (draft) that involved experts such as the syllabus co coordinator, syllabus writers and experts in English.

#### **4.5 Classes/Allocation of Teachers**

The Year Seven Co-coordinator allocates year seven classes. Data from the primary school (school performance, social and health issues, learning difficulties and behavioural issues) are used in this process. English, unlike Mathematics and Science, are arranged in mixed ability classes for Years 7 - 10 because of the English Faculty's strongly held beliefs in mixed ability teaching. The complex process of student placement into classes is an activity observed by the researcher. It initially involves random placement of students into classes with equal numbers of males and females. These lists are then commented upon by all faculty members teachers with a view to creating "balanced" classes that share equal numbers of student personalities (for example, 'stars', learning difficulties, behavioural problems) and for social reasons, "s/he needs a friend." Combinations that are deemed to be inappropriate are separated. The Head Teacher and class list co-ordinator examine suggestions and redraft and allocate teachers considering personalities, teaching styles and past interactions between teachers and students. The Head Teacher has the final say on student placement but it is a very consultative process.

#### **4.6 Evaluand: The Stakeholders**

The constructivist methodology utilised in this case study values the biographies and autobiographies of those involved in the research narrative journey. These accounts are crucial to the story that unfolds and also invaluable in explicitly addressing potential weaknesses in the methodology by enunciating the role of reflexivity "texts do not simply and transparently report an independent reality" and because narratives are "strengthened, not weakened, by the inclusion of the autobiographical accounts" (Atkinson, 1990, pp.109-110). Another reason for the inclusion of auto/biographies is the central concern of this qualitative study that is the identity or the 'self' constructed in the classroom and in the English Faculty

at Heartbreak High. Teacher and student initial interviews and student reflection logs were the data sources for the biographies.

#### **4.6.1 The Researcher**

I am a Head Teacher (English) in the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training and I have worked with the government system for twenty-five years. I am now in my mid forties and live in the Lower Blue Mountains, seventy kilometres west of Sydney, N.S.W. I have four children and a husband who is also a Head Teacher with the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training.

I was born and education in far Western New South Wales at both catholic and public schools. My mother emigrated from Scotland and was both a nurse and a pre-school teacher. My father was an underground miner. I taught in Victoria before returning to my hometown to teach for ten years. I received a promotion and moved with my husband and children to the Blue Mountains and I now teach in a public school in Western Sydney.

There are four girls in the family and we were initially educated at the local Catholic School and then transferred to a state, public primary school. Considering the very unequal position of women in the town (for example, married women not in professions were not allowed to work so that unemployment would be kept to a minimum) and no female was allowed in a bar, we were brought up to value education and having careers. I was the first child of the family to attend university. I studied English, History and Education. I undertook postgraduate studies in English and Education at Charles Sturt University, Australia.

#### **4.6.2 Teacher Stakeholders**

##### **Mr K**

Mr K is of Polish descent and 48 years of age. He comes from a large family and speaks both Polish and English. He lives in Western Sydney where he was educated. He is married to an English/Language teacher and has two children. Mr K taught in an isolated country town before transferring to Western Sydney schools. He has been at the school site for twenty years.

##### **Mrs C**

Mrs C is 47 years old and is of Anglo-Australian decent. She was educated in New South Wales comprehensive, public schools, and is an only child. Mrs C taught initially in very difficult Western Sydney schools and then transferred to the school site. She has been teaching English for twenty-six years and at this school for fifteen years. She is married to a public servant and has two children.

### **Mr V**

Mr V is 50 years old of English-Australian background. Mr V was educated at a private, high status, single sex school, in N.S.W. His father was a doctor and his mother a ‘homemaker’. Mr V has been teaching for 22 years, fourteen of which have been at the research site. Mr V taught in semi rural outer Sydney schools, before transferring to his current school. Mr V is married to an English teacher and has two children.

### **Mrs S**

Mrs S is a 49-year-old teacher of English who has been teaching for twenty-eight years (with some time off to raise a family). Mrs S was educated in Sydney at state, comprehensive schools. She is married to a psychologist and has three children. Mrs S has taught in inner Sydney and Western Sydney schools. She has taught English at the research site for ten years.

## **4.6.3 Student Stakeholders**

### **Kareena**

**Teacher: Mrs S**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

Kareena chose her pseudonym because she has, “*a passion for that name*” and because it sounds, “*Friendly, nicely spoken, well behaved – as I am.*”

Kareena is Indian/Malaysian/Australian and is in Year nine and fourteen years old. She is the middle child and has three siblings. Her eldest siblings have been or are currently at university. Kareena describes her mum as a “housewife” but her mother was a bank accountant in Malaysia. Her father is from India and although he has a profession he packs and stores toys because of the difficulty involved in getting his medical credentials recognised in Australia. Kareena thinks of herself as Australian. Kareena’s parents met in Malaysia but moved to Australia before she was born because, “*Mum thought that it would be a better life for us because up in India you need to know different languages and stuff and mum thought*

*that it would be better to have English as our mother tongue. She thought education and everything would be better here [in Australia] and everything.*” Kareena’s favourite hobbies are drawing, studying, friends and movies. Kareena wishes to be a doctor.

### **Isabel**

**Teacher: Mrs S**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

Isabel had difficulty choosing a pseudonym but eventually decided upon Isabel because she identified with it as sounding like herself, *“Sensitive, reliable, honest, easily embarrassed, Australian, different and shy.”* Isabel is 15 years old and has Chinese parents who left China when Isabel was eight, *“Because of the one child policy”* so they came to Australia, *“to have another child.”* Isabel has a younger brother. Isabel describes her mum as undertaking home duties and her father as a carpenter, but both parents are viewed by their daughter as, *“extremely ambitious”* and in an initial interview Isabel related the disappointment and failure her parents felt in her when she failed to achieve a place in a selective school via examinations. Isabel came to the she school research site because she was not accepted into a selective state school. Selective state schools are also a part of the New South Wales education system where students enter via a series of external examinations. Six months after the data was collected for this thesis Isabel was accepted into a selective high school many, many miles away and her parents moved her even though it meant commuting for a significant amount of time each day. Isabel’s favourite hobbies include drawing, reading and painting. Isabel wishes to go to university and be a writer or an artist.

### **Steve Clein**

**Teacher: Mrs S**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

Steve Clein chose his pseudonym because it, *“sounds like me; crazy, risk taking, exciting, outgoing, active, adventurous, smart, hardworking, polite, important.”* Steve is a fifteen-year-old boy who is the youngest of three children. His older brother is at a selective high school, and his sister is at another high school in Western Sydney and she is school captain. Steve’s mother works for a charity helping disabled children and his father is a bank manager. Steve is of European-Australian heritage. Steve came to the research site because of his *‘mates’* going there in Year seven. Steve was Captain at his primary school and in the OC (gifted children) class. Steve’s favourite hobbies include skateboarding, sports and umpiring.

Steve had been voted by his peers to be a student representative on the SRC (Students Representative Council) but had been removed from the position for a number of infractions. Steve's career goals include being a professional skateboarder or sportsman.

### **Mike**

**Teacher: Mrs S**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

Michael chose his name because of a bawdy joke. Michael said the name was like him, "*funny*". Michael is in Year nine and is fourteen years old. He lives with his grandparents and his twin brother. Michael also has an older brother who is eighteen but he doesn't know where he lives and an older sister whom he described as, "*an alcoholic*". Michael's Mum lives in a tough inner Sydney suburb and his father lives in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Mum, '*does drugs, so my Grandparents came and got my brother and me and brought us to live with them here. It got bad there. It's better here because we were always walking home carefully 'cause of the needles and stuff between home and the school when we lived with mum and she.... well she done drugs, ya know.*' Mike's favourite pastimes are skateboarding and funny movies. Mike wants to do the Higher School Certificate and go to university to study law or medicine.

### **Leah**

**Teacher: Mr V**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

Leah is fourteen years old and in Year 9. Leah chose her pseudonym because it sounded, "*creative, artistic, colourful, dramatic and that's how I see my strengths.*" Leah is the middle child and she has two other siblings. Her Dad works in telecommunications and her mother does home duties but trained as a draftsman. Leah's mum wanted to be an architect but wasn't allowed to do subjects like technical drawing at school because only males could undertake them in order to get, as Leah tells the anecdote, "*a man's job.*" This 'hidden injury' still rankles with Leah's mum and is one reason Leah wants to go to university to be an architect or artist after completing Year 12. Leah's favourite hobbies are drawing, sculpting, art and drama, as well as, making and painting miniatures.

### **McKayla**

**Teacher: Mr V**

**Year 9**

**Stage 5**

McKayla is fourteen years of age. McKayla chose her pseudonym because it sounded, “*exotic, cool, historical, romantic, sporty, creative, adventurous and mysterious.*” She identified herself as having these character elements. McKayla’s dad is from Scotland and he is a lecturer in literacy and language at a university who “*travels a lot.*” Her mother is from Malaysia and works for American Express in Sydney. McKayla is the only female sibling and the youngest of four children. One brother sells telephones; one works for American Express and the other is still at school. McKayla has no career goals besides completing Year 12. McKayla’s favourite pastimes include dancing, athletics, soccer, football, riddles, listening to music (except for heavy metal), and writing stories. She wishes to do business studies at university.

**Nick****Teacher: Mr V****Year 9****Stage 5**

Nick chose his name because it was his nick-name. He is fourteen years of age and his family migrated from India “a few years back because my Mum thought we’d get a better education here. Education is better in Australia than India ‘cause in India the teachers are not polite like Australia, it’s like do this, do that and they aren’t polite and they hit you with a ruler in India.” Nick was very proud of being dux of his primary school, “‘cause I was really helpful to the teacher and studying and all that. I did E.S.L (English as a Second Language).” Nick likes to spend his time outside school playing football and swimming. Nick wants to get an apprenticeship in telecommunications.

**Roger****Teacher: Mr V****Year 9****Stage 5**

Roger is fourteen years old and the only student not keen to create his own pseudonym. Initially Roger exhibited a keenness to participate in the research as a means of escaping the classroom, “*it’s [research] better than being in the room doing journal, reading and writing and stuff.*” I selected Roger’s pseudonym because as he displayed indifference to doing so. Roger’s mother is a shop assistant and he has a step dad who worked in a trade. His Mum and Dad divorced when Roger was ten years old and his Dad had remarried and Roger has stepsiblings. Roger’s mum has plans for him to complete Year 12 and to attend university to

“*be something.*” Throughout the research Roger was suspended from school for classroom and playground offences including dangerous conduct and violence. Roger’s favourite hobbies are skateboarding and hanging out with his mates.

### **Moria Sack**

**Teacher: Mr K**

**Year 7**

**Stage 4**

Moria created her own name because it sounded the kind of name where, “I am an interesting person. I want to be a High Court Judge or a teacher of dance and I want a beautiful house and a beautiful car. I am not interested in boys, well not that much anyway, and I want a beautiful dog and bird and I will look after mum ‘cause all I want in life is to go GOOD!” Moria lived with her mother who had separated acrimoniously from her partner some years before. Moria was very concerned about being ‘good’ and asked me, in my role of researcher, “to approve [improve] me and help me be good, not bad.” Moria loved her mother a great deal and wanted her to be proud and happy of her and her actions. During the research, Moria was taken away from her mother by the Department of Community (D.O.Cs) and placed in foster care. She later rebelled at school, for which she was suspended. Moria rebelled at her foster home and ran away to live in a house with two friends. While still attending Heartbreak High, the school paid for her clothes, but Moria often refused to wear the school shoes and clothes supplied for her because they were, “unfashionable.” Moria recorded her favourite pastimes as food and dancing. Moria left the school two years after the data collection process concluded.

### **Beyonce/Bianca**

**Teacher: Mr K**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

Bianca vacillated between two names, Beyonce Knowles (the successful singer and popular culture figure one of her, “*dancing idols*”) and Bianca, because she loved to sing and identified with these stage names and identities. Eventually she settled for ‘Bianca’ as a more original name for her inclusion in the research because it, “*reflects myself – bright, a reader and writer, smart, a dancer, singer, involved in musicals, keen to learn new things and meet new people.*” Bianca is thirteen years old and has a twin who also attends the school research site. Bianca has an older brother who is a bricklayer. Her mother is a primary school teacher and her father is a plumber. Bianca wants to be a lawyer when she, “*grows up.*” During data

collection Bianca was placed on a 'blue' monitoring book by the welfare team at the school to assist her (as she explained to me) to, "*get back on track*" in class and stop her talking and calling out. Bianca's favourite pastimes are interacting with people, dancing, singing, sport and music.

### **John Howard**

**Teacher: Mr K**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

John is thirteen years old and displays an awareness of politics and current affairs, and enjoys satire – hence the use of the name of an Australian Prime Minister as his pseudonym. His dad is a financial planner and his mother is a receptionist. John is the youngest of three children and the only male; his sisters are both at the nearby selective high school. John entered the demanding University of New South Wales *Australasia* writing examination and scored a high distinction, placing him ahead of candidates much older than himself. John wants to complete a successful Higher School Certificate (Stage 6) and become a lawyer or actor. In the short term, he wants to continue story writing and to win in public speaking and debating competitions. John frequently looked frail and was ill during the research and his hand would twitch uncontrollably at times. He was eventually diagnosed as a diabetic. John's favourite hobbies are reading, playing basketball and writing short stories. John was voted by his peers to represent them on the Student Representative Council (SRC). John later became Junior School Captain (Year 10).

### **Twitch**

**Teacher: Mr K**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

Twitch is thirteen years old and chose his pseudonym because, "*It's like me; cool, funny, a practical joker, and I've got a temper.*" Twitch is the oldest child sibling – he has a younger sister. Twitch's mum is from Ireland and his father is from Wales but they split up when Twitch was in primary school. Twitch sees himself as, "*Australian 'cause I was born here.*" Dad has a job waterproofing on construction sites and mum is a hairdresser. Twitch wishes to leave after getting his School Certificate exit credentials, "*to get a job, maybe an apprenticeship.*" Twitch has been on Deputy and welfare monitoring systems and has been suspended for, "*getting into heaps of fights 'cause I was aggressive, but I'm calmer now, I'm*

*sick of getting into trouble.*” Twitch’s favourite hobbies include boxing, motorbike riding, water skiing and being, “*out and about.*”

## **Fred**

**Teacher: Mrs C**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

Fred is a twelve-year-old female who chose the name ‘Fred’ because she identified with the character in the *Harry Potter* (J.K. Rowling) series. Fred was captain of her primary school and debating champion. Her mother cleans houses for other people and her father is a tradesman. Fred is one of four children who have all been at the same school site and successfully achieved the Higher School Certificate (Year 12 exit credential) and attended university. Fred has always been successful at school; in primary school (kindergarten to year 6) and she was voted School Captain. Fred describes herself as, “*hardworking, caring, quiet, but with a wicked sense of humour, friendly and polite.*” Fred was voted by her peers to represent them on the Student Representative Council (SRC) that helps give voice to student issues and concerns. Fred later became Junior School (Year 10) female Captain.

## **XXX**

**Teacher: Mrs C**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

XXX chose his pseudonym because, “*I liked the movie called Triple X. This guy’s a criminal and he gets outa gaol and he trashes all these um cars and he works under cover as an agent. He’s a goodguy/baddy.*” XXX likes action, violent movies, sports and skateboarding. He is a thirteen year old who is currently on medication after being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Syndrome. XXX has a history of rebellious behaviour in primary school (which he attended from age five to twelve). XXX describes himself in very physical terms including relishing “rumbles” which XXX says are “are only mucking around.” This “mucking around” was observed by the researcher to result in XXX being frequently placed in isolation with the Deputy Principal and also being suspended from school.

## **Bob**

**Teacher: Mrs C**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

Bob chose his pseudonym because it was a “*simple, funny name*” that “*didn’t require too much thinking about.*” His pseudonym wasn’t important to him unlike most other evaluands who thought a pseudonym an important symbol of their identity in the research. Bob was from an Anglo Saxon Australian background, his mum is a nurse and his dad a tradesman. Bob sees himself as having many friends whom he “*sticks up for.*” Bob’s hobbies were cricket, rollerblading, football, skateboarding and watching cartoons. He described himself as “*always giving*” but “*easily annoyed.*” Bob wanted an apprenticeship in “*carpentry or something.*”

**Leyla**

**Teacher: Mrs C**

**Year: 7**

**Stage 4**

Leyla chose her name because she thought it reflected her personality. She described herself thus, “*I do not have a sense of humour. As a friend I am nice and I am shy around people I do not know. I am smart*” Leyla’s goals are to go to university and study law. Leyla lives with her step – mother, father, two brothers and a sister. Her dad immigrated from Turkey and her step – mother is English. Leyla’s dad works in management at a very large glass-manufacturing factory and her stepmother (whom she calls mum) is a scientist who “*works with minerals.*” Leyla’s hobbies include artistic skating and playing netball. Her goals include gaining her Higher School Certificate and becoming a “*vet or lawyer.*”

This chapter has described the conceptual framework for this thesis The methodology utilised in this study has adapted and combined elements of research metaphors (narratives, chronicles, composition), case study and Fourth Generation Evaluation ethnography, and grounded theory in order to create a consensual response to the research questions:

What factors are responsible for student identity construction in N.S.W. English 7 - 10 classrooms?

What factors are responsible for teacher identity construction in N.S.W. English 7 - 10 classrooms?

The paradigm for the research is represented in Figure 1. It depicts a spiral to symbolise the dynamic nature of the process of data collection and synthesis; the role of responsive

focussing in forming and reforming questions as new issues and themes emerge, and the procedures utilised to gather and analyse data.

This chapter has described the methodological approach utilised in this qualitative investigation into identity construction at Heartbreak High. The metaphor of research as a narrative journey provides opportunities to depict the detail of this research and to explain the appropriation of different theoretical perspectives. The influence of Guba and Lincoln (1990) and their model of *Fourth Generation Evaluation* have been described in this section, particularly in terms of the equality of stakeholders, and application of a complex selection process in an attempt to achieve equity and diverse interpretations of realities. This chapter has also explained the choice of a case study approach that takes account of “multiple realities” (p.41) being synthesized into a “consensual truth” (Guba and Lincoln, 1990, p.12) in this research narrative. The role of narratives, ethnographies, and auto/biographies in “persuading” (Atkinson, 1990, p.15) and explicitly reminding the reader that the researcher is implicated in the research process has also been highlighted in this section of the thesis. The grounded nature of this qualitative study has been described as has the processes of data collection. Chapter 5, *Research Analysis and Findings*, utilises the theoretical framework explored in this chapter and examines factors and influences implicated in the process of student and teacher identity formation. Figure 1 synthesises the methodological approach used in this qualitative case study at Heartbreak High.

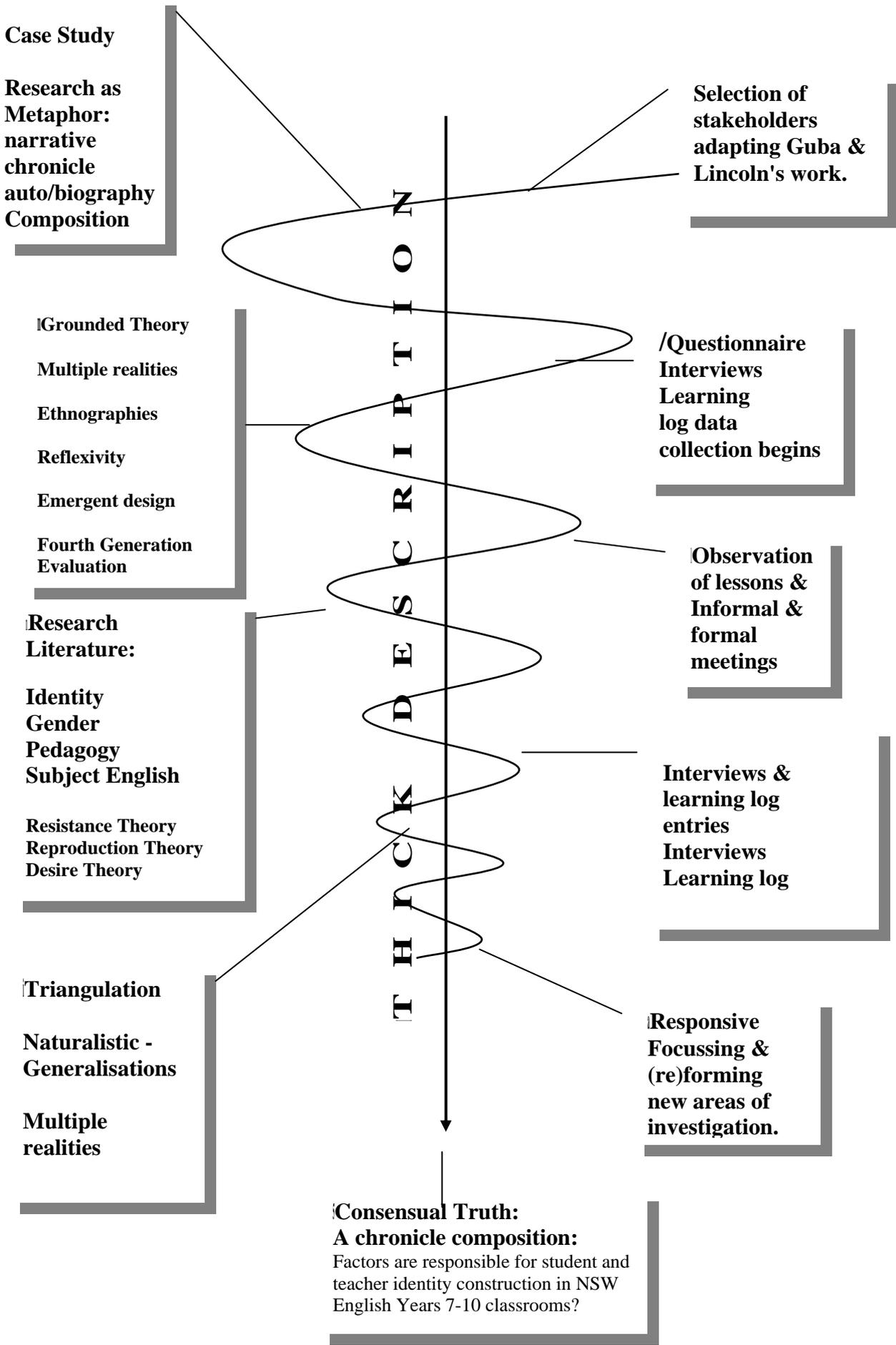


Figure 2. Model of Methodology

## **RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

## Chapter 5

### Factors Influencing Identity Construction in English at Heartbreak High

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical perspectives that underpin this ethnographic investigation, the methodological approach and foreshadowed the framework to be used to analyse the data. This chapter will initially interpret information gathered at Heartbreak High relating to student identity construction in English classrooms and this will be followed by an examination of factors influencing teacher identity creation.

The literature reviewed in an earlier chapter revealed that students are characterised as presenting engaged or disengaged identities in the classroom. The research highlighted the following factors as significant in producing these identities: ability, achievement, attentiveness, self-concept, critical reflection, the ability to empathise, (sub) cultures, gender, desire, agency, curriculum and the teacher. These motifs formed the framework of the analysis of findings in this ethnographic inquiry.

The literature is divided regarding the nature of teacher identity. One school of thought presents it in terms of an objectifiable, professional self that fundamentally equates with a set of teaching approaches and strategies. Another school suggests teacher identity needs to be viewed in a more subjective manner based on pedagogy as a complex phenomenon that incorporates personal and professional 'self(s)'. These self(s), some theorists suggest, are based on desire(s). A large body of work states convincingly that teachers have significant agency in creating engaged or disengaged student identities in the classroom. Conversely, some scholars suggest that students have a great deal of agency in constructing their own identities and in choosing whether they engage or disengage in learning. Grounded theory analysis in this chapter will explore the findings discussed in the review of the literature in light of the Heartbreak High context.

An analysis of the data applying *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1990) methodology identified students who were engaging and disengaging in the 7 - 10 English classes involved in this case study. The complex selection of student participants described in the previous chapter was used to obtain initial impressions of those who were engaged or disengaged in learning applying 'I am most like' and 'I am least like' statements. Teacher descriptions of students obtained during interviews and the recording of student profiles of

other students, as well as observation of lessons, provided valuable data that verified initial perceptions about the teachers in the investigation. This process also revealed that Steve, McKayla, Roger, Moria, Mike, Leyla and Twitch displayed disaffected identities – they were consistently disengaging from the learning process in the English classrooms. On the other hand, Kareena, Isabel, John, Fred (female), Bob, Leah, Nick and Beyonce constructed engaged student identities in Subject English (refer to Table 3 on page 80).

## **Student Identity Construction at Heartbreak High**

### **5.2 Student perceptions of Ideal Teachers**

Students in the case study at Heartbreak High were asked during interviews to reflect on ‘good’ or ‘ideal’ teachers and record these characteristics in their logs. These responses were compiled and then students were asked to select the ones they thought were important. They did not believe one factor was more significant than another, so the list is compiled randomly. Both engaged and disengaged students indicated the complete list that follows as profiling the ‘best’ teacher:

- Has fun with the class
- Enjoys teaching
- Is an expert in the subject
- Is relaxed
- Knows things are hard to learn and helps you
- Controls the class/has firm discipline
- Is polite, kind and nice
- Explains things
- Plans lessons and knows what s/he is doing
- Caring and close to students
- Doesn't yell
- Gives merits and tells you that you have done well
- Has a sense of humour
- Makes learning fun as opposed to boring
- Includes variety in lessons in what is done and how we do it
- Sees students as individuals and shows personal interest in them
- Is flexible and adapts to situations without getting upset
- Has no favourites
- Helps you learn
- Is organised
- Is hard working

These data support the large body of work in this area including the single sex study of males undertaken by Slade and Trent (2000) and the unisex research of Borich (1999) who both found that students defined ‘good’ teachers as: caring and encouraging, enthusiastic about

what they teach and also to share this enjoyment, fair and equitable, warm and friendly, able to see students as individuals, work at developing a positive rapport and give personalised feedback. Heartbreak High teachers involved in the study were shown this list of ideal attributes during interviews and asked to comment. They concurred with all of these elements but noted during discussions in a joint interview that “good” teachers have to have a “personality, a presence” in the classroom. Mrs S equated this “*personality*” with the role of “*An actor, and like an actor, good teachers are very different. They can be quiet and self possessed like Mr K, or energetic and dramatic like Mrs C, or very loud and dramatic like Mr V or somewhere in between like me. But we all have that personality that makes us, well good teachers even though we often feel pretty failed at times.*”

### **5.2.1 Disengaged Student Perceptions of Teachers**

Disengaged students (although they displayed a lack of critical self-reflection and empathy for teachers as discussed previously) recognised their English teachers as having “good qualities”. However, this did not result in creating engaged identities in the classroom and this finding differs from those of Rowe (2003). At Heartbreak High disaffected English students were considerably more critical of their teachers than engaged students. During interviews Steve exemplified this finding saying of his teacher that she “Knew her stuff, she teaches us things like picture books and we watch movies and do units on witches and things but she doesn’t laugh enough and she doesn’t do drama and games like my teacher last year.” Mike, another disaffected student, wrote in his log “Mrs S is a good teacher and she teaches us some things that I like like speeches and movies but I want to do group work like we done last year but she won’t let us so we do individual work because she says we get too distracted in group work.” McKayla explained in her interview that she believed Mr V to be a “Good teacher because I am doing better this year than last year, but he yells.”

It was an interesting observation by the researcher that disengaged students used the term “yell” to describe almost every interaction with their English teachers, yet the teachers were not usually yelling - they raised their voices sometimes but this was observed by the researcher to be an increase in reasonable volume to, for example, return student to the tasks at hand. During discussions with the teacher participants of the study, the researcher raised this issue and teachers conjectured that this behaviour was part of (un) conscious learned behaviour in which students used misdirection, attack and a “scattergun approach” (I wasn’t the only one talking..., you don’t like me..., don’t yell at me...) to obfuscate, confuse and

escalate situations. Teachers in the case study reported that this pattern of behaviour resulted in a rapid re-writing of incidents so that the student had committed no wrongdoing and was the victim of the situation. Teacher participants were vocal in their belief that this reconstruction of reality by disaffected students was rooted in their inability to take responsibility for their actions and their lack of empathy with the teacher or with engaged students. This appeared to be the case and supports findings (see for instance, Hodkinson 1994) that critical self-reflection is a crucial factor in constructing engaged student identities in the classroom.

The disengaged students who were most critical of their teachers (Roger, Leyla and XXX) exhibited less respect for the role of teacher in general than other students. Roger described Mr V as “good” but one who “can’t make me behave even if he threatens me with like yellow forms or detention or being sent to the Deputy. I don’t care if they get my parents up. So what if they suspend me...let them!” Moria Sack and Twitch enthusiastically described their teacher Mr K as “Fantastic!” They appeared to most appreciate his sense of justice and fairness and showing that he liked them and felt Mr K was liked and respected by most students: “The class likes him and my friends like him too, they have him for Drama and he’s good there too.” However, during observation lessons and subsequent interviews, Moria Sack and Twitch did not evidence critical self-reflection, empathy for the teacher or other students – they were focussed on their own desires (“I was just bored”, “I was just having fun”, “I got sent out for doing nothing”). Liking and respecting Mr K did not prevent Moria Sack and Twitch from disengaging and disrupting the learning in the classroom.

Although Leyla and XXX described Mrs C as a “good” teacher they were very critical of her requirement to be attentive and work. XXX and Leyla interpreted Mrs C’s requests to conform to classroom rules as persecution based on “dislike” and “personality clashes”. Observation of lessons refuted disengaged students’ assertions of being “victims” of negative teacher personality traits. This study found that disengaged students displayed varying degrees of aptitude in interacting with teachers and frequently chose to confront rather than negotiate. Observation of student and teacher interactions supported the view that students were fulfilling desires - the desire to be right, to be noticed, to be important, to have their subculture valued. In doing so, as Walker (1993) found, they chose the subculture over the dominant culture of the classroom and disengaged even when they ‘liked’ the teacher.

### 5.2.2 Engaged Student Perceptions of Teachers

Kareena, Isabel, Leah, Nick, John Howard, Beyonce, Fred and Mitchell had positive attitudes towards their English teachers and described them as being “good” teachers. Kareena’s response epitomises the attitude of engaged students about their English teachers, but also their positive perceptions of teachers in general: *Mrs S is basically like all the teachers I’ve ever had, nice to me and they all have treated me the same way so you learn equally well with them all because they are approachable and trustworthy. I learned how to co – operate with them [teachers] years ago. Have always talked to teachers and I have a dialogue with them, that’s important. I have a job to do and so do teachers like Mrs S in English help me to learn. If I don’t understand a passage or something I put up my hand and the teacher comes to me and I say, ‘Miss what does that mean? And the teacher helps you and makes the learning easier and you show you are trustworthy and the teacher talks to you more and more. She is polite, answers questions, explains how to do things and corrects you when you are wrong.’ I so not have a “Favourite teacher because they are all nice and helpful and know their subjects and use discipline and Mrs S is like that – funny and kind and polite.*

Kareena’s concept of positive student and teacher interactions appears to be a learned phenomenon (“I learned how to get on with them years ago”) and was a common aspect of engaged students’ reflections on teacher/student relationships. Leah believed “*staying within the boundaries [teachers set]*” assisted student “self-control,” Nick commented “*with most teachers, you just start to talk to them about their subject and they get excited and they are happy and that’s what I do and I get on good with my teachers.*” John, Fred and Isabel focussed on “*being co operative*” and showing teachers that “*you are a good student*”. It is evident that engaged students were experts in negotiating the dominant culture of the classroom and that they had learned to do so at a very young age as Furlong (1991) found.

### 5.2.3 Disengaged Students and Ability, Achievement, Self-Concept and Reflection in English

Disengaged students involved in this case study, as Robertson (1997) found, evidenced a “lack of responsibility” (p.111) as they allowed their desire and self-concept to over-ride a desire to critically reflect on their disengagement. Student responses recorded in the questionnaire, interviews and in their reflection logs described themselves as “very good” at English and producers of “good work” “most of the time” and “doing really well” regardless

of their ability level. This finding is at variance with Dembo (1988) who found that low self-concepts resulted in perceptions of lack of ability and result in resistant behaviour. The data revealed that those students disengaged in English over-estimated their ability; failed to evaluate the quality of their work accurately; displayed an attitude of “that’s good enough”; and could not reflect critically on their work habits in the classroom.

The inability of students to critically reflect on their ability and work effort in English is epitomised in the following comments: Leyla described her ability in English as “*really, really good*”, Twitch thought English “*easy*” and Mike thought himself “*Pretty good at English and doing the work and I do pretty good stories and drama and talks but I don’t like the listening part or English, I prefer not to do it.*” Moria believed she was “*Really good at English and a great writer and reader and really good at drama,*” Nick said he was “*close to top of the grade*” although there was no measure for this judgement other than his own perception. XXX, despite poor skills, understanding and knowledge of English, also exhibited an overall positive self-concept about himself and English. His resistant behaviour was accurately depicted by his teacher’s comments: “*He won’t stay in his seat, he calls out, swears at the other students, shouts at me, and won’t do his work unless it’s reading but even then he wants to do that at home.*” XXX thought he was “*average*” at English could read “*really well, like I’ve read Harry Potter series five times!*” but he was not good at writing because it was “*boring*” and because it “*hurt*” his hands. When asked if not being good at writing made him feel less confident XXX replied, “[laughing] *Naaa. It’s just ‘cause it’s boring, most of school is boring except for sport and me mates. They [teachers] just do too much writ’n and and I could do it if I wanted to, I wouldn’t be great but I could do it if I cared.*” This interview comment may have included a degree of bravado, but the data verified that XXX and the other less able students displaying disengagement evidenced very positive self-concepts.

Observation of student behaviour in the classroom reinforced the researcher’s perception that disengaged students believed themselves, on the whole, to be able students of English and chose to disengage for reasons other than poor self-esteem, poor ability or a lack of skills. Steve (who was Dux of his primary school) resisted learning as did Twitch, Roger, Leyla and McKayla. During interviews, the teachers of each of these students described them as: “*very capable,*” “*intelligent,*” “*clever,*” and “*creative.*” However, as was most evident in observation lessons, these students continuously resisted learning in the classroom. They displayed

behaviour that teacher participants described as “demanding”, “talkative” “loud”, “uncooperative”, “unmotivated”, “challenging,” and “rude”. Disaffected participants also displayed behaviour that teacher and engaged student stakeholders described as: “passively resisting”, “confrontational”, “attention seeking”, “disrespectful”, “egocentric” and “uncaring”.

A power-struggle appeared to be occurring in the 7 – 10 English classrooms in the study where the disengaged displayed confronting and manipulative behaviour towards the authority figure of the classroom. Disaffected stakeholders appeared to be challenging the teacher in order to assert themselves as the most significant identity in the learning context. This resistance appeared not to be about rejecting irrelevant class values (see for instance, Willis 1977) or reproduction of “school knowledge” (Bernstein, 1990) being forced on them by “transmission” pedagogy (Barnes & Shemilt, 1974), nor was it about “lack of success” (Walker, 1993). It was more a reflection of their belief that they, singularly or as part of a subculture, as Walker (1993) and Wexler (1992) found, were the most significant person(s) in the room who (un) consciously wanted immediate gratification of their desires (to be noticed, not to be bored, etc) (Felman, 1997). Roger highlights the latter finding in an interview that followed his referral to the Deputy Principal:

**Researcher:** *Why did you do what you just did in class?*

**Roger:** *I did it [swore and shouted abuse Mr V] ‘cause I wanted to. It’s like a game. I was bored and I felt like it and he deserved it. It made me feel good. He’s only a teacher; he gets paid for it.*

All students in the study perceived themselves to be “abilitied” (Furlong 1991) in English. As Wexler (1992) says, all students felt they were “someone,” but the disengaged students exhibited aggressive identities out of a desire to challenge the dominant culture of the classroom. However, this was not because they felt “unloved” or “nobody” or because the classroom had “no soul” (Wexler, 1992) but because their ‘self’ was perceived as being of the highest importance in the classroom.

This study found, as did Hamachek (1997) and Schon (1983), that self-reflection is a crucial factor in engagement in learning. A common refrain of disengaged students observed during classroom interactions with teachers was “*I’m only talking because I’m finished*” when in reality they were observed by the researcher not to have finished their work, nor had they

undertaken extension activities, and their work was often of a poor standard. An exchange between the researcher and Leyla reflects the typical response of disengaged students when challenged about their resistant behaviour:

**Researcher:** You said in previous interviews and on your questionnaire that you thought you were good at English and you felt confident in class. Is that right?

**Leyla:** Yes, Good, really, really good. I know heaps and I do the work easily and I have it all done and you know I'm good at talking and reading and doing journal. I'm really good at it. I don't find it hard.

**Researcher:** Today in class, Mrs C was speaking with you about the work not done and work that needed to be upgraded and you got angry and said it was at home.

**Leyla** [interjecting angrily] I'm good at English. I'm really good but she doesn't like me. I've got a life and I'm busy and I've got priorities and they're more important than her's. I get my work done; anyway, I wasn't the only one.

Disengaged students' inability to critically reflect on their 'real' behaviours supports the importance of "subversive critical reflection" (Felman, 1997, p.32) in disengaged student identity construction. It also reinforces the findings of Furlong (1991) that student identities are concerned with the psychological and emotional. Leyla was a student who had been "kicked out of home" because her family wanted her to "do work all the time." Her assertion "*I've got a life and I'm busy and I've got priorities and their more important than her*" echoed the feelings of the other disengaged students in the study and supports the findings of Walker (1993) that the values of the classroom (represented by the teacher) were not the dominant values of disengaged students. Leyla, as did other disengaged students in the case study, 'acted out' because of perceptions about their teachers whom they believed exerted "external pressure and adult control" based on "useless boring values" combined with anxiety about not "feeling in charge of her life" (Watts, 1993, p.1).

Disaffected students intellectually recognised the importance of Subject English in terms of employment: becoming a High Court Judge, going to university and obtaining an apprenticeship. However, emotionally their immediate gratification came from the social activities associated with their subcultures at Heartbreak High – both in the classroom and in the playground. Therefore, Mike and Steve spent most of their time at the skate park; XXX,

Roger, Moria, Twitch and Leyla spent most of their time away from school “hanging with friends.” It was very evident from the questionnaire, reflection logs, interviews and observation lessons that schoolwork was not a priority in the lives of these disaffected students at Heartbreak High. This supports the findings of Walker (1993) that adolescents find it difficult to achieve academic success because they don’t balance social demands in order to experience academic success. The social activities and the culture of the student were a more significant factor in positive self-concepts in student identities than their experiences of Subject English.

#### **5.2.4 Engaged Students and Ability, Achievement, Self-Concept and Reflection in English**

The only student of the study who was both engaged and found English “very hard” was Bob. Bob felt he “wasn’t good at it” and his teacher concurred that Bob required constant assistance in English. During observation lessons, it was obvious that Bob exhibited a positive manner in the classroom. He was continuously and positively reinforced by his teacher and he exhibited a quiet, focussed demeanor that was engaged in learning. When asked if “not being good” at English made him feel “bad” about himself Bob replied, *“No ‘cause I do what I can and Ms is nice and we do things I’m good at like reading my own books and I’m good at other things like sport.”* When asked why he did not ‘act out’ in English Bob replied, *“It’s not the right thing. I don’t know why the others in my class [Leyla and XXX] can’t just shut up and do their work and let us get on with it. They’re always making it hard and Mrs C is nice and that’s just what you do. If the work’s boring I think, oh well I’ll get it done and then I’ll get to do something I like. And I don’t like getting into trouble. I don’t like upsetting Miss or getting yelled at.”* Bob’s desires are to stay out of trouble, get his work done, get on and do something enjoyable, and to please his teacher.

Scrutiny of the evidence of this ethnographic investigation revealed that students engaged in learning in the English classroom displayed positive self-concepts. This concurs with the work of Kelly-Byrne (1991). However, most importantly these students also had the facility to critically and sensitively reflect on their ability and behaviour in English through their metacognition. This finding supports the work of Thomson (1997) who highlights the importance of metacognition and students being aware of what they learn, how they learn, why they do learn, and the preferred learning style of cultures they encounter. Engaged students, in contrast with disengaged students in the study, displayed high levels of critical self-reflection; indeed, they were often too critical of their behaviour, ability and performance

in English. Engaged students diligently and painstakingly reflected on their learning styles but disengaged students tended to undertake the tasks in a cursory fashion producing superficial reflections such as, “It was okay what we did”. In contrast, engaged students produced insightful comments that critically assessed their learning and showed understanding of their preferred learning styles. Isabel, for example, commenting on the same lesson as Mike and Steve reflected, “I found it challenging to share my writing with the group because I am a very private person and although Miss says I write well, I know my grammar and vocabulary need work. However, peer marking was a very positive thing because I got to read other students’ work and compare it to mine...I will use what I have learned in Science when we do group work... I will use it in the real world when I go to uni I will write well.”

Engaged students, the data indicated, were able to acknowledge weaknesses in their skills, understanding and knowledge of English and welcomed correction. Kareena, for example, described herself as “*Good at English. I enjoy it and I work hard and I read well and write and listen and I’m doing debating so I’m getting better at that. I need lots of work with essays and grammar and things like that but I’m generally good at English.*” Isabel was confident generally in English, which was well deserved as she received the prize for “outstanding student of English” but she was able to critically and accurately reflect on her weaknesses of “*speaking and drama*”. Leah described herself as being “*Pretty good at English and pretty confident in it because I like English.*” Leah thought of herself as capable in English and able to “*Do most things well, especially drama. I’m confident in drama and I like it because you get to act and to show your feelings through body movement and it helps your confidence.*” The data showed that Leah correctly reflected on her strengths but also on her weaknesses in English (grammar, spelling, and limited vocabulary). Nick said he felt “*intelligent*” and “*confident*” in English and when reflecting critically on his ability in English describing himself as “*Pretty good*” at English [*but*] *my writing activities could be better.*” Mr K described John Howard as “*Exceptional*” and this was supported by the data. John described himself as “*confident, capable, relaxed and happy in English*” and as “*Good at English*” but who needed to “*work more on my debating and public speaking skills because I’m not as good at those as I’d like, so I’m doing debating and public speaking*”. John, like the other students engaged in English was able to critically evaluate his strengths and weaknesses in English and was actively taking steps to address these weaknesses. John and Fred both felt “*confident, relaxed and happy*” in English and were able to honestly and objectively comment on their strengths in English (writing, reading, listening, representing) and weaknesses (public

speaking) and were addressing these. Beyonce recorded in her log that she was “*Well above average in English, Maths and Science. I’m bright (I think I’m a bit smart) and English is my best subject because I’m good at it. I’m a good speaker and writer but I need to improve my listening skills,*” This analysis of her ability was reflected in her teacher’s evaluation of Beyonce as a student of English.

In summary, the findings of this study regarding ability and self-concept in English revealed that all students exhibited positive self-concepts in the English classroom. Both engaged and disengaged student stakeholders felt they were “good” at aspects of English and generally believed that they were able to experience success in the content of English (“I’m reading a book about space and I’m really interested in it”, “I’m enjoying Harry Potter because I like fantasy” “I enjoy free choice journal”; pedagogy (“*I love it when Ms does drama games and we get to act and stuff*”) and the nature of Subject English (“*It’s about understanding who you are*”, “*It gives you morals*”, “*It’s about different points of view*” “*It’s like the writer is saying you could be this person or you could be that person so you get to think about which kind of person you want to be and what happens when you choose*”). Overall, the students found ‘space’ in English to feel good about themselves as learners.

Another significant finding from an analysis of the data was that engaged students displayed the ability to effectively reflect on their ability in English, whereas, disengaged students were severely limited in this facility. Disengaged students in the study were not experiencing disempowerment and therefore disengaging because of a devaluing of their class culture, but because they were focussed on fulfilling their desires – desires that they frequently shared with those who belonged to their subculture(s). The researcher observed the following prevalent desires among disengaged students: Enjoyment (“*getting teachers angry is fun*”); boredom (“*I don’t feel like doing writing; it’s boring*”); superiority (“*I know the stuff better than Miss does*”); affirmation (“*I want to be somebody... important ya know*”); to belong (“*I come to school for me mates, for lunch times and recess and after school, not for English*”). The latter finding concurs with the findings of Walker (1993). Disaffected students in this case study were, as McLean (1999) and Tickle (1999) found, displayed a limited capacity to be reflexive. Disengaged students were unable to critically evaluate their ability in English and take responsibility for their behaviour. They were focussed on creating identity(s) or self(s) that fulfilled their desires and the desires of the subcultures to which they belonged, and these frequently conflicted with those of their English teacher. Students in this

ethnographic study, as McFadden and Munns (1997) found, were disengaging in a very personal way from their teacher. However, unlike McFadden and Munns (1997), this study found that student disengagement was the direct result of disaffected students' perceptions that their English teachers were not fulfilling their desires and the desires of the subcultures to which they belonged. Disengaged student identities were therefore constructed during the process of desire fulfilment, accompanied by incapacity to empathise with others (teacher or those they judged as "different"), and limited ability to critically reflect on their abilities and actions.

### **5.2.5 Empathy and Engaged and Disengaged Students**

Analysis of the data of this inquiry showed that engaged students, in sharp contrast to disengaged students, evidenced feelings of empathy with their teachers of English and with the role of teachers in general. The engaged students "*liked*", "*trusted*", "*respected*", and "*cared about*" their teachers who "*have a really hard and important job.*" Engaged students were "*embarrassed when kids don't obey the rules. It's not fair on the teacher*" and were upset by disaffected students' treatment of teachers. Beyonce's response was typical of the criticism expressed by engaged students, "*Say you get told to read a book. Like he [Twitch] will say no and no I don't think so and he won't do it. And when Mr K was called to the door Twitch sneaked to the tape and fast-forwarded it and Mr K he's too nice for that. Twitch is getting better, he isn't as bad as he was, 'cos before he was calling out to you and being rude. He just doesn't care and it's unfair on Mr K.*" Fred also reinforces engaged students' capacity to empathise with the teacher in the following comment, "*Mrs C doesn't deserve XXX's behaviour or Leyla's either. She's nice and good at her job. They don't care about the rest of us; they should just be quiet and let us learn if they aren't interested. Instead they interfere and stop us from learning and that's not right.*" Thus engaged students empathised and aligned themselves with the role of the teacher and saw their teacher as an "individual". These students resented the behaviour of their disaffected peers whom they described as "selfish" and whom they perceived as interfering with their own desires to learn.

### **5.2.6 Engaged and Disengaged Students' Perceptions of the Value of English**

An analysis of the data of the Heartbreak High student participants reflected the findings of Foucault (1997) and Watkins (1999) that schools provided "spaces" where students could feel they were "good" about themselves. English, because of its very nature, provided such "spaces" for students. Bob, for example, although he felt "not very good" at English was able

to specify enjoyment in skills (listening, viewing, reading certain kinds of material) and knowledge (“*I know a lot about Harry Potter ‘cause we’re studying film techniques and the Quidditch match and I know what a close up is and about animation*”) understanding (“*Group work is important in English because it helps me to participate and not be shy and it makes me defend what I do from what I know*”) and linking it to the “real” world (Bernstein, 1990), “*I really like fantasy and I like the movies so I like this unit we’re doing.*” Isabel, an “excellent” student of English but one who felt very unconfident, isolated and alone at school (she eventually left Heartbreak High to go to a selective high school) was “*happier*” in “*English than in subjects like science even ‘though I am coming first because I can draw and I like writing stories and reading and imagining, it’s personal and I feel less alone.*” Bob felt that English positively impacted on his self-concept “*unlike maths [English] doesn’t make me feel bad. In maths I go badly in tests and that’s what we do, textbook work and tests. I come out of maths feeling bad, but not English. We don’t do tests all the time. English can be hard but maths, maths is always hard. I just don’t get it. I don’t feel failed in English – I can do bits of it. But not maths; I can’t do it.*” Bob’s comments suggest that for some students, pedagogy, assessment and linking the learning in the classroom to the “real” world (Bernstein, 1990) are important for students to feel successful (to a degree) and to maintain a positive view of themselves.

The data indicated that all students perceived English, to some degree, to be a “legitimate form of knowledge” (Mc Inerney, et al., 2004, p. 7). Students valued English or aspects of English for several reasons. Firstly, they believed what and how they learned Subject English had a positive academic impact on the other subjects they undertook. Isabel exemplifies this in her comment that “*The most important subject you do is English because every subject has English in it. English is needed for real life.*” The second reason is also indicated by Isabel, students saw the relevance of English “*for real life*” Newman and Wehlage (1993). Kareena reflected this stance by commenting that English was essential “*because I need to know English (like how to write an essay and do grammar) to communicate better and to do well and to get into medicine.*” A third reason for students valuing English was related to issues of morality and this concurs with Patterson’s view (2000). Students believed that English was imbued with “the right values” “*like doing the right thing*”, “*seeing how people live*”, “*understanding how people feel*”, “*speaking up and defending your rights*”, “*knowing right from wrong*” “*importance of love*”. Students in the study also saw English as worthwhile because it was “personal” in that it allowed them to explore issues, topics, content and skills

that they personally valued. All the students in the study (even the most disengaged) commented, for example, that they “*liked*” and “*enjoyed*” “imagining” through reading and creative writing.

However, an analysis of the data found that while all students (to some extent) professed to value Subject English, students who were disengaged in English rarely displayed this belief. In reality in the classroom, disengaged students categorised learning activities as “boring” or “fun” as Walker (1993) found. What was “entertaining” depended on the individual preference of the student or their particular subculture (Walker, 1993, p. 1). Mike, Moria, Leyla, Twitch and Steve thought drama, speaking, and creative writing, making movies and watching movies were “fun”. Roger thought “group work” fun and “sometimes free choice journal.” XXX found “watching “*Harry Potter* fun.” English had to be perceived as ‘fun’ for students to even begin to engage. Students disengaged at Heartbreak High, as Watkins (1999) found, resisted learning if what they were doing, or how they were doing it, did not gratify their desire(s) (the need to be entertained, the need to be noticed, etc). This was not just “a battle for the control of the learning environment where the teachers and students engage in struggles over the forms of knowledge, which are to be legitimated in the curriculum,” (McInerney, et al., 2004, p.7). At Heartbreak High, the data showed, that student desire embedded in subcultures (Walker, 1993) was a key factor in students disengaging in the classroom.

### **5.2.7 Disengaged Students, Culture, (Sub) Cultures and Agency**

The findings of this case study suggest that students resist or engage in learning because it fulfils desires. These findings are in line with Walker’s (1993) view that disaffected students consciously and unconsciously choose “to accept negative and destructive peer values and behaviour as normal” (Walker, 1993, p.1). Disaffected students at Heartbreak High looked to their social group to define what was of value in school and in the classroom. The disaffected students came to school to “hang out with their friends” and to “do things, talk and stuff with their mates” and to meet there to “go places” after school. Disengaged students in the study saw the purpose of the English classroom as a place for “*socialising*”, “*gossip*,” “*being us*”, “*being happy*” and displaying group cohesion or “working out solutions to social and personal problems, encountered in their lives” (McFadden & Walker, 1994, p. 19).

Disaffected students, emulating the students in Wexler’s (1992) study, created subcultures of stereotypical identities that rejected the teachers’ culture and the culture of students who

generally chose to engage in learning. Generally, their dress challenged the school's uniform code (boys wore their pants low showing their underwear, the girls wore their top buttons undone, the girls wore a great deal of chunky jewellery and makeup, coloured t-shirts under tops and both wore non-school approved footwear). Group cohesion in classroom subculture(s) at Heartbreak High was exemplified by overt support of disruptive behaviour including rude comments to the teacher ("*He didn't do anything,*" "*Leave her alone,*" "*We're only mucking around*"); refusing to co operate as a group; mocking the teacher; persistently talking and refusing (passively or aggressively) to work.

Interviews and observations of disengaged students in the Heartbreak High case study evidenced no awareness of fears for the future – disaffected students appeared to be living very much in the 'now'. They did not appear to 'act out' because of "nagging anxiety" for their future (Walker, 1993), but from an uninhibited and "egocentric" (Robertson, 1997) need to have their immediate desires requited. This finding supports the large body of work by Desire theorists including Robertson (1997) and McClaren (1997). The driving imperative for disengaged students was to assert themselves as dominant identities in the classroom. This desire, as Misson (2002) suggests, was frequently achieved through emotive and highly orchestrated (conscious and unconscious) confrontations with the teacher. Resistance included passive behaviour (not doing work, not bringing equipment) to active resistance (ignoring instructions, persistent talking, tapping, swinging on chair, making noises, moving around, turning back on teacher), to abusive shouting and physical challenges to the teacher. The aggressive desire to assert their identity was evidenced by each of the disengaged students being withdrawn from class or suspended from school for aggressive behaviour to their English (and other) teachers (and frequently other students).

This case study found that disengaged students had joined subcultures that valued peer culture over the culture in the classroom in early Primary school. These resistant subcultures, as Munns and McFadden (1997) found, reflect a "continuum of [student] resistance organised around the moment when students finally withdraw their allegiance from their school, and by extension education" (p. 4). Furlong (1991) calls these instances "hidden injuries" but they rely on the child's perception of reality. Disengaged students at Heartbreak High had distinct memories about when they perceived they had stopped engaging. In their reflection logs students were asked to record their best and worst memories of schooling and these were discussed during interviews with the researcher. Moria recalled "*being in second class and*

*the work was boring and you had to write and I said I wouldn't and she was going on about it and I yelled at her [teacher] and she sent me to Mr \_\_\_\_\_.*" XXX was "Suspended from school one day, I was really little and I threw rocks at the teacher's car." Twitch remembered, "being put out of the room in second class because the teacher didn't like me. I'd been mucking around. The work was boring and I was just having but she put me out in the little room next to my classroom. Steve had his "school captain's badge taken" and had been suspended, as was his friend Mike, for fighting. A pattern of "getting into trouble a lot" featured in the memories of all disaffected student participants in the study and was continued in high school. In contrast, students engaged in learning in English had very positive memories of learning in the primary classroom. For example, Kareena said that she had "lovely teachers"; John reported that he had "a great year six teacher who had a fantastic sense of humour"; Bob spoke of "enjoying primary school"; Fred reminisced about "fantastic teachers"; Beyonce "loved being the class captain" and Nick "liked being school captain."

The evaluation at Heartbreak High concurred with the findings of Furlong (1991) that disaffected students were resisting the dominant culture of the classroom. However, this resistance showed a driving desire to continue to disengage in order to assert an identity that was reliant on the subculture(s) in the classroom. Roger displayed the most extreme and ruthless desire to assert his resistant identity in opposition to the teacher's and those who were "not my mates". Roger consciously chose not to engage "Because I get bored and it's like sport to have a go at teachers and see them go off." Roger's desire for entertainment and fun is a priority in his subculture, which rejects the values exhibited by engaged students. Roger strutted in the classroom, physically invaded the personal space of Mr V., smirked and sneered at reasonable requests and appeared to be in control of the classroom where no learning would occur if he were challenging his teacher. Roger sees the teacher as a piece of entertainment to be exploited; he sees no other real value in the role of the teacher.

Disaffected students at Heartbreak High knew they were challenging the teacher with inappropriate behaviour and by refusing to "do the work". Students at Heartbreak High appeared to refuse to learn (and to excuse this refusal) because it did not constitute what they perceived to be legitimate teaching. This supports the work of Jones (1989) and Robertson (1997). This finding is evidenced in comments by disaffected students: "She couldn't take a joke," "He shouldn't have done that," "She doesn't understand," "He yelled so I yelled," "I didn't think we should be doing journal so I said I wouldn't do it," "We wanted to work in a

*group together and he wouldn't let us so I walked out," "She doesn't know how to teach essay, so I didn't do what she said."*

Disengaged students in this ethnographic study, as Hodkinson (1994) found, varied in their awareness of "agency" in the classroom. For example, Moria did not construct her 'self' as a "rational and knowing" self, but as an emotional being who felt powerless over her behaviour. This was most poignantly shown in Moria's logbook entry to the researcher, "*Help me be good. All I want in life is to be good. I would like to talk to you] about approving [improving] my behaviour. Can you make me a better person? I now [know] I am good and a good person but please make me better (someone please).*" Twitch reiterated this perception of powerlessness over his inappropriate behaviour. "My mouth opens up and I say things or yell and it's like I can't help it." A frequent refrain from the disengaged students in the study was that they felt the teacher did not address their questions and input quickly enough and this invoked a sense of powerlessness that provoked an inappropriate outburst in class. This finding is evident in the behaviour of all disengaged student participants in the case study. The desires that resulted in such behaviour, as Misson (2002) suggests, are deeply embedded and often operate at the level of the subconscious for the subculture. The latter is evidenced by Steve's comment on his behaviour with Mrs S: "*me mates were laughing and talking and they just set me off.*"

Disaffected student participants often blamed their "mates" in their subculture for their inappropriate classroom behaviour. At Heartbreak High disengaged students, as Robertson (1997) and Felman (1997) discovered, refused to change their negative classroom behaviours and attitudes. They did so because they believed themselves to have "agency" or power in the classroom. This sense of agency was most evident during observation lessons when Roger, Moria, Leyla and XXX walked out of class despite the teachers' injunctions to remain. This disaffected behaviour was discussed with each of the students during interviews and it was also reflected upon in their reflection logs. Roger, Moria, Leyla and XXX, excused their behaviour, blaming the teacher for not "understanding" them, not "caring" about them, not "taking notice" of them, and for "boring" them. During the interviews it became particularly noticeable that learning was not the priority; being "someone", as Wexler (1992) calls it, was the priority and this desirable "someone" was the one valued by "mates"; not teachers and not those students engaging in learning.

The findings of this case study concur with Jones' (1989) assertion that disaffected students displayed significant agency in the classroom. Steve, McKayla, Roger, Moria, Mike, Leyla and Twitch exerted enormous influence over what, how, when was taught, as well as, interactions in the classroom. Teacher participants verbalised this influence during interviews, for example, Mr K explained that he was, "... *doing 'Boy' because I'm trying to get Twitch to be interested in doing something in English besides talking about his social life, who he's going to have a fight with, who he's going out with, if he's going to a party this weekend, or doing nothing*". Lesson observation, interviews with teachers and reflection logs revealed data that agreed with the findings of Jones (1989) - students choose what they will or will not do, and when they will or will not do it. Students were observed actively and passively resisting. Passive resistance included not attempting to complete homework or class tasks and not bringing equipment (pens, books) and refusing to participate. Observation lessons confirmed teacher participant comments regarding student disengagement. An enormous amount of time was observed to be spent by the teachers in disciplining, managing, directing, counseling and assisting disengaged students. Teachers were very conscious of this "*waste of time and energy*" as Mrs S said during an interview and felt increasingly frustrated and powerless. All teachers in the investigation reported changing their lesson strategies constantly (for example, from group work to teacher-centred) in an attempt to feel more "*in control*." In other words, teacher participants were expressing their belief that disengaged students held considerable agency in the classroom, whereas, their teacher self(s) felt fearful and disempowered. They believed themselves to have limited agency in the classroom.

This ethnographic investigation into student and teacher identity construction in English 7 – 10 classrooms at Heartbreak High concurred with Walker's (1993) finding that disaffected student identities expend enormous energy maintaining their identities because of a failure to recognise their role as attentive, collaborative and independent learners. Twitch, for example, persistently calls out, fast forwards the tape the class is listening to, bullies other students, refuses loudly to undertake activities and encourages his 'mates' to congratulate him. The disengaged students at Heartbreak High exhibited a passion for resistance and a "desire for ignorance" as Felman (1997) calls it. The classical view of students as learners who are inherently motivated or can be motivated by the teacher is challenged in this case study. Disengaged students' "core business" (*Quality Teaching*, 2003) in the English classroom was not learning as the school perceived it. Instead, disaffected students' "core business" was fulfilling their desires that were representative of their subculture.

### 5.2.8 Engaged Students, Culture, Subcultures and Agency

Students engaged in the classroom, in contrast to disengaged stakeholders, generally chose to embrace the dominant culture of the English classroom as represented by their English teacher. During observation lessons and interviews engaged learners displayed a desire to: “be kind”, “do the right thing”, “work hard”, “be on task most of the time” “enjoy learning”, “be patient” and “be honest”. These students were independent, reflective and empathetic learners who saw learning at school as “valuable”. They exhibited identities that “desired to know new things” as Kareena expressed it. Engaged student participants, unlike disaffected students, were prepared to “have a go” and “do boring work sometimes” because they believed in the “legitimacy” (Jones, 1989) of the teacher. Engaged student reflections in their logs expressed a realisation that Subject English could not always be exciting and “fun” but were prepared to do the “boring stuff like grammar and essay” because they valued it in a wider context – they perceived that “boring” content was still useful and fulfilled their desire to “do well in other classes or in uni.”

Engaged students chose a culture that supported their teachers’ endeavours because they generally valued the role, personality and expertise of the teacher. This valuing was evident throughout their schooling lives: Kareena had “*Always loved learning and enjoyed school,*” Isabel had “*Always worked hard and tried because that is what you should do at school,*” Leah “*got on well with teachers,*” Nick found all schooling “*Really interesting most of the time because you just get bored at home and at school you do different things in class.*” Engaged students’ desires were closely connected to those of their teachers and shared with friends who held similar values and desires. Students who consistently chose to cooperate with the teacher were prepared to negotiate the classroom culture rather than to oppose it. Engaged students at Heartbreak High chose to “be productive and to initiate activity [which is] about collaboration as well as individuality” (p. 500).

This section has provided an initial interpretation of the data gathered in the case study relating to teacher and student identity construction including perceptions of ‘ideal’ identities, and the significance of ability, attentiveness, self-concept, self-reflection. An analysis of student perceptions of Subject English has been followed by an examination of the significance of desire, agency, culture and subculture(s) in the identities constructed in the English Years 7 - 10 classrooms at Heartbreak High. The next part of this analysis of the data explores the role of gender in the identity constructs that are portrayed in this case study

## Gender

### 5.3 Gender and Valuing School

This small scale, in-depth case study of sixteen students and four teachers in the English Years 7 - 10 classrooms at Heartbreak High did not reflect the findings of Martin (2003), Rowe (2003) and others who found that girls valued school more than boys; students in the study at Heartbreak High engaged or disengaged in learning regardless of their gender. This finding was derived from an analysis of the data: auto/biographies; observation of lessons, interviews and reflection logs. The data collected from these methods and the employment of triangulation (Denzin, 1978) provided opportunities to explore the factor of gender in this investigation gleaning particular nuances in the unique context of Heartbreak High. This analysis elicited the “recurring messages” (Eisner, 1991) that equal numbers of male and female students were either engaging or disengaging in learning.

The students who were resisting learning perceived the main purpose of school was to be “somebody” (Wexler”) as defined by themselves and the subculture(s) to which they belonged. This desire is epitomised by Leyla who said in one interview: *“We come to school for our friends, to meet up with them, play sport, go to the dances, and go hang and do things. I like recess and lunch and going home because we go down the skate park or the plaza after school and you see your mates and that’s good you know. You feel like you’re important, that you belong ”*. Moria expressed this desire even more clearly: *“I want to be somebody... important ya know”*.

In contrast, engaged female and male students at Heartbreak High enjoyed socialising at school but did not see this as only occurring outside of the classroom, nor did they perceive it as being in opposition to the classroom. These students saw learning as usually being relevant, enjoyable and interesting. Nick highlights the balance engaged students saw between socialising and learning in the following extract, *“Well, learning is important to get a job and that and you got to be able to read and write and stuff. You get your work done in class and you can still chat with your mates and that and then you can go down to music and play your guitar or go on the oval or play basketball or go play chess in the library comp.”* Engaged student participants, in common with disaffected students in the investigation, desired to be “somebody”. This identity, however, although valuing school for social opportunities and affirmation of the self, primarily viewed school as a place of learning – socialising was secondary. This is not to say that engaged students ‘self(s)’ were not desirous of belonging

(Isabel was very unhappy because she felt that she did not “fit in”) but this did not create a disengaged student identities because of the perceptions that learning is not necessarily separate from socialising, and that the primary role of the school is learning.

### 5.3.1 English as a ‘Feminine’ Subject

Interestingly, engaged and disengaged students, regardless of gender, selected as their favourite subjects ones that Rowe (2003) would term ‘masculine’ (active, physical, technological) as opposed to the ‘feminine’ subjects (passive, language orientated, biased towards females). These included Design and Technology, Art, Music, Physical Education, Personal Development and Wood Technology. English was not ranked ‘favourite’ subject by student participants, but neither was it listed in their logs as the ‘least enjoyable subject’ by any student in the case study. A variety of subjects were categorised this way (Mathematics or History, Science, History and Physical Education and Personal Development) with no obvious gender preference. Female and male students were also asked to list in their logs their favourite activities in English and in other subjects. These were then discussed during interviews.

Students, regardless of gender, noted a mixture of active and passive learning strategies such as reading, drama, speeches, interviews, creative writing, journal, viewing films. It was evident, especially during observation lessons, that both male and female disaffected students were initially keen to participate in active activities, particularly drama. This study did not find evidence of inherently feminised styles of learning as Gaskell (1992) reported. Mr K, during an interview, reinforced the notion that most students, regardless of gender, enjoy active lessons: *“Most kids seem to like being active and having some fun so that’s why I do a lot of drama and collaborative games especially at the beginning to build a sense of community but I don’t see any real differences except generally boys not interested in learning will be more physical (they wrestle if you try and do drama) whereas the girls shout more.”* These comments were supported by units of work and the English Faculty Program (Appendix G).

Analysis of student participant responses supported the findings of Lingard (2000) that males disliked writing more than females. However, this did not appear to be related to the factors of ability or literacy demands as Lingard, Martino, Mills, Bahr (2002) found. Steve, for example, was a very capable writer but remarked during interviews that he found it “easy but boring.” Instead, writing engagement in English appeared to have more to do with student desire.

During lessons students were observed choosing or not choosing to write depending on whether it fulfilled their desires. Disaffected students reported choosing to write if it “interested them” or if they “had to” whereas engaged students reported a willingness to write for a variety of reasons including: a desire to please the teacher; skills improvement; joy in writing and because they needed it in other subjects and for future endeavours.

Teachers in the Heartbreak High case study enunciated during interviews evidence of constantly attempting to engage students through accessing student culture via popular and youth culture texts, through teaching gendered texts, and though the explicit teaching of ‘gender’ as a concept and as Martino (1988) advocates. Therefore, implicitly and explicitly, teachers involved in the study agreed with Bernstein (1990) that the culture of the child needed to be an integral part of the classroom and this included attention to gender. Teacher interviews revealed that teachers did not perceive English as an inherently gendered subject that was disengaging males. Teachers reported that “significant numbers of students” were disengaging, regardless of gender. This is an interesting perception in light of the extensive work of Lingard, Martino, Mills, Bahr (2002), Rowe (2003), and others who have found gender to be a significant factor in disaffection. Mrs S expressed the feelings of the other teacher participants: *“Right across the school kids don’t appear to want to learn. You get so worried about it and try and try to motivate the kids but nothing seems to work. You just ask anyone, even the practical subjects. All the kids, not just the boys, are disengaging and it’s in the practical aspects as well as the theory bits of the courses. At the staff morning teas, teachers are always talking about it and how behavioural problems are getting worse and all courses are talking about it so it’s not because we’re a ‘gendered’ subject.”* The perception of teachers in the study was that many students (both male and female) were disengaging from learning regardless of gender, the English 7 – 10 curriculum that embedded their culture, and Quality Teaching strategies. Teacher participants noted that this belief made them feel increasingly frustrated, de-valued, anxious and disempowered.

Heartbreak High teacher participants, as stated previously, had clearly engaged in constant reflection regarding the significance of gender as a factor in student disaffection and this was included in their selection of texts. During a group interview Mr V noted the importance of texts in engaging both male and female students (as well as different sexual orientations and family groupings) *“we teach things like the ‘gendered fiction’ mixed set unit to kids where the boys have to read the so called feminine texts first (‘Feeling Sorry for Celia’ and ‘Looking for*

*Alibrandi*) and the girls read the ones where the central character is a male (like *Boys R Us*), then they swap over. It leads to great discussions and the boys, even Roger, get into them for a short time, but then he just stopped reading and wouldn't do anything else except be negative and disruptive." Thus, teachers in the case study were also actively incorporating critical literacy, as is evidenced by Mr V's previous account, in order to explicitly explore gender issues as Martino (1988) and other scholars suggest.

Mrs S highlighted how teachers consider gender in programming: "We have our units, we adjust for different kids and we do mystery boxes that the boys love to present as well as the girls, you get as many girls as boys being a bit intimidated by the talks and speeches but they all get there in the end. The flexibility of the new faculty program really encourages us to adjust to the kids' needs and interests. So if XXX wants to film himself skateboarding and do a talk or voice over like he did, then that suits the assessment task and gives him an opportunity to be successful in the classroom. And all kids tend to enjoy reader's theatre and film studies. So no, English isn't a subject that suits girls better than boys." *Quality Teaching* (2003) approaches and the use of popular and youth cultures by the participant teachers to in an attempt to motivate and engage all students is reflected in these comments and was constantly in evidence in teacher informal exchanges and in the lessons observed.

The *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) highlights 'gender' as an area that requires explicit teaching (p.11) and this is reflected in the Heartbreak High Faculty Program that explicitly maps 'gender' in terms of teaching strategies and content. Misson (2002), Pallotta-Chiarolli (2002) and Martino (1988) advocate critical literacy strategies and the teaching of popular culture texts in order to challenge dominant concepts of masculinity. Participant teachers in the Heartbreak High investigation were observed utilising critical literacy techniques and popular culture texts to do just that. The *Shrek* film unit (Appendix H) that was compulsory in Year eight exemplifies the teachers' desire to use both critical literacy strategies and popular culture to address gender issues and engage students. This study supports aspects of the work of Misson (2002). Misson found that explicitly teaching gender issues could engage students in "hearing different voices" that challenge dominant classroom "hierarchies" evidenced in homophobic and sexist subcultures that interfere with student engagement in English. During observation lessons of the Year ten *Gendered Fiction* unit, after initial engagement with the texts, Leyla, XXX, McKayla and Roger exhibited disaffected behaviour. They refused to read the texts, constantly talked and became increasingly agitated as the lessons progressed.

Heartbreak High's disaffected students (both male and female) appeared to choose to disengage despite access to curriculum, pedagogy and a supportive classroom environment. Popular culture, therefore, ameliorated student disengagement at Heartbreak High at times, but could not sustain engagement because students did not continue to value it. This finding differs somewhat from other studies including those of Pallotta-Chiarolli (2002), who reported greater success in student engagement through pedagogy that focused on critical literacy, popular and youth culture texts.

Students in this ethnographic inquiry did not perceive English as a gendered subject as did student subjects involved in other studies (see, for example, Rowe, 2003). At Heartbreak High, an analysis of the questionnaire, interviews, reflection-logs and observation data did not suggest that boys found English more difficult and less relevant than did girls, or that males preferred Science or Mathematics subjects. The data did not support Francis' (2000) contention that girls are more diligent regarding schoolwork when compared to boys because of a desire for future employment or because disengaged boys assume they will be employed in the future. Boys enunciated their career goals ("to be an apprentice carpenter" "to be a doctor" "to be a professional sportsman") as confidently as the girls. This study did not find English to be an inherently feminised subject that disengaged males by its very nature, indeed Subject English appeared to provide valuable opportunities in content, skills and teaching approaches to engage students if they desired to learn.

### **5.3.2 Gender and Student Attentiveness**

The data analysis concurred with Rowe (2003) that "attentiveness" was a key discriminating factor in engagement in learning in their English classes, but unlike Rowe found no gender bias. Students who were engaged in learning exhibited a "Booster" (Martin, 2003,) personality, that is, they had high self-belief, learning focus, valued schooling, persistence, [and to a lesser degree]planning and study management." (pp.44-46) However, the profile of disengaged students did not correlate with Martin's unmotivated Guzzlers except for "self-sabotage" and sometimes "uncertain control" (pp. 46-47). Analysis of the data of disengaged students in the investigation at Heartbreak High found that disaffected students (male and female) evidenced high self-belief, generally felt in control, and were confident about their ability in English. This finding of this small-scale ethnographic case study may provide interesting aspects for consideration in light of the findings of researchers such as Martin

(2003) and O'Doherty (1994) who found that resistance is usually displayed to a greater extent by males than females *per se*.

Both disaffected males and females tended to overtly resist learning in very physical ways. This was most evident during observation lessons: Mike and Steve wrestled over a chair; Roger hit people with cardboard, and Twitch and XXX punched students as they “*just mucked around.*” It was also evident during observation lessons that both males and females were equally non-attentive. Leyla, Moria and McKayla were very vocal in their resistance and frequently and aggressively orchestrated confrontations with the teacher. The researcher observed them calling out, having loud, robust exchanges with other students, challenging and threatening verbal exchanges with teachers, laughing at the teacher, and physically moving about the classroom regardless of classroom rules. However, they could also be sullen, silent and passive in their refusal to do work or engage in learning activities. The disaffected male participants in this ethnographic study also exhibited this behaviour but with one interesting difference. The disengaged males were observed to be significantly more prone to invading female teachers’ personal space in a challenging manner than were female students. On the other hand, student participants at Heartbreak High who generally chose to engage in learning (Kareena, Isabel, Leah, Nick, Beyonce, John, Fred and Bob) were observed to follow classroom management conventions, able to sit, attentive, on-task, working independently, listening, and generally being co operative and polite to teachers and to peers.

### **5.3.3 Masculine and Feminine Stereotypes**

As foreshadowed in the previous section, this study supports the finding of Martino (1988) that there is a model of masculinity for disengaged males. Significantly, however, it was found that disaffected female student participants also displayed stereotypical masculine identities in the English classroom. Interviews, reflection log entries and observation lessons all evidenced the power of the dominant concept of masculinity as a subculture in the English classrooms. Steve, Mike, Roger, Twitch and XXX exhibited this gender stereotype, they valued “sport and real life” and called those who did not conform to this models ‘gay’, ‘nerd’, ‘fag’ or gave them ‘put downs’ as Lingard et al. (2002) reported.

In contrast, engaged males in the case study (particularly John) displayed a more feminised male identity and were intimidated by the stereotypical masculine identities of Steve, Mike, Roger, Twitch and XXX, and by some of the female disengaged students who also conformed to a masculine stereotype. John was not comfortable in the male group discussions and

preferred to be with his best female friend Fred with whom he undertook debating and public speaking (later Fred and John became Junior School Captains). Interviewing John revealed that he was focussed on “*school work*” and learning and “*doing the best I can*” and that “*having a friend*” was good but that “*learning things like being a really good public speaker and debater and how to write stories and how to act*” was of significantly greater importance than social pursuits. He was involved in the Student Representative Council Activities (SRC) with Fred. John and Fred’s friendship circle consisted of each other and they “*did things*” together at lunch and recess because they were “*doing the same things, we like public speaking and debating.*” John described himself in his log as “*active, funny, enjoying play station 2, enjoying reading, enjoying Music and English, and having a balanced lifestyle.*” He wanted to go to university and thought he “*might do something like being an actor.*”

John showed anxiety and reported that, although he had not been physically bullied (hit) by males, their overt and aggressive behaviour in the classroom and in the playground exerted an enormous influence over the other students and frequently impacted on his behaviour. For example, John reported that he hesitated to participate in discussions fearing those who were disengaged would ridicule him. John also noted in his reflection log that he preferred to go to the library at recess and lunch instead of going to the playground. He perceived the library as a “safe space”. Interestingly, engaged females at Heartbreak High also commented on feeling intimidated by females who were disengaged in English so this suggests that males exhibit dominant ‘masculine’ identities and females. This finding questions the findings of research including Martin (2003) and others who see disengagement through a gender-specific lens. The role of gender in student identity construction has been analysed in this section of the thesis. The data revealed that engaged students, regardless of gender, perceived the value of Subject English and of school in general to go beyond socialising. Disaffected male and female students, on the other hand, valued school largely in terms of socialising. This involved in “being somebody” (Wexler, 1992) in the English classroom and this entailed enacting their desires (to be noticed, to be entertained, etc). Male or female teacher or student research participants did not perceive English as an inherently feminine subject but teachers were conscious of explicitly teaching ‘gender’ in their classrooms. An unexpected finding was that disengaged female students portrayed stereotypical disengaged identities (aggressive, homophobic, and physical). It was also noted that “safe places” were important, for males and females alike who exhibit feminine identities). Gender was not found to be a significant factor in student attentiveness, ability or interest in Subject English.

## **Teacher Identity Construction in English at Heartbreak High**

### **5.4 Personal ‘Self’ and Professional Identity**

Data analysis of this case study found support for the findings of Sachs (1999) that the professional identity of teachers is currently being shaped by two competing discourses: one that is “emerging from the profession itself” and one “imposed” by “outsiders”. The latter phenomenon, Parker (1997) terms “technical rationalism” (p.8). During interviews teachers at Heartbreak High were vociferous in their belief that economic managerialist philosophy was “driving the leadership of the school” and education in Australia in general. The research narratives of the teacher participants of this case study echo the findings of Hargreaves (1994) who describes the negative impact of administrators and politicians through “contrived collegiality” (p. 17).

During their interviews teachers cited the following areas as having increasing impact on their self-concept, their personal lives and how they were “trying to teach”: national reporting, national curriculum, merit based pay, work place agreements, basic skills testing, teacher professional standards, policies (particularly *Quality Teaching* (2003), claims of falling literacy standards and persistent negative reports in the media about teachers. Teachers exhibited “fearful” (Agne, 1999) identities during interviews. Their accounts depicted the constant rewriting of faculty programs, Principal and Superintendent interviews, attempts by the Principal to instigate streamed classes and the Principal’s habit of “*creeping around corridors*” as impacting negatively on their personal and professional selves. Parker (1997) believes this trend of political interference in subjects, the national curriculum, age-related targets, standardized testing and the re-emergence of reactionary ideas reflect “a rising tide of bellicose managerialism manifested in their lives of command and decision” (p.4).

An analysis of the data confirmed Parker’s (1997) finding that economic managerialism (“technical rationalism”) is based on “conceptual hierarchies” that “assume the normality or one pole of the opposition and sees the other as simply negatives...a perversion” (pp.72-73). This was evident in the identities of the Principal and Deputy Principals at Heartbreak. It became increasingly evident during observations of staff meetings that the Senior Executive did not work collaboratively with the staff; instead they used a “contrived collegiality” model (Hargreaves, 1994, p.17), which featured managerialist terminology (mandatory, measurable

growth, clients, accountability, effective, ineffective, value-added). Observation of staff meetings supported the findings of Hargreaves (1994) that teachers who questioned the Senior Executive's position (for example, on state external testing and Productive Pedagogies) were viewed as "oppositional" and "dangerous" (Parker, 1997). The Deputy Principal repeatedly exhorted the staff to "speak with one voice", and the Principal repeatedly uttered the necessity of the staff to "be going in the one direction", and the need for teachers to "pull together" despite declaring that decision-making was "collegial" and democratic at Heartbreak High.

The English faculty members frequently discussed the close scrutiny of the Principal and his demand for programming to conform to his structure. The faculty rewrote the English program and teaching units several times but the Principal expressed to the faculty via the Head Teacher that he was dissatisfied because they did not conform to his models. The teacher participants expressed distress at the level of scrutiny and the manner of the Principal's visits to class and they showed a great deal of anger and confusion regarding the Principal's leadership style. Mr V, Mrs S, Mrs C and Mr K frankly spoke during interviews of the "*culture of fear and conformity*" that they perceived pervaded Heartbreak High and which was negatively impacting on their 'self/selves'. Mrs S epitomises the teacher participant perceptions of economic managerialist leadership in the following interview extract:

Researcher: *You said in the group interview that the Principal and the Deputies make all the decisions and people are too frightened or too apathetic to disagree. Did I get your ideas down correctly?*

Mrs S: *Yes. They [the senior executive] make all the right sounds, it's about us, we're a team, everyone needs to be involved, etc but that's just lip service. You go to a meeting and wham! You find they've made the decision. There is no real discussion or consultation. If you try to raise an issue, or clarify or suggest something that doesn't fit with what they want they get defensive and angry and can be very dismissive, rude, aggressive, cold, that kind of thing. They're interested in what the Superintendent [District Superintendent of Education] wants – better test results, their own reputation depends on them, and promotion and themselves. I call them 'company men.' They're not interested in me personally. And people just give up because they're afraid or because speaking up doesn't change anything.*

The auto/biographic narratives of the teachers in this investigation compiled by the researcher through the collection of data from interviews, observations and attendance at staff meetings evidence the negative impact of Economic Managerialist theory on teacher identities in the classroom. The notion of “service,” McWilliam (2002) argues, is an important aspect of economic managerialist practices in schools. The Principal at Heartbreak High reiterated during meetings: “we are here for the kids” and implementation of initiatives “while it means more work [for teachers], is necessary for the kids.” N.S.W. Department of Education and Training documents implemented at Heartbreak High reflected the language and beliefs of influential reports such as that of Ramsey (2000), where teaching is described as a “core business” and where teachers give “service” to “clients” and are “accountable” for their “effectiveness”. Ramsey (2000) acknowledges economic rationalist philosophy as a lens through which teachers are being forced to view the world. He also asserts that the language of economic managerialism is a reality in our contemporary world and must be accepted by teachers.

Teacher identities at Heartbreak High were also being affected by implementation of the *Quality Teaching* (2003) policy in schools. The *Quality Teaching* model, as discussed in the review of literature, equates teacher identity with pedagogy, that is, teachers are defined in terms of professional identities; not personal identities. Teachers in the investigation reported being “very angry” about the *Quality Teaching* model and how it was being implemented. They perceived the process to be detrimental to their concept of self. During interviews teacher participants expressed their belief that the *Quality Teaching* (2003) model embedded assumptions about teacher identities that viewed the craft of teaching in simplistic terms. Teachers described their feelings in statements such as: “*I am not a good teacher because many of my students are disengaging*”, “*I am not a good teacher because I am not getting good external examination results across all years*”; “*It is my fault students do not want to learn, and If I use the formula for pedagogy depicted by the Quality Teaching policy I will be an effective teacher*”.

Anger and feelings of disempowerment dominated the responses of Mr K, Mr V, Mrs S and Mrs C. Their attitudes reflected many of those of the teaching body at Heartbreak High, evidenced by highly emotive exchanges between teachers and the Principal and Deputy Principals during the staff meetings that were observed during the study. Teachers perceived that Productive Pedagogy was being imposed by “*bureaucrats and politicians*” as Mrs S said

during one heated exchange at a staff meeting. Examination of the *English Faculty Program*, units and observation of lessons indicated that the teachers involved in the research exhibited those qualities valued by the *Quality Teaching* model. Teachers, during interviews, expressed frustration that students were not engaging when they utilised “best practice” incorporating productive pedagogy. The Principal’s response to the concerns of the teachers was to employ consultant tutors to “teach” staff how to program. These research observations support the finding by McWilliam (2002) that teachers are encouraged to be “corporatising professionals through an unprecedented array of policy initiatives, in-service workshops and courses” (p. 29).

Teachers at Heartbreak High were identified during observation lessons and through review of the English Faculty Program and units as “Interpretation” teachers rather than “Transmission” teachers. Teacher participants were not focussed, for example, on transmitting knowledge or on learning strategies such as lectures, note taking from the board, dictation that depicts strong framing and control of the subject and how it is taught. Interpretation pedagogy operated in the classrooms of Mr V, Mr K, Mrs S and Mrs C who provided numerous opportunities for student autonomy and involvement in learning that was not about the transmission of knowledge and not about filling students up with knowledge. The teacher participants encouraged student input in a number of ways: they selected texts they hoped would engage students; they asked students for their input into programming; evaluated lessons through student reflection logs, offered alternative tasks and texts; adjusted work demands to individual student needs, and incorporated popular and youth culture. There was a core of activities but students could create alternative tasks or present tasks in different ways. Observation lessons revealed that teachers were sensitive to the needs of students and flexible with strategies and content and that they adjusted different strategies in order to ensure as much understanding as possible.

However, it was also evident in the case study that the ultimate legitimisation of knowledge was dependent upon the students and whether they desired to engage. It was very obvious during observation lessons that disengaged students refused to acknowledge “one’s implications in the information” as Felman (1997) found. Students (both engaged and disengaged) impacted on the classroom explicitly and implicitly as teachers participated in a perpetual process of adjustment of pace, content, strategies and organisation in attempts to engage all students. This finding is at odds with the view that classrooms focus on cultural

reproduction and that the teacher is the most powerful identity in the classroom (see for example, Lortie, 1975).

Compilations of the auto/biographies and comparisons between these and lesson observations revealed that teachers were implementing a concept of teacher as self in the classroom - one that integrates the personal and the professional 'self'. The centrality of narratives in teacher identity, suggested by the work of Atkinson (1990) and Bernstein (1996), are particularly evidenced by the two female teachers in the study. Both Mrs S and Mrs C had very distinct memories of schooling and teachers. During interviews they reminisced about role-playing being a teacher from three years onwards. Mrs S described this desire to be a teacher from her early childhood in this way:

*"I always wanted to be a teacher, I always role played being a teacher from as far back as I can remember, honestly I was only three or four at the most because I went to school at four and it was before then and I never envisioned being anyone else or doing anything else." In contrast, the male teachers in the study had become teachers for pragmatic reasons (money, jobs) as Mr K enunciates: "I wanted to be a pastry chef, and other things, but never a teacher. Then I got through high school and there were scholarships for teaching and so I just thought "Oh well" and did it. It was for pragmatic reasons really, money and jobs – not a vocation and it wasn't expected."* These extracts are further supported by teacher comments during interviews in which they all described teaching in subjective terms. Teaching was, they said, about "passion," "making a difference" and "all those important values in society like freedom, equality, democracy, communicating, getting along with others, being independent" and they viewed teachers as "entertainers," "we are actors in our own way" and asserted that "you have to have a personality to teach."

Through interviews and observations of conversations in the staffroom, it became obvious that the females in the study had significantly greater difficulty separating their personal self(s) from the teaching self (s) than the male teachers in the study. The female teachers exhibited the influence of the factors of "fear" and an "awareness of human imperfections" (Agne, 1999) in teacher identity construction more than the male participants at Heartbreak High. Mrs S and Mrs C cried several times because they had "failed" to make Steve or Kayla engage, they had "not addressed that child's need for..." "I should have avoided that incident by...", "I could have taught that better..." Both Mrs S and Mrs C reported, "not sleeping," having "headaches" and being "constantly worried at home" because they had difficulty

separating their teacher identity from their personal one. On the other hand, males (although they reported the need to “debrief” and being “angry sometimes about school”) perceived that they could separate their personal and teaching worlds effectively. The male teachers used expressions such as, “It’s only a job” in contrast to the female teachers’ description of teaching, “Being a vocation.” However, despite these claims, males were observed to be angry, hurt, confused, fearful and depressed after negative interactions with students or “bad lessons”. The subjective and the personal ‘self(s)’ appeared to be integral to the professional teacher identities observed in the English classrooms.

Analysis of the data at Heartbreak High supports the findings of Agne (1999) and Aspy and Roebuck (1977) that effective teaching involves both fear and care. Fear inhibits effective teaching and is reflected in teachers at Heartbreak High fearing failure, and was evidenced by questions teachers in the study constantly asked during staffroom conversations including “Why can’t I motivate my kids?” “Why did the kids do so poorly in that test?” “Why didn’t I see that kid needed help?” Why did she do that? Why doesn’t he care about this class? Why can’t he just co-operate? Mackwood (1997), a Desire theorist, refers to these fears as “puzzles” based on teacher desire to understand students.

The teacher participants in the case study also exhibited what Agne (1999) refers to as ‘care’ in her model of teacher identity involving the ‘self’. Care is “Other oriented-ness’ and caring involves awareness of the ‘other’ in the teacher/student relationship, it is about trust, respect, democracy and self-discipline. Classroom observations highlighted attempts at democracy and student autonomy but what was most noticeable was the awareness of teachers to the multitude of needs of students and particularly their sensitivity to student moods. Indeed, teachers at Heartbreak High seemed to have a ‘sixth sense’ about the emotional state of students in their classrooms. Staffroom conversations and interviews verified that Mr V, M K, Mrs S and Mrs C knew a great deal about the individuals in their class and they spent an extensive amount of their time worrying about them. Teachers in this case study evidenced a complex identity that included Agne’s (1999) notion of care and fear.

The findings of this ethnographic inquiry also support those of Tusin (1999) that effective teachers (including Mr K, Mr V, Mrs S and Mrs C) evince a “personal sense of self [that is] actualised to the point that they can enter into meaningful and growth-facilitating relationships with students” (p.168). In other words, all teacher participants exhibited a healthy sense of their own identity “how one sees oneself (self-concept), how one evaluates

oneself (self-esteem), how one desires to be (self-ideal), and how assured one is at meeting life (self-confidence)” (Ehle, 1989, p. 46). Therefore, the identities of the teachers in the study were autonomous, balancing professional and personal empathetic and reflective selves in ways that made it possible for them to effectively engage students. Mr V, Mr K, Mrs S and Mrs C, while displaying frustration about resistant student behaviour, generally evinced classroom identities that shared qualities that Hamachek (1999) identified as essential elements in effective teacher identities: passionate and enthusiastic about English and teaching; warm friendly attitudes; firm and reasonable expectations; fairness; a sense of doing or saying the right thing at the right time; intellectually groundedness; assumed responsibility for student outcomes; see students as individuals; provide definite guidelines focussed on what students know; challenge without offence; give personalized feedback; rapport with students is given a high priority; they are flexible regarding teaching methodology; are reflexive (p.206).

A crucial finding of this small in-depth ethnographic study of engaged and disengaged students at Heartbreak High is that disaffected students, despite expressing the belief that their English teachers had qualities that they had listed in their learning logs as ‘ideal’ or ‘good’, chose frequently to disengage in the classroom. This finding is at the crux of the narrative journey of this thesis. Teachers in the study were observed to be unable to engage disaffected students despite the realisation by those students that the teachers were in many ways “effective”. This finding was supported by reflection log entries and interviews. Therefore, teachers, while exerting some influence on classroom situations, displayed considerably less agency in the student-teacher dyad than other researchers have reported (see, for instance, Rowe, 2003).

Heartbreak High findings concurred with Slade and Trent (2000) that disaffected students was critical of teachers who did not fit their expectations. These criticisms were mainly about behaviour and being disciplined. Four students described their teachers of English as “good” but not the “best” partly because s/he “*Didn’t let me talk and move around the classroom [XXX],*” “*Kept picking on me [Leyla],*” “*Yells [McKayla],*” “*Takes things too seriously when we’re only playing around [Mike]*” and “*Doesn’t listen to your side [Steve]*”. It was interesting that two of the disengaged students (Moria and Twitch), while expressing responses typical of those by disengaged students who were being disciplined (“*I didn’t do it*”, “*He made me*”, “*My work is done*”, “*I wasn’t hurting anyone*”) described their teacher

as good because he was viewed as fair: “*He gives us three strikes on the board before he sends us out to talk to us*” and he “*likes us even ‘though we call out and do muck up*”. This supports the findings of Slade and Trent (2000) that disengaged male students are concerned particularly about justice and fairness, but these findings also highlight that disengaged females share these male concerns.

#### **5.4.1 Teacher Agency**

This ethnographic investigation of student and teacher identity construction in Years 7 - 10 English classrooms at Heartbreak High found that students had considerable agency in the classroom, and that teachers perceived themselves to have little power in the teaching/learning process. Teachers did not perceive themselves as “God” (Garmeston and Wellman, 2004, p. 4) or the most important figure in the classroom as a large body of work suggests (see for instance, Dembo 1988; Miller and Seller 1975). Observations of lessons supported teacher perceptions regarding student agency (power) in the classroom. Teacher culture appeared to be competing with powerful subcultures (Walker, 1993) in the English Heartbreak High classrooms; subcultures that displayed their power through disengagement and this act considerably reduced the agency of the teacher. This research concurs with Desire theorists, for example Gallop (1997), who found that desire is a crucial aspect of the pedagogic process. This finding is evidenced in the study in a variety of ways, for example, Mrs S and Mrs C desired to be teachers from an early age, both male and female teacher participants desired all students to engage in learning, and teachers desired to be more effective. Analysis of the data (particularly teacher interviews and staff meetings) verified Watkins (1999) argument that “Contemporary educational practice tends to give priority to student desire viewing it as an innate capacity to be tapped but not “violated” by teacher intervention” (p1). Disengaged students in the investigation were not an “innocent, empty receptacle, lacking own desires, having desires introduced to by his teacher” (Gallop, 1997, p. 2).

The desires of the student(s) were given priority at Heartbreak High. This was most evident in the Principal’s litany: “We are here for the kids” “We need to do this for the students” “These changes are needed for better student outcomes” “Students and parents think this is good so we need to do this”. Teachers in the study (except for Mrs S) accepted this traditional view of the teaching and learning relationship and often reiterated it. They assumed that student needs and desires were paramount in the learning/teaching relationship. This finding supports the concern of Watkins (1999) that teachers are being marginalised. It also suggests that the

current N.S.W. Department focus on pedagogy is ignoring teacher desires and valorising student desires. Student participants of this case study did not reflect the identities depicted in the body of work that portrays students as willing participants who are able to be motivated by the correct pedagogy (see for instance Gore, et al., 2003; Ramsey 2000; Rowe, 2003). Disaffected students at Heartbreak High, in interviews and observation lessons, did not display personas that could be motivated to learn. Engaged students, on the other hand, portrayed characteristics of students who “desired to know” (Felman, 1997) and therefore engaged in learning activities.

It was also found in this investigation that student identities frequently became disaffected in “opposition to the actions of teachers in concrete educational contexts” (Munns & McFadden, 1997, p.2). Steve Clein, for example, chose to “act out” as he said in his reflection log, because he “was bored and wanted to do drama, not write”; Leyla was “*fed up with the teacher going on and on*” so she walked out of the room, and Roger wanted to be entertained so he “*wound Mr V up for fun*”. Engaged students resented the disruption to the learning process and having their own desires marginalised. Fred evidences this point in her log comment on resistant behaviour in general: “*Everything stops. The teacher can’t teach and you can’t learn. They [disengaged students] want to do what they want to do and they don’t care about the rest of us. They’re rude and disrespectful and selfish. Why can’t they just shut up if they don’t want to learn and let us get on with it? They’re bullies! Just by being there, they bully you.*” The teachers at Heartbreak High reflected Fred’s perception that disengaged students had enormous agency in the classroom. Mrs S highlighted the latter during an interview: “*Mike and Steve control the class; if you didn’t have them you would have the class on side. I feel so sorry for the kids who are wanting to work, you spend 90% of your time lion taming when you have such great stuff to do with the kids if only they’d let you.*” Mrs S highlighted the power of students over her personal life “*I have nights when I don’t sleep, when I go over and over again in my head asking myself what I could have done better or differently. I get headaches and I get stressed and I know I should learn to let go but it’s easier said than done.*” There was a general consensus among teachers in the case study that disaffected students turned teachers from “care” pedagogy to “fear” pedagogy as Agne (1999) suggests. Teachers, during staff meetings and interviews, expressed concern about this shift and spent a great deal of time reflecting on more effective strategies to utilise to avoid raising their voices, or sending the student to the Head Teacher.

#### 5.4.2 Subject English, Models of English and *English Years 7 – 10 Syllabus (2003)*

Analysis of the interviews and observation of lessons in this investigation found that teacher identity is about a personal set of beliefs about teaching and learning and about Subject English. Mrs S, Mr V, Mrs C and Mr K spoke of the aesthetic value of English (for example, “*the power and beauty of language*” [Mrs C]); centrality of English “*English is the most important subject in the curriculum because everything we do relates to other subjects*” [Mr V]); social value (“*Kids learn to related to each other and to others in the real world because we teach them explicitly how to communicate – how to speak, how to listen, how to work in groups, and we give them the language to do it*” [Mr K]); moral values (*We explore ‘right or wrong’, or whether ‘right or wrong’ exists, we look at the big issues – love, power, life, death, equality, difference, in imaginary worlds and real ones* [Mrs S]); and the importance of the child. Patterson (2000) also found that teachers of English believe English to be important because it focuses on “What it is to be human” (p. 266) and this was a deeply held belief of the teacher participants at Heartbreak High.

The teachers in the study were experts regarding the *English Years 7 – 10 Syllabus (2003)* and were well informed about its pedagogical underpinnings. They clearly enunciated their belief that Subject English has a history of competing pedagogies. This finding supports the contention of Little (1998) and Watson (1981) that models of English exist and are utilised by teachers consciously and unconsciously. Each teacher, both in interviews and in log entries, noted that they had been taught explicitly about John Dixon’s Growth model (1975). They aligned themselves to the Growth/Language across the Curriculum/Language in Learning/Negotiating the Curriculum model of English paradigm(s). The English Faculty rejected the Basic Skills model of English. Teachers identified the Basic Skills model with economic rationalism and “false claims of falling literacy standards” as Mrs S noted. Mrs C, during a group interview, angrily commented that the Federal Minister of Education “*was on the radio lying about falling literacy standards that don’t exist, don’t they read the OECD reports?*” *They do this because they’ve got to have a crisis so you can force through reactionary changes.*” Mr V found the Basic Skills model “*very ill-suited to my beliefs about English, about how to teach and about me.*”

Observation of lessons and an examination of teaching units and the English Faculty Program provided evidence of a model of English that combined the Growth model with Cross Curriculum/Language and Learning/Negotiating the Curriculum model of English which

reflected their beliefs including: the importance of the personal, of language in use and context, process learning, the centrality of the child, the validity of the child's compositions, student-centred activities, real audiences, reflection and metacognition. The teachers at Heartbreak High had also incorporated into their teaching identities the Cultural Heritage's love of literature; the Genrist text types, Critical Literacy's notions of social context and power, positioning, appropriations, transformations, valuing all texts and enjoyed challenging notions of 'truth') and multiliteracies.

Student narratives, revealed via the rich tapestry of auto/biographies, observation recordings, interviews and reflection logs, that students in the study disengaged despite the wealth of relevant learning experiences (negotiated learning, journal, reflection log, digital media, popular and youth texts, autonomy, relevance of knowledge and understandings for their real worlds, etc) and 'good' teaching. Mr V, Mrs C, Mr K and Mrs S were frustrated and puzzled by resistant student behaviour because they believed that the *English Years 7 – 10 Syllabus* (2003) should, together with 'quality teaching' result in student engagement.

### **5.4.3 Critical Reflection**

Data analysis of this case study supports the findings of Tickle (1999) and Schon (1983) that on-going self-analysis and self-reflection are crucial for effective teacher identities. Teachers at Heartbreak High constantly reflected informally and formally about themselves and their teaching. Informal reflection included dialogue among the faculty members regarding a plethora of topics including teaching resources, programming, organisation, skills, knowledge, strategies and teaching and learning theory. Embedded in these conversations was a desire to be a better teacher and an over-riding desire to engage all students. Teachers were painfully honest and very critical of themselves, often focussing on their perceived weaknesses instead of celebrating their strengths and successes. At Heartbreak High, the English Faculty utilised reflection logs regularly in their classes, reflecting the findings Schon (1983) that metacognition is important for students and for themselves as teachers. Reflection scaffolds were utilised to assist students to be reflexive about themselves and about their teachers.

Teachers involved in the research reflected on their identities through the eyes of their students, utilising their comments to improve their teaching and as an important means of developing and sustaining positive rapports with their students. The latter is evidenced by the

following teacher log extract written in response to a question about the value of reflection logs:

*Mrs S: My junior classes put their reflection log entries at the back of their journal but my senior classes have a separate small exercise book. We try and do reflection log most lessons but if we get too busy it turns out to be once a week instead of regular journal. I use it to “chat” to kids I’m worried about, or to get kids to tell me when they are angry, etc. I try and use logs to get the kids to talk to me so we avoid “blow ups” because I’ve done something to upset them. Kids are better learners if they understand what, how and why they learn and how they can use it elsewhere. If they don’t think about it they often don’t know what works for them and what doesn’t or they don’t think they’re learning at all. Like when we do drama games and collaboration exercises – when we sit back down they’ll say, what should I write in my reflection log because we only had fun and played games so we didn’t learn anything. This drives me nuts, especially as I’ve pointed out what we’ve done and why 100 times. But I guess it goes to show you just how they don’t associate ‘fun’ with learning and how you can tell them something but they really have to work it through and write it down to get it.*

Mrs S displays in this interview excerpt powerful understandings about teaching and learning, about herself and her students. She is an emotionally intelligent teacher who is trying to develop this intelligence in her students. Mrs S is using the logs, as Hamachek (1999) suggests as a “door” that is leading her to “useful insights about [her] and others that positively affect teaching practices” (p.215). It is apparent from this extract that Mrs S is using logs to reflect on the learning of her students, to develop and maintain a rapport with each one, to show that she values the students as individuals, to relate to their culture, to enhance their self-awareness and autonomy, to be democratic, to improve their knowledge, understandings and skill in English, to teach better, to try and prevent student disengagement and to improve their enjoyment and her own in class.

This chapter has described the major findings of this case study including identifying student ideal teacher attributes and general perceptions of their English teachers. The analysis of the data highlighted the role of ability, achievement, self-concept, agency, reflection and empathy, as well as, the role of desire in identity construction. The complexity of the nature of teacher identity is testified to in this analysis of data that suggests the importance of viewing teachers as integrated self(s) that incorporate the professional and the personal. The positive and negative aspects of desire are described in the rich tapestry of this chapter’s

narrative and brought to life by the stories conveyed in this chapter. The following chapter (Discussion and Conclusion) offers elucidation of these findings and areas for further investigation.

## **CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

## Chapter 6

### **“By telling stories we make identity claims” (Ronai, 1997)**

This case study is the chronicle of a journey through research of a small group of students, teachers and a researcher at Heartbreak High. Its narration has provided insights into the factors and influences responsible for student identity construction and teacher identity construction within N.S.W. English Years 7 - 10 classrooms. This thesis has argued that identity construction is a complex, fluid process shaped by cultural and social contexts, and evidenced by constant enactment of self(s) “in any given situation, moment, or scene, relative to others” (Ronai, 1997, p. 125). This ethnographic investigation has presented an original approach to examining the nature of engaged and disengaged student ‘self(s),’ and of teacher ‘self(s)’ by adapting and synthesising a range of theoretical perspectives.

#### **6.1 Why do Students Engage or Disengage in Learning?**

This case study found that several factors influence student identity construction in Years 7 – 10 English classrooms at Heartbreak High. Student desire was a critical factor and largely dependent on the cultures and subcultures to which students chose to belong. Engaged students generally displayed a desire to “know” and chose to work collaboratively with the teacher whom they perceived to have a legitimate right to their cooperation and respect. On the other hand, disengaged student desires were generally incompatible with the teachers’ desires (to teacher and for students to learn). Disengaged students did not value the teachers’ or engaged students’ culture; instead they legitimised their peer subcultures and their own desires (to be entertained, to be noticed, to be empowered, etc). The disaffected students in this case study embraced a desire “not to know”. The ability of a student to critically reflect on their own self(s) was a key discriminator in identifying engaged or disengaged personas in the classroom. Disengaged students displayed limited ability to critically assess their behaviour, skills, knowledge and understandings of Subject English. At Heartbreak High disaffected students, in comparison to engaged students, frequently showed limited capacity to empathise with those who did not belong to their subculture whom they perceived as “different”. This was particularly noticeable with regard to their attitude to teachers. It is therefore evident that student participants in this qualitative research displayed considerable agency in the classroom.

Broadly speaking, Social/Cultural Reproduction theorists (see, for example, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976) posit that students who embrace the dominant culture of the classroom (re) produce engaged student identities. In contrast, students who are resisting the cultural relay of “legitimised” knowledge, values and processes of school are marginalised (Bernstein, 1990) and create disengaged student identities. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) suggest that student disaffection reflects the misalignment between what is culturally important between individuals or groups in society. This ethnographic inquiry offers another interpretation of this finding. Disaffected students at Heartbreak High were rejecting the “cultural capital” of the classroom because they did not desire or value it; not vice versa. They were not being marginalised by the teachers’ dominant culture but chose their own subcultures that were oppositional to that of the classroom. In doing so they fulfilled their desires (for example, to be noticed, to be entertained, to be important). In contrast, engaged students desired to engage because it was compatible with their own culture(s) and because of their capacity to critically reflect and to empathise with the teacher.

Disengaged students at Heartbreak High were not (re) producing disaffected identities because they felt disempowered or because they were resisting oppressive capitalistic inequalities as Willis (1977) and other Resistant theorists assert. Nor were students disengaging because of a lack of success or poor self-concept (see, for example, Dembo 1988). Indeed, both engaged and disengaged students at Heartbreak High generally perceived themselves to be “good” at English and had very positive self-concepts. This finding differs from that of Furlong (1991) and others who suggests that teachers legitimise differences among students and that teachers’ views of students’ abilities has become a part of the subjective view of how students perceive themselves.

This study found that subcultures (Walker 1988) dominated the identity(s) of disaffected students and brought them into conflict with the dominant culture of the classroom. Individuals in subculture(s) at Heartbreak High affected each other’s development powerfully and were driven by desires that were crucial to the student identities they composed (consciously and unconsciously) that were “unable to take responsibility for their thoughts and behaviour” (Walker, 1988, p.1). Heartbreak High (dis) engaged students were attempting to become somebody: “a real and presentable self and one anchored in the verifying eyes of the friends whom they came to school to meet” (Wexler, 1992, p.7). However, disaffected students were not, as Wexler suggests, creating compensatory identities in the social vortex of

school. Instead, disengaged students exhibited aggressive identities out of a desire to challenge the “dominant representations, languages, and meanings [that] become central to the working of pedagogy” (Todd, 1997, p. 4).

Heartbreak High students involved in this research displayed considerable personal agency in the classroom. This finding concurs with that of Hodkinson (1994), Jones (1989) and Giddens (1984). Disaffected students were not rejecting learning because they felt “unloved” or “nobody” (Wexler, 1992). They were disengaging because their “egocentric selves” (Robertson, 1997) were focussed on fulfilling their own needs. These desires were reflected and reinforced by student subcultures (Walker, 1988) in opposition to the teachers’ (and those students choosing to engage in learning). Disengaged student subcultures accepted negative peer values and were focussed inwards on their own desires, lives, personal problems and social relationships. School was generally valued for its social context - they came for “recess and lunch” and “to see their mates.” Students who resisted learning at Heartbreak High created stereotypical masculine identities dominated by the desires of the individual and subculture at the expense of “others” (Hamachek, 1997). Disaffected students exhibited “retrospective identities” (Bernstein, 1996) that reflected a long history of disengagement at school. They had clear memories of “hidden injuries” (Furlong, 1991) or “moments” (McFadden 1992) when they rejected schooling because it did not fulfil their immediate desires.

The traditional (classical) notion of students as passive, able-to-be motivated learners (see, for instance, Rowe, 2003) is questioned in this research. This study found merit in an alternative view of students as learners as presented by Desire theorists (see, for instance, Watkins, 1999; Gallop, 1997). This view asserts that students are not naturally motivated or able to be motivated unless they desire it. Engaged students at Heartbreak High exhibited the “desire to know”; they were usually attentive, motivated, polite, cooperative, collegial, reflexive, empathetic and self-reflective. However, disengaged students “desired not to know”; they displayed a “passion for ignorance” (Felman, 1997). These students were usually uncooperative, non-collegial, inattentive, unmotivated (and unable to be motivated), impolite, egocentric and aggressively assertive.

Heartbreak High student engagement and disengagement were also found to be directly related to a student’s ability to critically reflect on his/her skills, knowledge and understanding of English and particularly his/her behaviour. Students, who were able to

critically self-evaluate generally engaged in learning, co-operated with the teacher and exhibited engaged personas. Disengaged students, on the other hand, showed limited capacity to critically reflect or to empathise with the culture of the teacher and those students engaging in learning.

Reflection was highly developed in students engaging in learning at Heartbreak High and supports Felman's (1997) notion of the importance of "subversive critical reflection" (p.32). They evidenced high levels of metacognition (reflecting on what, how and why they learned and the learning cultures of others). Engaged students were able to effectively evaluate their own abilities and strengths and weaknesses in English. They also reflected honestly and critically on their behaviour and were generally able to take responsibility for their behaviour, unlike disengaged students who were limited in this facility. Engaged students were intimidated by those resisting learning and were perplexed and angered by disruptive behaviour that interfered with their own learning. These students also valued school for its social attributes (to be with friends) but they also believed school to be important in other ways. Engaged students in the case study desired to learn and embraced opportunities to do so because it correlated with the culture they valued-one that fulfilled their present desires and their desires for the future (to go to university, to get an apprenticeship, to improve English skills).

Engaged students exhibited the capacity to empathise whereas disengaged students were unable or unwilling to empathise with "others" (Agne, 1997) who were "different". At Heartbreak High, engaged students evidenced feelings of empathy with their teachers of English and with the role of the teacher in general. Retrospective narratives (Bernstein, 1990) of infants/primary schooling depicted positive experiences and social awareness and the ability to negotiate relationships with teachers. Interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence (reflection and empathy) were well developed in engaged student identities as Hamachek (1997) found. Engaged students cared about what their English teachers thought and felt and were concerned about them as individuals. They "trusted", "liked" and "respected" their teachers as having "an important job", whereas, disengaged students saw teachers as "sport" as "different" as "being paid for the job". Students engaging in learning at Heartbreak High desired to learn and to be aligned with the teacher and the dominant culture of the classroom.

This case study found that gender was significant in student identity construction in terms of masculine and feminine subculture stereotypes. Interestingly, female disaffected participants

(as well as disengaged male participants) exhibited stereotypical ‘masculine’ traits including “self-sabotaging” and “uncertain control” (Martin, 2003), as they were inattentive, uninterested, active, loud, very verbal and physical. This case study concurs with Martino (1988) that disengaged males [and females] modelled themselves on a dominant concept of homophobic masculinity that valued “sport and real life” where “others” were called “nerd” and “gay”. In contrast, ‘feminine’ traits of learning were apparent in engaged students who were generally passive, attentive, interested and co operative (Rowe, 2003)

This chronicle did not find that males disengaged more than females because English is a “feminised” subject as Pallotta-Chiarolli (2002) and Connell (1995) found. Nor were girls naturally more attentive as Martin (2003) suggests. This study also, as noted previously, found no significant connection between self-concept and gender. Disaffected students at Heartbreak High were disengaging irrespective of gender. This finding is at variance with that of Rowe (2003) and O’Doherty (1994).

### **6.1.1 What is the Role of Pedagogy in Teacher Identity Construction?**

The story of four committed and experienced teachers implementing a “concept of self” (Lipka and Brinthaupt, 1999, pp. 2-3) in the English classroom has been told in this research. The complex nature of teacher identity that combines the professional and the personal “self(s)” and that highlights the idea that “consciously we teach what we know; unconsciously we teachers teach who we are” (Lipka and Brinthaupt, p.201) was revealed here.

The teachers in this chronicle were passionate and enthusiastic about English and about teaching. They portrayed identities that were warm, friendly, empathetic and critically self-aware. Teacher participants were well informed and interested in each of their students. They were fair, firm, equitable and fair with regards to discipline; they were experts in their knowledge, understanding and skills of Subject English and reasonable in their expectations. These teachers portrayed very competent teaching identities that were grounded in strong beliefs about Subject English and about teaching. They were emotionally intelligent and continuously engaged in critical reflection. However, the teacher identities in the classroom at Heartbreak High also displayed “fearful” personalities that were undermining these “caring” identities (Agne, 1999).

A significant finding of this inquiry, and one which reflects the findings of Sachs (1999), is the existence of dominant discourses that are currently impacting on teacher identity. One

such discourse is imposed, authoritative and couched in economic rationalist terms and implemented in economic managerialist policies including those relating to pedagogy, for example, *Quality Teaching* (2003). The other is subjective and involves “self-actualised” identities (Tusin, 1999). These autonomous identities integrate the personal, professional, public and private self(s) and are constantly engaged in self-reflection driven by a desire to engage all students in the English classroom.

This research narrative questions representations of teacher identity largely in terms of pedagogy and professional self (defined frequently as a set of strategies that formulate “best practice” in the “core business” of teaching) The teacher participants at Heartbreak High felt alienated by the *Quality Teaching* (2003) model and by *Productive Pedagogy* (1998, 2001) because of an economic managerialist implementation that presented it, contrary to the pleas of Newmann and Wehlage (1996), as a ‘magic bullet’ to ‘fix’ teachers who cannot engage students in learning. One teacher at Heartbreak High derogatorily described this paradigm as the “*build it and they will come*” model of teaching.

Narrow interpretations of teacher identity constructed only as pedagogy ignore, as Borich (1999) notes, the desires, beliefs, attributes and qualities - the subjective and personal - that cannot be communicated or taught which this case study found to be paramount in the (re) creation of “good” teachers. The *Quality Teaching* model and definitions of teacher identity only in ‘professional’ terms (a set of teaching strategies and attributes), is limited also in its traditional view of students that portrays them as innocent, passive, and self-motivated or willing to be motivated. The four teachers in the case study believed this traditional view of students and believed they were ‘failing’ because they were unable to engage all students. This examination offers an alternative perspective from the traditional view of children and learning that dominates contemporary educational practice which “tends to give priority to student desire viewing it as an innate capacity to be tapped but not “violated” by teacher intervention” (Watkins, 1999, p.1).

In this study, student agency was found to be a significant factor in the construction of classroom identities and this differs from the findings of other scholars (see, for instance, Rowe, 2003; Ramsey, 2000) whose work is based on the traditional premise that students have less agency than teachers who have the power to create engaged student identities. Students at Heartbreak High were powerful agents who chose to engage or resist learning depending on their desires and the desires of the subculture. Teachers were in the continuous

process of adapting curriculum, teaching strategies and approaches in attempts to engage disaffected students. Students, as Jones (1989) found, often dictated aspects of the classroom including the timing and pacing of the lesson. This influence, compounded by other factors, was most noticeable in teacher participants' perceptions that they were increasingly powerless in the classroom.

The teachers at Heartbreak High portrayed identities that were "effective" and desirous of "making a difference" and were passionate about teaching despite, as Agne (1999) also found, disaffection because of feelings of guilt, failure and fear. Teachers were frustrated and puzzled by continued student disengagement and were embattled both in the classroom and in society. They felt disrespected and undervalued and expressed a "lack of confidence in their capacity to make the kinds of differences in the lives of children and young people which first motivated them to become teachers" (Vinson, 2005, p.9). Teachers showed diminished self-concepts as they perceived their role as being reduced to "managers" in an economic rationalist/managerialist world where change was being imposed from above and from outside (Sachs, 1999). Examination of federal and state policies including the Carrick (1989), Finn (1991), Mayer (1992) and Ramsey (2000) reports reinforce the accuracy of this perception. The teachers of Heartbreak High, particularly because of the actions of the Senior Executive, perceive themselves to be creating identities in educational contexts that were increasingly dominated by the language of the marketplace and by economic/managerialist values. They believe, as Hargreaves (1994) suggests, that their teacher identities are being negatively impacted by being "accountable" through "external measures of achievement" and "records" of "value added" in order to "benchmark" their "client's" "achievements" in the "core business" in the "service industry" of teaching. Heartbreak High teacher participants used the metaphor of "battle" to describe the role of teachers in an educational system that seems "soulless" (Wexler, 1992).

### **6.1.2 What is the role of Curriculum (Subject English and *English Years 7 – 10 Syllabus*) in Identity Construction?**

Teacher beliefs about Subject English and the N.S.W. *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) were integral to the 'self(s)' they composed. Teachers at Heartbreak High believed, as Patterson (2000) suggests, that Subject English encompassed "aesthetics, ethics and rhetoric" and was about "humanity, truth, moral development and fulfilment of the individual in society" (p.30). Teachers valued Subject English as providing opportunities for the "moral", "ethical" and "spiritual" (*English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus*, 2003, p. 7) growth of the child. Belief

in equity, freedom, equality, democracy, justice, beauty, collegiality, respect, morality and the joy and empowerment of language and the centrality of English in the curriculum were values embedded in teacher identities at Heartbreak High and reflected in the words of the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003): “language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world, and is the primary means by which we relate to others” (p.7). However, the teachers at Heartbreak High, contrary to Patterson’s (2000) findings, explicitly expressed their allegiance to paradigms of English that correlated with their view of the world and their underlying belief system. The latter concurs with the work of Sawyer and McFarlane (2000), Sawyer (1998), Watson (1998) and others.

Teachers involved in the research aligned themselves with the combined Growth/Language across the Curriculum model of English. Sawyer and McFarlane (2000) call this amalgamation of models an ‘eclectic’ paradigm of English. This model, they suggest, “allows teachers to make conscious and reflective choices between aspects of models suitable to the kinds of learning intended would seem to be an appropriate approach to curriculum design” (p.4). This process was subjective and intuitive. Teachers who participated in the research evidenced this eclectic paradigm. The Growth/Language across the Curriculum model of English was most evident in the teachers’ discourse but they incorporated aspects of other paradigms of English. Critical literacy, for example, was utilised in classroom practice as teachers perceived the value of equity, multiple voices and context; Genre text type frameworks were utilised and teachers clearly revered ‘classic’ literature lauded by the Cultural Heritage model, but this did not preclude them from enthusiastically embracing youth and popular culture texts. In contrast, the Basic Skills model was rejected except for some drilling of skills at point of need, because teachers associated it with economic rationalism and reactionary political perspectives. Teachers were searching for a model that responded to the increasing politicisation of teaching and expressed interest in Jack Thomson’s (1998) Rhetorical, Ethical, Socio-Cultural, Political Model:

such a rhetorical/ethical model involves personal growth as well as full awareness of the relationship between language and power, a familiarity with social practices and their discourses, and an understanding of the political and ideological formation of texts and of matters of values and ethics (p. 14).

It was found during the research narrative journey that the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) encouraged “Interpretation” pedagogy as opposed to “Transmission” pedagogy (Barnes and Shemilt, 1974). It encouraged ‘real life’ relevance and not ‘dummy runs’ for

what, how and why students were learning in English. Teachers at Heartbreak High programmed English fully cognizant that learning is “recursive” (*English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus*, 2003, p.7). They perceived learning was not “linear-cumulative-progressive” but occurred via “breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action” (Felman, 1997, p. 23). The *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) encouraged pedagogical practices that reflected low “classification” and weak “framing” and made “codes” (Bernstein 1996, 1990) explicit through various strategies including Reader’s Response (Thomson, 1998) and critical literacy techniques including people as texts (Mackwood, 1997; Misson, 2002). The *English Years 7 – 10 Syllabus* (2003), despite incorporating some prescriptive elements, provided teachers with considerable scope for interpretation “The syllabus enables teachers to draw on the methods of different theoretical perspectives and models for teaching” (p.7) and for teachers to tailor curriculum and practice pedagogy that integrates their personal and professional self(s) as advocated as best practice by Sawyer and McFarlane (2000).

While student agency is a dominant factor in student engagement or non-engagement in the English classroom, it was found that the teacher and the curriculum could provide “spaces” (Watkins, 1999; Foucault, 1997; Giddens, 1979) that connected it with the desire(s) of the subculture(s). The *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003) provided such spaces in various ways including: a focus on the personal and subjective; the post-structuralist view of the child as the centre of learning; a wide definition of “text”; the inclusion of youth and popular culture; critical literacy and literary theory; and embedded notions of empowerment and democracy. This finding concurs with the work of Pallotta-Chiarolli (2002) and Misson (2002), and with Bernstein’s (1996) exhortation that teachers need to respect and value the child’s culture in order to engage students in learning. However, these periods of engagement, always brief, intermittent and inconsistent, occurred only to be replaced by the over riding desire not to engage in learning because students chose to value their subculture over the culture in the classroom if learning was not “fun”, “interesting” and “enjoyable”.

## 6.2 Conclusions

### “We are all actors” (Mr V describing teachers)

Chronicling the “small scale and richly patterned” world of four teachers of English and sixteen students at Heartbreak High to create “rich textured” ethnography (Watts, 1993, pp.55-56) has provided “spaces” (Foucault, 1997; Hodkinson 1994) for reflection on teacher and student ‘self(s)’ in English Years 7 - 10 classrooms. This case study reflects the thinking of Wexler (1992) in his description of his research narrative as “neither truth nor fiction, but a composition” (p.2). The research narrative depicted in this thesis listened to the different “voices” of the characters and created a narrative that features motifs, refrains and themes based on the notion of reflexivity that recognises “texts do not simply and transparently report an independent order of reality...therefore, there is no possibility of a neutral text” (Atkinson, 1990, p. 7).

Many stories about education are told in this thesis. In the first story, teachers are characters in a world where “there is a vocabulary of means, efficiency, universals, law-like generalization and bureaucracy (Parker, 1997, p.3). This world is hierarchical, authoritative, egocentric, managerial, fear engendering and is about “contrived collegiality” (Hargreaves, 1994, p.17); it suppresses the desire to teach. This world values the objective, the scientific, the quantifiable and the pragmatic. Ironically, in this world, “Good intentions are persistently and infuriatingly turned on their heads. Even the most well intentioned change devices which try ...[to] promote their professional growth and support their efforts to build professional community are self-defeating because they are squeezed into mechanistic models or suffocated through stifling supervision (Hargreaves, 1994, p.3). Initiatives such as *Authentic Pedagogy* (Newmann & Associates, 1996), *Productive Pedagogies* (QSRLS, 2001, 1998) and *Quality Teaching* (2003) evidence this phenomenon and serve to sustain it.

*Productive Pedagogy* and *Quality Teaching* models of teaching advocate: intellectual quality in an inquiry based learning approach in “supportive learning environments”, the need for “substantive conversations” and “professional learning” communities. These paradigms of teaching also focus on applying learning in school contexts to wider contexts. At Heartbreak High, in the current climate of economic rationalism and managerialism in education, this has translated into change imposed from ‘above’ and has negatively impacted on the self-concept

and efficacy of the teachers in the case study. The dominant pedagogy utilised to teach teachers at Heartbreak High about *Quality Teaching* is transmission pedagogy (Barnes and Shemilt, 1974). “Outsiders” (Sachs, 1999) or “tutors” were employed by the Principal at Heartbreak High to “fill up the empty vessels [teachers]” with “knowledge” about “how to do *Productive Pedagogy*” and be “Quality Teachers”. The Principal called this process, “Being on the same page.” Ironically, teachers in the case study exhibited “quality” and “effective” pedagogy but were increasingly feeling marginalised by a school culture that ignored the subjective, the romantic; one that de-eroticises pedagogy and ignores teacher desires in order to create “corporatising professionals” (McWilliam, 1997, p.29).

The second story in this research narrative features teachers as characters who are caring, collaborative, reflexive and empathetic. These teachers symbolise a world of “autonomy, emancipation, uniqueness, democracy, ends and values” (Parker, 1997, p.3). This world engenders the desire to teach. Teachers at Heartbreak High were enacting “self-actualised” (Tusin, 1999) self(s) that integrated the personal and the professional; the public and the private; the desirous and the desiring. The characters portrayed effective teaching identities. The teachers in the ethnographic inquiry are like those portrayed in Parker’s (1997) post-modern school where “The character of the reflective teacher embodies an optimistic vision of human potential within a pessimistic picture of its present realization” (p.7) They remained passionate, caring, committed and engaged in teaching despite experiencing fear and guilt focussing on the student and the classroom (Why didn’t s/he learn? What could I have done to stop him/her abusing me? How can I learn this new body of knowledge?).

Integral to the character of the teachers at Heartbreak High, were beliefs about Subject English and the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003). Teachers at Heartbreak High believed that English was the story of “humanity, truth, moral development and fulfilment of the individual in society” (Patterson, 2000, p.238). Teachers valued English as providing opportunities for personal moral, ethical and spiritual growth for themselves and for their students. They desired to “make a difference” and to experience “joy” in teaching and learning. Teacher participants in this qualitative inquiry were committed to the philosophy, skills, knowledge and understandings about English expressed in the *English Years 7 - 10 Syllabus* (2003). They were very aware of the need to equip students for “the real world”. However, the role that teacher stakeholders most wanted to play was one that inspired an appreciation of the power and beauty of language and texts (in the widest definition of the

word). Teachers wished to be instrumental in developing student autonomy and happiness, as well as, engendering tolerance, equity and democracy within their classrooms and in wider contexts.

An important and interrelated narrative recorded in this composition is that of student identity. This is also a story about desire, empathy, reflexivity, agency and cultures. Desire Theory characterises the student in a different way from classic Western pedagogy. It challenges the centrality of the child and the portrayal of the child as one who has an innate desire to know. Children are not depicted as “innocent, empty receptacle(s), lacking his own desires, having desires ‘introduced to him’ by the teacher” (Gallop, 1997, p. 2). Instead, students are characterised as having considerable agency in desiring or not desiring to engage in learning. Put in simple terms, students who desire to “know” engage in learning and students who desire “ignorance” choose not to engage in learning.

Desire is integral to the student self(s) they (re) create in the English classroom and is dependent upon the culture and subcultures the student values most. Engaged students at Heartbreak High saw their identity as a reflection of the dominant culture of the classroom symbolised by their English teacher. Disengaged students saw (consciously and subconsciously) their identity(s) as a reflection of a subculture in which individual members exerted considerable influence on each other (Walker, 1988). Subcultures in English at Heartbreak High were generally oppositional to the dominant culture of the classroom. They were characterised by a general desire for ignorance; for masculine stereotypical identities; for fun (not to be bored); for social gratification (to be with friends) and for dominance. They opposed the culture of the classroom because of a desire to assert themselves as more significant than “others” (engaged students and the teacher) who were “different”. The identities belonging to these subcultures displayed little “emotional intelligence” (Hamachek, 1990); and they showed limited empathy and critical reflection (the ability to listen to other ‘voices’; the ability to reflect critically on their behaviour or work; the ability to follow advice).

### **6.3 Implications of the Research**

A different way of conceptualising student and teacher identity has been related as a “consensual truth” in this research narrative. Students have been (re) positioned as powerful actors involved in constructing their own identities in the context of English classrooms.

Throughout this research journey students have displayed significant agency in creating identities that are predominantly concerned with obtaining their own desires and the desires of subculture(s) to which they belong.

Engaged student identities portrayed in this composition are critically reflective and empathetic individuals who desire to assist in the (re) production of a collaborative and cooperative learning environment. They experience episodes of disempowerment generally because of the actions of disengaged students who disrupt lessons. Disaffected student identities are generally focussed on their own desires and the desires of the subculture(s) that do not value the teachers' culture. The resistant subculture is dominated by social and intrapersonal concerns and stereotypical masculine characteristics (egocentric, physical, homophobic, lacking in empathy and unable to critically reflect).

The classical portrayal of students that currently dominates contemporary educational models of teaching and learning is questioned in this research. This model places students and student desires at the centre of teacher/student relationships. It (re) presents the child as powerless and passive and able to be 'motivated' to engage in learning through 'quality' teaching. Contrary to this depiction of student identity, disaffected students at Heartbreak High possessed significant agency in the classroom (they disrupted the timing, structure, tone, interactions and content of the lesson) and they refused to be motivated.

The traditional conceptualisation of teacher identity construction and student identity construction (by assuming that student desire is at the centre of learning) arguably denies the desires of teachers. Teachers are thereby destined to 'fail' because they cannot motivate students. This in turn has silenced the voice of teachers and is in danger of diminishing self-actualising self(s)'. Increased tension within teachers was evidenced in this research as they attempt to realise their identities in an increasingly politicised environment. This chronicle illuminates concerns regarding economic rationalism and managerialism. It highlights the dangers inherent in perceiving teacher identity through the lens of professional pedagogy that denies the subject 'self(s)' and perspectives that reduce teacher identity to a set of pedagogical practices.

This case study also suggests that placing critical reflection and empathy at the centre of the teaching and learning relationship will promote "Critical autonomy [which] is primarily concerned with helping young people to think for themselves ... to examine critically the

contexts within which they live, work and study” (Hodkinson, 1994, p. 489). This view is supported by a number of scholars from a range of theoretical perspectives (see, for instance, Furlong, 1991; Hodkinson, 1994; McLean, 1999; Misson, 2000). The research undertaken at Heartbreak High supports the premise of Parker (1997) that critical reflection should be central to paradigms of teacher identity because it will nurture certain social, democratic and emancipatory commitments as well as pedagogic effectiveness. However, this research also suggests that this concept needs to be expanded to recognise critical reflection (together with empathy) as central to both teacher and student identity construction and by extension, their interrelationship in the classroom. Empathetic identities are able to place their own “ego”, in Desire Theory terms, in context and forgo immediate desires for the good of the community. Empathetic individuals engage, as Agne (1999) says, in “loving actions” and “other-orientedness” and create “trusting, accepting, respectful, democratic and self-disciplined” (p.176) student/teacher relationships.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this examination suggest the need for further research into the relationship between desire, curriculum, pedagogy, gender and student and teacher identity constructs in Subject English and in other subjects. Further investigation into critical reflection and empathy as key indicators of engaged student identities would also prove fertile ground for future inquiries. Additional research building on the work of Walker (1988) and subcultures would offer worthwhile insights as Walker suggests that student disaffection can be addressed through microcultures (small groups of children lead by a facilitator and a program of team building initiatives).

In light of the auto/biographies of teachers at Heartbreak High and their “hidden injuries” (Furlong, 1991) research into the impact of *Quality Teaching* (2003) and *Productive Pedagogy* (2001) educational policies on teacher identity is of paramount importance. Greater attention to teacher and student identity in light of the ‘self’ (the subjective, the personal, the intimate), Desire Theory and the role of literary theory (‘reading’ students as texts as Misson, 2002 suggests) is another important area for examination. Finally, the teaching profession and its craft would benefit from the sharing of different discourses other than the prevailing economic managerialist perspective that is currently suppressing the ‘voice’ of teachers and diminishing their sense of self.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

**English Questionnaire****WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT & HOW YOU LEARN  
IN ENGLISH?**

This survey will help us the plan and change what you learn in English & how you learn it and how we can teach the new syllabus (Department of Education guide to teaching English). It is ANONYMOUS (you don't write your name).

Your teacher will give this survey to a number, but not all students. Be honest and fill it in carefully so that your teachers can create better units of work and teach better & you can learn better. Think about the last year(s) at our school as you answer.                      Age \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female

**1. What is your favourite subject AT SCHOOL? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why?**

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**CIRCLE the activities you MOST like to do in English & CROSS OUT [x] the ones you have NOT done in English.**

**2. READING:**

Wide reading / poetry / song / other students' writings / magazines / comics /  
Journal / learning log/ short stories/ class set novel/text / plays/ reading to  
A friend/ reading aloud/ the teacher reading to you/ other\*

Please give example/s \_\_\_\_\_ .

**3. WRITING:**

Free choice journal/ set journal/ creative stories/ poems/ songs/  
advertisements/ comics/ drama plays/ radio scripts/ tv scripts/  
mindmaps/ timelines / conversations/ speeches/ talks/ monologues/  
spontaneous sensory monologues/ sensory monologues/ interior monologues/

eyewitness memoir/ biography/ myth/ legend/ tall tales/ anecdotes/  
letters/ diary/ newspaper editorials/ feature articles/ essay/ tests/  
comprehension/ study guides/ essay/ sequencing/ lists/ spelling/ grammar  
other\*

\*Please give examples\_\_\_\_\_.

**4. SPEAKING**

Small group talking/ question/answers/ debates/ drama games/ acting/  
Mystery box talks/ impromptu talks/ planned speeches/ telling stories and

Anecdotes/ class discussions/ role play/ performances/ show & tell/ radio

Scripts/ filmed activities such as documentaries or soap -operas or ads/

Performance poetry/ conversations/ reading aloud in groups/ reading aloud

To the class (your work)/ reading aloud (from a novel or magazine for  
example)/ brainstorming/ evaluating others' performances & products.

Other\* \*Please give examples \_\_\_\_\_

**5. LISTENING**

Listening games (like A talks to B)/ quizzes/ listening tests/ recording group

Findings/ recording class ideas/ listening to instructions/

other\*example\_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL: In English :**

○ I am good at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

○ I need help with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

○ I like / do not like the contracts because

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **I usually do / do not do my homework because**

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- **I like making things in English yes/ no.**
- **I am doing enough computing in English yes/ no**
- **My teacher cares about me Yes / no**
- **Kids want to work in my class : some/ all/ most**
- **I want to work in English: always/ usually/ sometimes/ never**
- **I My teacher tells me why I am learning topics: always/ usually/ sometimes/ never**
- **I like Successful [s]/ not successful [NS]/ Not Complete [NC] : Yes /No**

### **Preliminary synopsis of Student Comments from the Survey Questions**

**What students liked about their favourite subject (listed according to frequency of the comment):**

- *Practical (hands on/ doing)*
- *Fun*
- *Enjoyable*
- *Great teacher*
- *Liked the subject matter/focus area (eg Agriculture: “Because I like animals.”)*
- *Interested in the focus area*
- *I’m good at it.*
- *Future career*

***Comment:***

No gender bias noticeable in comments. Students said that their number one reason for liking their favourite subject was: how well they enjoyed the subject but this appeared to be closely connected with how capable they perceived themselves to be, and secondly their liking of the teacher.

Most of the students surveyed viewed subjects as either practical OR theoretical. They appeared to perceive elective subjects as practical & that this equated with ‘doing’ pedagogy & curriculum.

Discussions with teachers from I.A, art, drama commented in response to this apparent dichotomy that students 7 – 12 disassociate theory from practical elements & a reluctant to engage in activities such as writing, even when a range of techniques & strategies were employed. Resistance to the theoretical aspects of the course is causing frustration & tension in the classroom. Electives that dominated the favourite subject list in all areas were: DT, Art, Woodwork, Metal Work, and Food Technology. Strong support for PDH/PE and Agriculture was exemplified by comments like, “I like football” & “I like animals” respectively.

***I am good at...***

**Comment:**

Students gave a range of responses that have been included in the chart under student responses. Journal writing, creative writing of stories and reading were perceived as strengths & enjoyable for the majority of the respondents. Some felt they had good organisational skills.

***I need help with...*****Comment:**

- Contracts & work load
- Writing
- Spelling/punctuation/grammar
- Organization
- Other comments included: reading, speaking, writing (essay), contracts.

***I do/do not like contracts/units of work outlines:*****Comments:*****Students who did not like unit outlines/contracts commented:***

- *Too long*
- *Too boring*
- *Too hard*
- *Too demanding*
- *Too hard to understand*
- *Dates are changed*

***Students who like contracts/unit outlines commented:***

- *I know what I have to do when; I'm organised.*
- *I enjoy them*
- *My parents know what I am doing*

**Comments:**

- Explicit teaching of the curriculum & supporting notions of what & why we teach.
- Balance among modes (reading, writing, speaking, listening, representing) & delivery strategies (group, pair, class, individual)
- Negotiated & based on individual needs
- Links evaluation of one contract with another
- Communication with parents/caregivers
- Continuity for students when teacher is absent (HT sanity)
- Encourages sharing amongst colleagues & professional development
- Effective organisational tool for student organization
- Allows for teacher individuality
- We like it.

**Negatives:**

- Students comments above
- Are contracts taking into account the program & the individual needs of the kids?
- Are we negotiating?
- Are we sharing?
- Too much in them; do less but do it better
- Do we all use contracts?
- Sharing limited sometimes because of different approaches to the physical production of contracts. Should we standardise this or not?
- Parents are not looking at contracts (constant complaints about lack of homework or not knowing what kids are doing)
- Are we communicating well enough with parents & kids about our contract system.

***I usually do my homework because:***

- *I'm made to by parents or teachers*
- *I get in trouble if I don't*
- *I don't*
- *I've got a life so I don't*
- *It's expected of me so I do it.*
- *I work, play sport and do music, when am I supposed to do it and why can't teachers see I need fun too.*
- *English contracts are always full of it.*
- *I'm at school all day so why should I?*
- *I work at ... for twenty hours, so where is the time to do it?*

**Comment:**

There was not one positive response about what the students perceive as homework.

Do kids have a valid point about homework? Do parents have time/ are they believers in it? Why should teachers be responsible for kid's home - time?

***I like making things in English/ computing:***

- A resounding 'yes' to this response 7 – 10, but also a significant number of students perceived that they did not have opportunities to do so.
- We don't get time on computers (all years except for year 10 cited this as an issue in English classrooms)

**Comment:** Kids should be amenable to representing activities. The heavy demand on the computer room is a problem, but some of us are insecure in the network context.

***My teacher tells me about what and why am leaning:***

- A resounding yes by almost every participant.

***My teacher cares about me:***

- Once again a resounding yes by almost every participant.

Comment:

Most students felt this to be true.

***Other Kids want to work in my class:***

- *Year 7 were very concerned about the number of students who only 'sometimes' participated in the lesson and they felt few worked to their ability*
- *Year 8 were split into two categories, half believed that 'some' were wanting to work & were working & the other half thought that 'most' students wanted to work.*
- *Year 9 respondents felt that students wanted to work in class.*
- *Year 10 felt the same as year 9 & said so in greater numbers*

***I want to work in English:***

- *Year 7 students felt that they did work well in English either 'always' or 'usually'*
- *Year 8 students felt that they did work well in English either 'always' or 'mostly', but there were a significant number who perceived they 'sometimes' worked in English*
- *Year 9 recorded only 1 of the students as saying s/he worked 'always' in English. Some said they 'usually' worked but most students believed they only 'sometimes' or 'never' worked.*

**Commentary:** One must not lose sight of the fact that this was a very limited survey. However, Teacher comments (in the faculty & across the school) support the notion that kids are not engaging & that the majority of classroom time is being taken disciplining kids.

***I like successful/not successful/ not complete (work – required assessment):***

- A resounding yes from almost every student, but year 7 appears to be less sure of the concept.

**Comment:**

- What is the original premise/ review the philosophy
- How does the English Faculty Program reflect the philosophy of work required assessment?
- Assessment in years 7 - 10, outcomes, reports & work required; how do they 'fit'

## Appendix B

### Teacher Reflection Log Questions

Questions that can be used as a basis for Teacher Reflection Logs and Interviews

#### **Autobiography:**

- ✘ Why did you become a teacher?
- ✘ Why did you become an English teacher?
- ✘ What kind of a student were you when you were at school?
- ✘ How would you describe your 'identity' as a student at school?
- ✘ Did you admire a particular teacher? What did you like about his/her teaching?
- ✘ What subject/s did you most like at school? Why?
- ✘ What did you least like and why?
- ✘ How would you describe your personality?
- ✘ How do you think you are viewed by your colleagues in the faculty?
- ✘ How do you see yourself in the classroom?
- ✘ Do you alter who you are when you teach?
- ✘ What are your beliefs about teaching? What is your underlying philosophy?
- ✘ What view of students do you hold?
- ✘ What strengths and weaknesses do you have as a teacher?
- ✘ Why did you choose English as a subject to teach?
- ✘ Define Subject English.
- ✘ What do you see as the purpose of English in highschool?
- ✘ What influences do you think have been significant in creating your view of English?
- ✘ How and what do students learn?
- ✘ In what context do you think your students learn? What factors inhibit & promote learning?
- ✘ How would you describe your teaching style?
- ✘ How would you describe your relationship with your students?
- ✘ What is the culture or climate of your classroom?
- ✘ Describe your ideal English lesson.
- ✘ Describe your ideal English student.

#### **In view of implementing the new stage 4-5 syllabus in years 7 & 8 and your vast experience with the soon to be past syllabus:**

- ✘ What differences do you see between this new syllabus and the last one?
- ✘ What similarities do you see between this new syllabus and the last one?
- ✘ The rationale and opening section of the Stage 4 – 5 syllabus talks a great deal about imbuing students with values. How do you feel about these views? Is English about instilling values?
- ✘ What do you like about the new syllabus?
- ✘ What do you dislike about the new syllabus?
- ✘ What changes would you make if you had the power to do so?
- ✘ How do you view the compulsory content?
- ✘ The stages framework asserts the K-12 continuum of learning. How does this syllabus sit with your view of stages 1-3 and stage 6 English?
- ✘ What paradigms or beliefs about the teaching of English do you see in this syllabus?
- ✘ What paradigms or beliefs about learning do you see in this syllabus? How do these relate to how, what and why you teach?

- ✘ How important is the syllabus in the day to day running of your classroom?
- ✘ How do you make explicit the syllabus in your teaching?
- ✘ The syllabus utilises a model that is based on outcomes. How do you feel about this?
- ✘ What is your current assessment model? How successful do you think this model is in light of the aims of assessment?
- ✘ The assessment model in the new syllabus is called a ‘backward’ one because it starts with the learning outcome. We have talked about this model. How do you think it will accommodate your current faculty view of assessment?
- ✘ How do you evaluate learning in the classroom? Are children provided with opportunities to evaluate and reflect on your teaching and their learning?

✘ *How have you implemented the new syllabus?*

✘ *How do you think the new English syllabus is affecting the learning of students?*

✘ *Do you feel that students are engaging more or less with this curriculum than the previous one? Can you go into some detail please.*

✘ *What other factors would you like to reflect upon in light of implementing this curriculum?*

✘ *Do you think English is becoming more politicised? If the answer is yes, what impact has this on you, your role as a teacher or English, and your classroom?*

✘ *What tensions do you experience between who you want to be in the classroom and the reality of the classroom?*

**In looking at the children in your class in the study could you:**

✘ *Describe each one. What identity do you perceive they have in your classroom?*

✘ *Talk about the context of the class. What are the dynamics of the classroom?*

✘ *Hamachek (1990) quotes Goleman (1995) about five “emotional intelligences” that constitute an effective teacher, what do you think of these ideas?*

1. *Self-Awareness* (The ability to recognize one’s feelings as they occur, an ability that enables a person to have more control over his or her life.)
2. *Mood Management* (The ability to exercise control over the duration and expression of one’s moods.)
3. *Self-Motivation* (The ability to “get oneself up,” to delay gratification and to put the breaks on impulsiveness in order to achieve longer-term goals.)
4. *Empathetic Skills* (The ability to perceive the emotional needs of others, to recognize the subtle social cues that indicate what others want or need.)
5. *Relationship Skills* (The ability to manage personal relationships, to have productive and satisfying connections, and to be able to give and take in relationships.) (*Hamachek, 1990, p218*)

*We would discuss students in the study in light of these questions and in light of student responses about themselves, English and their teachers.*

*NB 'Classroom' is used in its widest sense meaning any learning/teaching environment.*

## Appendix C

**Student Reflection Log Questions**

The purpose of the learning log is for you to reflect on your own learning and what you are doing and thinking about:

***English***

- *What does this subject mean to you/ can you define it?*
- *Do you think you are good at English? Talk about this response.*
- *Why do you think English is taught?*
- *Do you read at home? If yes, what do you read?*
- *What do you watch on TV, video/film/internet at home?*
- *What do you listen to? What do you like about these things?*
- *What kinds of writing do you like?*
- *What do you feel about talking tasks?*
- *Describe your favourite English lesson & explain why you liked it.*
- *Describe your worst English lesson & explain why it was so bad.*
- *Do you enjoy journal?*
- *Is English different this year from English in previous years? What would you change about English?*

***Yourself***

- *How do you see yourself?*
- *Write ten adjectives that best describe you.*
- *How do you feel about high school? Talk about which you prefer high school or primary school.*
- *In your English classroom how do you see your behaviour?*
- *How hard do you work in class?*
- *How do you feel about homework?*
- *Do you like the teacher? Is that important?*
- *What do you think your teacher thinks about you?*
- *What 10 words might you think the teacher would use to describe you?*
- *Are you usually happy, lonely, angry, bored, content, excited, frustrated, etc in English?*
- *Other students who are very unlike or very like you (in what way are they different or the same? Do similar people band together in English?)*
- *What 10 words would your friends use to describe you?*
- *What, how & why you are/are not learning. This means things like what activities do you most/least like in English? Do you like English?*
- *What are your favourite subject/s? Why?*
- *Any other thoughts that you want to jot down?*

***We will talk about these questions & others that you or the others in the study raise during the interviews.***

The research learning logs (unlike your class logs) are confidential & the teacher will not be reading this one unless you want to share it with them. We will talk about what you say in your learning logs at our interviews as well as other things from the

list above. Be honest & remember that there are no right or wrong answers. You don't need to write miles either. Just jot down how you feel - do it each lesson please when your teacher sets aside the time. S/he will allocate 10 minutes each lesson during usual journal time. If you want to write more at home that's fine, but you don't have to! What you say is very important because it is you who is saying it. You need to pick a name that you want to be identified by in my research, remember for confidentiality we don't use real names. Choose one now & record it in your log... Only I know the real one & the pseudonym (a name authors create that isn't their real name). You can do mind maps, paintings, collages, comics, etc as well as writing as a way of recording your ideas. If you don't feel as confident expressing your ideas on paper you can get me to give you tapes & a tape recorder for use at home as a research learning log - but let me know by tomorrow (tell your teacher & s/he will ring me).





## Appendix E

**Sample Transcripts of Interviews and group Discussions****Fred**

Pseudonym:	Fred
Class	7
Teacher	Mrs C
Interviewer	Fred
Why Fred?	I like <u>Harry Potter</u> , Fantasy & Adventure.
Tell me about your family	<i>Mum cleans for others and Dad is a truck driver. I have a sister who is 15 at another school but I heard this one was really good so wanted to come here. Both of my parents went to Year 12..</i>
What about hobbies?	<i>I love swimming and writing stories, I'm writing a novel, it's a sci-fi. Year 6 – started in class and her friends l. I kinda ... I put my feelings into the book, and things that happen to me. I like listening to music, reading.</i>
Do you have friends? friends. What do you think of yourself?	<i>Yep. I'm caring, funny, and a good kid in classroom. Yep lots of friends. I work and I don't interrupt the teacher and I try my best.</i>
How important are friends?	<i>Very important, well when ya sad they cheer up and when your need someone to talk to they are there and they basically like the same stuff that you do."</i>
If I didn't have a friend	<i>It would "affect my learning cause, like in groups I wouldn't part of a group. I wouldn't have someone to talk to when we're allowed to talk."</i>
Memories of Primary	<i>Liked good debating a public speaking gets boring. Got first. Teachers nice. "Pretty exciting but it was good but old fashioned he was a really cool teacher. He let us do fun things.</i>
Good teacher	<i>Well we didn't exactly do art but we did a lot of science, lots of computer and a lot of reading. In high school like you have different subjects every day Yeah, I like having different teachers... I like the change.</i>
What's your nicest memory of primary?	<i>I was captain. I did special jobs – canteen and office duty and helped the ladies at the canteen But in kindy I cried a lot Mum said - I cried for 3 terms.</i>

*High school was like another step, a better step and I got used to being at school quickly.*

Can you describe yourself

as a  
student?

*Um well I'm nice, sometimes I can be funny, sometimes I can be a bit stressful, but that's only when I don't have any sleep. Um [pause]. I'm very kind and you can talk to me and I'll listen.*

*I'm a good student. I try my best and um and I don't interrupt them.*

*I'm successful at high school and I have a good self-esteem*

Do you prefer

Primary or highschool?

*I like highschool, the different subjects, teachers, more people.*

Favourite teachers?

*English was fun and he'd um hardly ever yells*

*and he'd look afta ya and if ya had problems he'd understand.*

*He tried his best to do everything for you.*

What are your favourite

Subjects?

*D & T [design and technology] and Science.*

*"I really like the experiments we do um and I'm interested in space and stuff going on around and the environment.*

Worst subject?

*I don't really like History. It's a bit boring.*

*We've had many different teachers and they all like different things...the first teacher we had was a bit stressful. She kept yelling at us telling us to be quiet. That was a bad thing because we didn't really learn much. The teacher wasn't really yes, we didn't have much respect for her because she wasn't a good teacher.*

*She didn't teach much, she was yelling and she wasn't fun.*

What would you have

done

as the teacher?

*Well, I would have done some fun activities and that would have kept them quiet.[all of them?] Most of them. Sometimes she'd tell the class to be quiet because the teacher looked really stressed she kept yelling "be quiet" and she, looked like she was really upset*

*We have three teachers in History but now we have Mrs. L\_\_\_\_\_ and she's nice. The kids are behaving themselves better. I think because she makes them earn her respect and um she's just nice and she's a bit strict but I think that's what makes people respect her.*

*Some of the stuff [history] is very interesting uh but um most of the stuff we've been taught before like we've had all different teachers but we've been taught the same stuff but in all different ways. [Ancient Egypt]*

Would you choose

To have the best teacher

With your worst subject?

Or vice versa?

*Good teacher with bad subject . Yeah the subject I dislike most with a good teacher because if I liked the subject but didn't like the teacher that would ruin it for me whereas if I didn't like the subject but had a*

*good teacher I could try with the subject, and try and make it better and I would look forward to the subject*

What was English

In primary like?

*Most of the time we did comprehension, reading the story and answering the questions. Sometimes we did a bit of acting and sometimes we did a bit of spelling. Um we got to do everything [writing] narratives, reports, recounts, and anything free choices um limericks. I thought it was fun. I basically liked everything and the writing was good too I like writing stories.*

What about high school

English?

*High School's got the film study which I like now um and the assigned novels 'cause normally we wouldn't go to the library and pick up that book uh and it helps with our reading and um the teacher's really nice. She's caring [in what way?] well if you don't like that thing she'll make it so you like it like she'll make it interesting. [How does she do this?] She'll offer you alternate books.*

What about contracts?

*I like it [contract system] so much better because its got lots of subjects like the film study of Harry Potter and it's really stepped up a level and got the kids interested 'cause most kids like Harry Potter.*

*"It's good so you can plan for the stuff coming up 'cause we might have a speech that's coming up so we can start it and um [indistinguishable]*

What's a contract?

*It's got all different stuff that we have to do during the term and it's got dates that are due and it um just explains the stuff to us and what we do in class.*

What topics have

You done this year?

*We've done autobiography, Boy. Which was really good. My own autobiography was fun 'cause we got in touch with our own selves and the stuff we didn't get really to tell people but we got to express it in a booklet.*

*We talked about our childhood and what we did as a child compared with the future and um what we do now and why it's different to before. I did most of it on the computer. It's just better 'cause my hand gets pretty sore when I write.*

What's English?

*Aw it's different to primary the readings better and we do speeches and stuff um well sometimes we do group work on the contracts um. [It's important because] we like to get to know the people around you and like the stuff that they like as well as you so that you learn about them.*

**Interview Bob**

Pseudonym: Bob

Teacher Mrs C

Goals – Vet (Year 12) ‘help animals be smart

Interviewer Bob

Favourite subject in

High school? “um um um [pause] can I list 3? [yeah]

“music, visual arts and science.”

“‘cause I like music and visual arts is fun ‘cause you get to draw stuff and um science because we get to do a lot of experiments.

Subject I least like ‘um [pause] um PE [pause]”

“‘cause when it’s really hot we have to go running.”

English ‘ar it’s alright [pause]”

Define English

[pause] um [pause] grammar, grammar and reading. [what’s grammar?] ah punctuation and stuff. We usually do that and we also did some auto autobiography and we do reading.’

‘um that’s um we did and booklet and um wrote stuff about ourselves in our journal.”

“In the booklets um we had to er do these booklets and I wrote most of it on computer.”[activities in autobio?] “um title page, um dossier inside, um physical background [indistinguishable].

“Read *Harry Potter*, write imaginary stories in our journal and watched the movie and did a film study on Harry Potter.”

“‘cause they’re what English is usually about [grammar and reading] I just know it from primary school.”

Best lesson/worst lesson

(think about)

With your favourite subjects, how much

does the teacher count? “um [pause] heaps ‘cause um they’re good teachers.

[what makes them good?]

“um, they do good stuff... let us do free drawing and teach us about stuff um do experiments.”

“I’m interested in drawing and music outside of school” [more likely to like that subject? Yeah]

Teacher/subject?

(flat monotone)

“the teacher I liked” [why] “‘cause I’d be better. They’d make the subject better.”

Likes all teachers

**Interview XXX**

Pseudonym XXX [from movie]

Teacher Mrs C

(Naughty)

Hobbies – cricket, football [highest wicket trophy]

“I like the movie called Triple X. This guys a criminal and he gets outa goal and he trashes all these um cars and that and he works under cover as an agent. He’s a good guy/baddy.”

Really wanted to go to PE. Only

one not keen to miss classes for research especially PE.

“He used tranquilision corvette actor Ben Diesal – actor he likes

Autobiography

Mum (40) a nurse and Dad (38) a milkman, brother (10) at Kingswood Sth, sister (17) works at McDonalds has left home.

Friends

Robert & Corey Year 1 met (naughty) identical twins, and other outside school. Jamie, Matt (naughty) (mostly from primary).

Primary

“It was okay”

“Not one good memory”

“I can’t remember anything”

[Bad memory[ [unhesitatingly]

“I got into trouble too much”

[What kind of things happened]

“Um I got detention ah I got took off the playground for about 2 weeks”

[Admits he did wrong]

Prefer Primary or High school

“high school”

“cause um once you know your way around um you can’t lose it. I got lost I went the wrong classroom at first in primary.”

Good Teachers (Primary)

“Miss \_\_\_\_\_ she was friendly, nice um she didn’t yell like most of the other teachers um if you got into trouble like she’d give you a warning and if you got into trouble again she’d give you time-out which’d probably be about an hour.”

What did she teach you in English?

“Um book reading, um yeah we had reading groups in um like just like I cam from the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest to the highest.”

[how did that make you feel?]

“Good”

“I’m still a good reader today I read heaps. I’ve read all the Harry Potter books 5 times each. I’m reading um the *Goblet of Fire* for the 6<sup>th</sup> time.”

[Remembers nothing else]

Do you prefer English in high school or primary?

“English in high school because of more things to do than in primary school like um like in primary school we didn’t watch videos and study them we just we just wrote down stuff and in high school you do”

- [Reads at home a lot]
- Term 2 “We’ve done we’ve done a study our 2<sup>nd</sup> contract um Harry Potter and um we watched the movie and um we’ve now watch’n it again and stay on the uh Quidditch on the Quidditch match um between Slytherine and Gryffindor and where Harry plays”
- [why?]
- Term 1 “um so we can pull out and can figure out where all the effects came from and the all the film techniques’
- “We done a contract reading on autobiography we had um *Boy* by Roal Dahl and we had to read that then we had to au [pause] I can’t think of it now ...”
- [prompt by me]
- “We had to aw we had to do the sheets um ah Mrs a problem where um Roal Dahl um put a um rat um..”
- Do you feel good in English “Yeah ... sort of um like [indistinguishable]
- Do you think you’re a good English student?
- “Yep”
- What is English? “um its like you haveta like [pause] I wouldn’t have a clue”
- “Reading, grammar and comprehension”
- How are you as a student in a class?
- “um er not good”
- [what does that mean? Your behaviour or \_\_\_\_\_?]
- “my behaviour and like journal”
- What kind of things do you do in the classroom that you think aren’t good?]
- “Um I talk too much when I’m not supposed to, I’ve got a habit of doing that a lot”
- [anything else?]
- “I don’t do my journal”
- [why?]
- “‘cause I can’t think of anything to write”
- Other subjects “I’m good, I’m good at other subjects [definite tone] um DT, art. My favourites are Visual Art, DT, PE and science”
- [why?]
- “you um get to um do stuff in there like in DT right now we’re cooking and in science we get to make we’re um [pause] um we make um experiments. In PE we get um we play games, sport and do athletics and um Visual Arts we get um I like drawing that’s why I just like it.”
- Favourite Teachers Teacher in primary school best teacher
- [What did your teacher in primary school have that you’re not finding in your teachers here?]
- “Um I don’t like um I can’t remember anything she did. I remember she had an accident and ran up the back of a car and her bonnet was pushed in”
- [he imagined this]
- Effective / good teaching [what ‘Perfect Teacher’ or advice]

	“Really, really nice, energetic um [pause] er.”
	“Like friendship, really energetic nice, um and they let you do what you want.”
Discipline/management?	“like send you out if you’re being bad um write yellow forms like they do now and suspend you from class or something.”
	“They’d have to know there subject very well”
Subject least like	“history”
	“it’s boring, we’re learning about ancient Egyptian and teacher was filling in for Mrs Limjap and we’d already done it.”
	“um discovering when um he was first found um”
	“we’ve watched films. We’ve done writing on him and we’ve looked at text books and that”
	“I know it all”
What is English?	“English would be grammar, comprehension, reading am listening and um studying.”
What’s a contract?	“a contract is something like if you sign a contract of the work right ya have ta do it and um in our books mum and dad sign ah sign our contracts and we had to do homework um and it’s got all this stuff we have to do on it.
	“I don’t know”
	[about negotiating]
	“but with the journal we’ve got all different kinds of things in our contract we can do.”

STLA – Arm hurts. Dead arm. Mrs Love working with him.

	“Don’t like writing. It hurts my hands. I fractured my wrist. I was 11 then and the test was on that week and I done it on a computer [and you liked it?] Yeah (gleefully) ‘cause it does spell correction. I got like 80/100.
	[no computer at home]
Favourite subject or Teacher?	“I don’t know (pause) I’d probably, choose um (pause) I wouldn’t choose any and I’d probably get into trouble for not going to class”
Subject or teacher? What’s more important?	“The work”
Attitude to school boring	“I didn’t pick it up from any side (mum/dad) I just find it boring [so you find school boring] Well yeah, most of it”
What isn’t boring?	“When I get to play with my friends at recess and lunch and that and that and I talk to Robert in every class ‘cause he’s in every class I’m in except maths. I was in his class (in maths) until I got changed”
What do you want to be?	“mum wants, mum wants to be in the army. I wanna b ah a construction worker”
Year 10 / 12?	“I don’t know, I haven’t thought about it”
	[Do you want to build houses?]
	“No I wanna knock ‘em down” (gleefully)

91.1 probably get it HSC “or um the rainforest things a veterinarian ‘cause I like animals. It’s either that or a marine biologist”  
 [no preparation]  
 Mum and dad did year 12

## Interview McKayla

*Teacher – Mr V.*  
*Year 8*

Pseudonym:

Autobiography

Family Dad from Scotland. Lecturer at UWS (literacy and language). Travels a lot. Mum from Malaysia works for American express in the city.  
 3 older brothers 21 (sells phones), 19 (American Express) Tad (15)

Hobbies Dance, acts, netball, athletics. I like writing and craft. Thinks that I like / hear – change it and make it relevant to me.  
 I like dancing because you get to express how you feel or the way you look at things. Singing and things and acting is fun ‘cause, like you get to be another person other than yourself.

Friends I have a lot of friends. I have like 6 at this school.  
 I don’t have my best friends in my English class, but close ones.  
 [Mostly met at high school]  
 Kingswood then Penrith South 9travel arrangements)

King of person in Primary & Secondary?

How would you describe yourself?

“I don’t know um ... fun loving, um ah think I’m understanding. Um uh I need to work sometimes if I don’t see the point in it. I don’t I can’t I’m not motivated to like [pause] [you need to be given the reason why] yeah.

“I wish I was good at art ‘cause that lets you be expressive as well”  
 “but I’m not good at it” Why? “‘cause I can’t draw and that.” “I wasn’t born with that talent”

Primary I think primary and secondary school have some good and bad points and vice versa.

She prefers one teacher I didn’t learn as much because like you had like only ½ hour of English ½ hour of maths but it was still better having one teacher, ‘cause you got to know them better and they got to know you better and I think that’s good. But if you don’t like the teacher that might take away your motivation so that could be a down point.

Good Teacher in Primary

What’s good?

Someone that’s fun like not always screaming and stuff and happy and like they show you that they’re happy being there teaching you not that it’s their job so they gotta be there like they’re not interested if they learn ‘cause they just get paid or it so if they’re like fun loving and like enthusiastic around the school it just helps [pause] helps work and and yeah. I’ve been lucky like most of my teachers in primary school [indistinguishable] were good. I haven’t had that situation where I don’t get along with them so I wouldn’t work. I’ve been lucky.

High school	
Favourite subject	Food technology, History and maths. [food the most] why?
Shows interest in me	“‘cause I like cooking.” “ I think it’s also ‘cause Ms Read shows and interest in me” “um she’s like enthusiastic towards it and she’s like a fun teacher so it makes it better.”
What kind of things	“she’s not like one of the teachers who tell you what to do and leaves you to it. She like helps you like if you’ve aw I don’t know how to explain, she’ll like come help you like or give you hints like or ideas of what to do or ideas on what to do more like better or taste better or whatever.
Discipline	<p>“No one really mucks up in the class I think it’s ‘cause she’s a good teacher and I think that when a teacher’s a good teacher I mean that like [pause] there are some people that just like to be naughty like they just take advantage of it [the teacher] but she’s like fun so no one likes to muck up. Some people like to muck up.</p> <p>They don’t muck up on her in Food Tech but I have her [Ms Read] for D &amp; T and there some muck up.</p>
Why?	<p>“Cause I think it’s ‘cause they’re with their friends” Muck up with friends</p> <p>“Like all the boys like be loud and like try to be smart” Gender</p>
McKayla in Ms R. class	
[how do you see yourself]	Well... I do pay attention and I do uh try to work best and I try to do my best ‘cause I like cook’n so I try to learn and I pay attention.
Don’t like subject	<p>I’m not I don’t really like science ‘cause I don’t really understand it and last year I didn’t get along with my teacher. Naughty when don’t understand and like teacher.</p> <p>She didn’t answer questions when I didn’t know what to do and I couldn’t do it and I got into trouble ... so it didn’t work.</p> <p>[How did you behave?]</p> <p>“I think because she didn’t listen to me I didn’t have the motivation [pause] I wasn’t motivated to work then then she thought that I was a bad student and then I didn’t like her and like she was just there to get paid well that’s how I saw it.</p> <p>Like if I asked her if I could move (kicked out) an experiment where I could see it she would get angry at me and kick me outa the class and then get angry ‘cause I hadn’t done the work....so I didn’t learn anything at all about science and so this year it’s harder to catch up.</p>
[My science teacher this year]	<p>“He’s nice and I’m learning more”</p> <p>“He answers [questions] to the best of his knowledge”</p> <p>Last year the class misbehaved more</p>
Scenario naughty kids	“Most of the kids I think saw it like I did ‘cause she mostly wrote things on the board and expected us to know it... she didn’t explain it so it was like harder to understand from writing ‘cause I think It’s easier to understand if they talk about it and explain.
English	
What do you think of English?	I actually like English like its not like I don’t think it’s like a set subject like maths it’s only about maths but English is about different subjects, like it like it like in English we did drama in English this year and I like drama but I couldn’t do it as an elective ‘cause they said you had to try out for it but I was too scared... we did some acting. I like English better this year like English better this year.

I um last year I didn't know, it was we did things I had already done and so I was just repeating things I'd already read that book but this year we're doing things like different so its so its if like I did a book that I really like, like my kind of story."

Wide heading: "I'd choose Lord of the Rings on the Hobbit" [but last year she got to choose Harry Potter]

What kind of activities have you

done in English 2004?

Done? Last year we done the play 2 weeks with the Queen and acted it out and it was pretty cool. [it was fun]

This year ah um this we're doing um Slake's Limbo like that's good 'cause its like about a different kind of life than to what like most people have like all the kids in our class like its different.

"Everything he gets he has to earn it for himself not given on a silver platter and it makes you think about the life you have – values themes interesting to McKayla

Contract

"We writing at the beginning [of the year] we did like we did a story about like getting kicked outa home and I'm still not finished that but um and what would happen and if you were in that situation what would you do like how you would survive um

Slake's limbo listening

That was good like uh it got us look'n like instead of having us parents there to help us all though life if like if we didn't so we have to think about how what me would do. Some people said busking some people said just go to a shelter and some people said um they wouldn't want to live and um it was um cool to see different people's views.

[haven't finished book]

Listening

at the end of last term we listened to something from [Paul Jennings] and we answered questions

Talking

Yeah like last term we did a unit where people tape recorded and people did a speech and like me and my group did a song we wrote a song we didn't actually sing it, but we wrote one and um about um the story 'cause having that like having the choice like me and my friends like was more what we were interested in like same taping and some people thought writing a speech [was better]

Mr V's Teaching

um I think he's a good teacher and like he helped like he's good pronunciation in grammar like so he like talks proper and it don't know like he explains things like when we're doing the book and like someone might not understand that word they might be shy and embarrassed he explains it so like we all understand what the book's about. But um the other teacher we had [casual PE teacher] she didn't like and we didn't understand it. But Mr V explained it.

Discipline

I think discipline's good like I don't know like he just sends them out of the room like and deals with like outside [why is that better then inside?]

'cause it doesn't distract us.

Subject or Teacher?

Um I'm not sure because I think teachers help me like the subject better say, if they explain it better. Like I didn't like history last year but I do this year 'cause he tells us stories like but we have to write but last year like we had to write like I learn when we hear stories and write. But like I don't like to do it when we've told to write but it was still alright..... [indistinguishable] we got to put it in our own words but like I like this year 'cause I like how we got here today. But I'd choose the teacher 'cause if it was a subject I did like but the teacher could make me like it no more.

[chose teacher over subject]

**Interview: John Howard**

Teacher: Mr K.

Pseudonym: (no name)

Goal: HSC (successful) Lawyer & debating competition

Autobiography:

Year 7

Family	Mum receptionist Dad financial planner 2 sisters (18 & 16) Penrith Selective Liked school HSC Teachers will always help. "It's nice place to go to"
Hobbies	Playing basketball, writing short stories. "depends on the mood I'm in 'cause we're doing a subject on space in science now and sometimes I write stories about what subjects we're doing in school things like that." [It is fun to do. Show to mum and dad]
Teacher impacts on his wanting to write (impetus)	"I'm I sorta started of the beginning of last year [why?] well um the teacher I had last year um he gave us lots of time to write stories and gave us subjects to write about and that."
Friends	"few" "They're nice and um they care and um"
School attitude	"Um, well it's fun to do and gives me something to do mot of the subjects are good but some of the subjects are average."
High school or Primary?	"Probably (definite tone) high school" "Um 'cause everything is a lot more organized 'cause we have times to do everything. Whereas in primary like we kinda stay in the same classroom and they give you heaps of time to do things and you can kinda be working on the one thing for a week or something and you fall behind. They give you lots of time but you don't know 'cause other people are finishing and you're still working on it \cause no-one says you've got to finish by a certain date."
Different teachers and subjects –	
What do you think?	'Um well it's good that we have lots of different teachers because like they have different attitudes and like some they give you lots of quizzes and things, and others you've just gotta work and write and stuff."
Primary - Nice Memory	"Elected for prefect" "I'm good a public speaking and things and I just wanted to do it 'cause of things people before me had said."
Bad Memory	"Um [pause] not really"
Teacher – Effective	"Um yeah! My year 6 teacher he was really nice. He made jokes about everything and he was sorta really laid back he kinda he gives us lots of work to do it like not heaps of time but we've got more than an hour a day and stuff."
What about discipline?	"Um well. There were some bad kids in our class and if they were bad he sometimes sent them out into the bag room. H sorta sent them down to the Principal's office or something."
What's bad?	"Well they just talk out of turn and those things and tease people in class" "Yeah! "Cause it kinda stops kids from learning as much"
Bad Teacher	"No, I haven't really had one of those. They're all good teachers"
What's a good teacher from	

your experience?	“Um, well it’s kinda they all do the same things like all the teacher they gave you things to do things they were nice if you do good work then they reward you by um letting you have early marks or something for recess or lunch.”
English in Primary	“Um well we did the sorta noun and verb sheets and those sort of things where we just focused on nouns and verbs and things. We did some reading. When we got an activity sheet he would get someone to read one paragraph and another one to read the next on.”
Teachers good at high school	“Well um some of them well like my English teacher and maths teacher they really try to help if we’re having trouble with something and my science teacher and people like that.” “Well they try to help you with your work and they sorta care about what you are doing if ya gett’n behind other students.” “They try to explain it to to you in a different way if you they explain it to the class and if you don’t understand then they try to explain it in a different way with examples.”
Worst teacher or bits?	“Um there’s not really any teachers I don’t like. There’s some that are a bit average but most are pretty nice and try to help.”
What’s average?	“Well they don’t sorta help you as much they sort of yell at you or send you outside” [He never has!!] (He judges teachers how they act toward others)
Favourite subjects	Music and English
Why?	“Um well I’m interested in like joining the band and playing an instrument and English is fun ‘cause we get to write stories and I like writing stories and I like writing stories and we get to read the novels and things like that.”
Least favourite subject	“Um (pause) probably maths ‘cause I was never really good at that. Well I’m reasonably good but I don’t enjoy it as much as the other subjects.” (Top stream maths) “Um I just some things I just don’t understand and it takes me a bit longer to understand.” [only happened in maths – lots of new things – faster pace] “I’m finding it hard to keep up.”
Teacher or subject	He blames the subject / self not teacher
Choice subject or teacher	“Um I’d probably choose the favourite teacher with the least favourite subject.”
Attention	“Um, well they pay more attention to ya and try to help you with the things you don’t understand.
English this year	“Um, well sometimes we get given novels to read at home, and we’ve been reading a story in class and we do journal every lesson and we have to write about things we like and um we’re writing poems at the moment.” “We listened to a tape of the novel we’re reading at the moment <i>Mrs Frisby and Rats of Nimb</i> . “Yeah it’s really interesting ‘cause it’s got a good plot.” “Um well we did a speech last term where we had to talk about something we like from home” (show and tell)
Mend mapping?	We’ve done a couple of those for poems and like the whole curriculum of English. Um you write English in the lecture and there’s all the arrows pointing out like to what you do in English like Drama and computers and um things like that.”
Define English at Jamison	
Choice	“Um, well it’s a really interesting subject ‘cause you sorta get things to do but you still get to do your own thing. Like you get free choice in writing a story and free choice in writing a journal.
Do group work in maths	

How much does a teacher count?

Important

“Well um they sorta keep everything under control and help students who are having trouble. Yeah, they’re probably pretty important because the students couldn’t learn without them and they’d have nothing to do or learn by!!

Contracts

“Things you have to agree to and you have to sign that ya have to stick by” [Yep – knows negotiation] “Good”

Why do you think kids don’t engage, behave in the classroom?

Bully

“I think they just like ta if they don’t like something the just want to make it difficult for them so they can’t learn.”

Advice for naughty kids

“I think they should be allowed to think whatever they want but they should keep it to themselves.”

## Interview Nick

Teacher – Mr V

Pseudonym: Nick (like my name)

Interviewer

Nick's Responses

Tell me about your family Mum's a UWS Librarian, dad 's a House dad it's sad 'cause Dad was a doctor in India but he hasn't don the exam. I have a brother at Uni doing telecommunications. We migrated from India 2002. We Came to Australia 'cause my mum thought we'd get a better education here. Education is better in Australia than India. 'Cause in India the teacher are not polite like in Australia. It's like do this do that but here they are really polite and they don't hit ya. They hit you with a ruler in India.

What about hobbies? Football, swimming.

What about friends? We just hang around at recess and lunch and they come over after school and play soccer and stuff. We do things we like like read joke books, comics and non-fiction (insects and spiders)

What do you think of school? I like school. Well, when if you stay at home you get really bored an when you come to school you've got friends to talk to and everything to do.

Do you have

good memories pf primary? Yeah. I was Dux in primary. I was really very proud. 'cause I was really helpful to the teacher and studying and that." [no bad memories at Australia] get hit in India – talking – no homework – behind. Don't yell, just hit!

Kind of person you are? Funny uh kind sometimes mean I sometimes get mad at people and I yell at them" Uh short tempered, smiting. [intelligent?] Yeah I'm good at ah maths and um I'm good at science.

Well last test I was like the top 5 people to get the highest mark. In middle of class in maths. I've got a couple of faculty cards for my latest assignment.

How are you at English? Well I'm not good at writing in English. I just think like creative stuff I'm pretty good but ah not like writing I suck pretty much at some kinds of writing.

What about Primary? I did ES.L

Do you do homework? 'Cause I can't watch TV if I don't. It's like practise of what you've done at school.

Can you talk about the best t teacher Primary you had in primary?

She was really nice and she used to give parties all the time and give out lollies for being good and answering questions.

She send them out or she'd tell them or she'd tell them they wouldn't get to do something good if they be bad.

Which do you like best?

Highschool or primary?

I prefer high school 'cause you have better friends and they are matured and they understand you and ah yeah that's it.

You have lots of different teachers at highschool and that's better than primary 'cause every teachers' got a different thing like one teachers better at something than another and it's too much for one teacher to know everything. You get a better education 'case their good (expert) Yeah, in their area.

Favourite teacher?

Ms H

Well we had her last year and she's really nice and um she helped you out if you had any problems like that like bullying or something like

that. She's really nice in class too. Mm well she doesn't punish you really bad like other teachers. She doesn't send you out until you're like really really bad. She'll say make a comment she'll make you stand up for 2 seconds and she'll sit you down.

Good teachers help me learn, most teachers are good

Well you just talk about their subjects and they get really happy like what are we going to do. Just say "hi" to them and stuff like that.

I do the work, and I be good in class.

Why aren't all kids good

They just like to be naughty. They just want attention.

Favourite subject?

Maths

What is more important

The subject or the teacher?

I'd choose the subject because you can just sit there and do your work without talking or anything and they [the teacher] would probably be happy with you and you could build a relationship] Yeah.

What do you like about maths?

Well um it's just like the stuff you do in maths and I'm good at it.

What's your least favourite subject?

That would have to be a [pause] History. I'm not that good at history, I'm not that good.

How do you know?

Well I tried my best like to do class work and stuff and answering questions but I'm not that good at it. I'm not thinking like a person that would do History.

English?

I'm pretty good at English, 'cept for the writing bit

"I'm good at! "Making up stories, essays, computer (I like it better 'cause my hand writing is all messy) like poems and talking.

English is, well it's about writing stuff and making up stories and that but knowing your grammar and stuff" [and talking] not much listening and "decorate your books"

What do you think of

Contracts?

They're just to remind you what you have or haven't done and to tick them off. I like them because I know what to do.

Sometimes I negotiate contracts.

**Interview Steve Clein**

- Teacher: Mrs K  
Pseudonym Steve  
Interviewer Steve
- Can you describe  
Your family background? Mum works for Barnados .Dad's a bank manager. My brother is at a selective high and my is at K\_\_\_\_\_school and is Captain.
- Do you have hobbies? Yeah, tape decks, skateboards, sports, umpire, paid tournaments. I like being active
- What about friends? My best friend's elsewhere, most of my mates are like me, we're a bit loud and active and we like to hang out at the skate park.
- What do you think of school? I like school, friends, pracs, Food tech and sport and PE. I don't like rules.and heaps of my writing – my hand hurts. I get bored. I get distracted. I get into trouble. Not in every subject I do lots in Science and maths. I copy off the board and overheads in Science and out of textbooks in maths. I like doing group work in science and doing experiments. We don't do much group work in maths. When I get bored I muck up. When I'm with \_\_\_\_\_ we muck up a bit. Yeah "muck up". I get on alright in maths. I get on with the teacher.
- What memories do  
You have of Primary? I was in the gifted class -OC -in primary, that was a good memory but I also had my fair share of trouble because I mucked around.
- What about teachers? In my last year I was out of class a lot – didn't like her much but once I had Mrs E in year 3 Mrs Edwards, Year 3. She used to handle the out of control kids and get through to them. [How?] She spoke calmly to them and didn't yell much she was close to kids.  
Casual teachers are the worst because they don't have any control over the class at all.
- Why do you expect to be  
Controlled by casual teachers? Teachers should stop us speaking and mucking around. It's their job. We chat across room, muck around but it's harmless.
- Which do you prefer,  
highschool or primary? I like high school best. You get to carry your bag around and you get treated with more respect by the teachers. I like different teachers 'cause if you don't like one, you don't have to see them all the time.
- What are your  
favourite subjects?  
Teachers who behave  
Differently? PE – Foodtech. I like my teachers Ms H PE and I like the prac and we're active. In Foodtech I like cooking. She was my hockey coach last year and she likes sports so do I. I'm sitting with my hand up and they wont listen to me but Ms H will.  
I feel pretty good at the practical but not heaps good – just average at the theory.
- What do you think of Englis? I like drama 'cause I chose drama as an elective. I like the games and acting. And I like reading and um comprehensions 'case you've always got work to do ... and I like journal 'cause you can express yourself.
- How is English this year  
compared

- with last yea? Big differences um I like you you're strict you keep me on line and um last year I had a lot of changes in teachers um Ms B to Ms B [you had 5 teachers, didn't you] it was hard because they all had different ways and different contracts.  
Teachers had different ways of doing things, like different contracts and that makes it hard. I do activities, I done journal, done collages, watched movie like Roald Dahl "Witches" not sure why he did things.
- If a kid came from a different place and they were your age and they said what's English.
- What would you say? You learn about reading and writing and literacy. Um drama um contracts um journal um I like doing speeches, especially being funny. I done skateboarding.  
I get to do things I choose myself [Why? Um? Something to do ourselves I guess]
- What's bored? When I've got no work or I've done the work or if I've got no interest it's just really really boring and then I play with things tekdek, talk and I get in trouble.
- What kind of student do you see yourself as? I can be distractive but if I want I can be hardworking so I can do it um I think I'm pretty good at English.
- The works not too difficult or easy? No it's alright.
- What's being strict? Um discipline um like yeah discipline... um getting in trouble for doing the wrong think have control over the class and "get through" to the naughty kids.
- What king o strategies could a teacher use re: discipline? Be firm and [pause] I don't know
- research participant I like being in research I want to help and its pretty fun.

## Interview Bianca

Teacher: Mr K

Pseudonym: Bianca

Autobiography: Twin

Can you talk about

How you are going

In English?

I've been put on a blue book. Oh yeah. Normally when people are put on a blue book they go on it for 2 weeks. Well, they haven't really been that bad to get it, a few of my teachers have sorta suggested (not 'cause of being bad) but um just to see how we are going so they put us on it for a week but like it's just for school and it doesn't have anything to do with parents and it's sort of a monitoring thing but if that a have to get I think, one is high achievement and 2 is very good achievement or something and if you don't get 15 and 25 then um you have to go on the green book or something like that (Deputy's book). But I don't think I'll get that. Because mainly um because me and Moria and 2 other girls T\_\_\_\_ and E\_\_\_\_ and we're sort of in most classes and we're like talkative."

Well, I don't think I'm that bad of a person but like um I do agree that I talk a lot and um [pause] the occasional thing, like sometimes I can be a bit rude, but I don't, don't ....

Sometimes I call out. But like I'm not a bully or that.

What about good Teachers?

Bad teachers?

Well a teacher that I liked nice, fair, no favourites, and um and I don't like yelling, ah yeah. I think they should know their subjects. Like for Geography I have Ms B \_\_\_\_ and I don't mean to be rude 'cause she's PE [casual] and she teaches lots of subjects but she sorta that's what where I got the idea that you should know your subject because most of what she gets out of a text book and we don't learn anything. Like she gives us a book and we've gotta answer questions but its not really sticking into our head like we do it but like if she knew her subject a bit better and she could say it off the top of her head you could, I reckon it would probably stay in your mind a bit better. Well both really some people like when the like know they have to answer questions out of a book they've gotta read or something, but if its talking it sorta gets them going and you you feel more confident if they know."

Good Teacher

What kind of things would they say

to you?

"Um [pause] I don't know. I don't know. Um um. Well Mr K... has a good um discipline um table

um like 3 strikes and your out or something. But like the people that are causing discipline like Peter Pope (he's always a bit naughty, like if he's interfering with someone's learning he'll get sent out and get a class suspension or something or Head Teacher has to talk to him and then everyone can learn more. Like Mr K doesn't like people disrupting other people's learning."

Well it's (sending terds out) good for the kids in the class but not for the kids sent out. Say you get sent out you're missing out on learning but something but then again that's the consequence for doing something bad

What happens when

Someone is naughty?

Say you get told to read a book. Like he'll [Twitch] says no and no I don't thing so and he won't do it. And like the other day when we listened to a tape book and read and he [Twitch] got up (when Mr K was called outside) and fast-forwarded the tape 'cause he said it was boring.

He's [Twitch] is improving but he's still bad, like calling out and rudeness and putting class mates down.

How do classmates see you?

Well it didn't really occur to me at the time um the subjects I like I'm good in all the time like language and English and I'm pretty good in English all of the time but there's the occasional calling out but I I'd say I'm pretty good – it's just my mouth gets me into trouble.

How do you feel when you call out? What's going through your head?

Well it sorta just slips out and then when I get into trouble I think yeah I shouldn't have done that Yeah like I know when I'm doing something wrong.

Are you doing it for any attention? Why?

I I um thinks it's just like I like talking out loud and I just [pause] don't have many patience.

“Sometimes like sometimes I'm frustrated like um when I finish all of my work and I want the teacher to see all of my work 'cause I think it's good (or somethin' that's when I say yeah LOOK AT ME!![laughs])

Mr K yeah yeah, thinks I'm a good worker and everything um I don't know – I 'spose it's the attention. I don't like being left out.

'Cause of the blue book I reckon I'm gonna improve more ... um like um I'm gonna make myself improve like when I got it I was all upset 'cause I thought it was gonna ruin everything like the report card so now me an Brooke have decided we're only going to go forward.

**Interview: Leah**

Pseudonym: Leah

Teacher: V

Goal: Architect or an artist (Year 12)

Interviewer

Leah

- Tell me about your family? Dad's 48 and is in Optus communications, Mum's at home. I have a sister – she's older, and brother who's younger. Both my parents left school at year 10 – parents didn't usually go on then. Mum became a draftsman. (
- Do you have hobbies? Drawing. I'm really into the arts and performing and stuff. I like creating things (models etc.) and writing. Write poems or stories computer/hand. 'Cause I can express my feelings and how I feel. I like painting and drawing and making miniatures.
- What about friends? I've got a few friends. I've got some close friends but I've got others as well. [lovely girls]. I'm happy at school but I don't have best friends in English but I sit with some nice girls.
- What's your attitude to School? Um I really um like school overall but some subjects I don't like going to uh like I put up with them 'cause like I come to school actually to see my friends and to do drama and things 'cause I really like to do that.
- Favourite subject? Drama. Um 'cause it's fun and expresses feelings and um ah like it's just really fun. I'm average at drama but I like what we do and the teacher's nice.
- What about One's you don't like? Ah maths I don't like going all the time 'cause it's boring cause maths is just like facts and writing things down out of books and stuff but drama is more fun 'cause like you get to get to do practical like [pause] perform. There's no group work in maths. We just have a book and usually just answer questions. I'm alright at maths.
- Did you like primary School? Do you have memories? I liked primary school [indistinguishable] 'cause I got different teachers um with different qualities like some were really creative and um we did lots of creative stuff but like my year 6 teacher Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ she was really into English so we did heaps of stuff on English and I really like that.
- I have a good memory of Year 6. We got to do lots of uh different things like we got to do woodwork like we couldn't like we couldn't do when we were in Year 2 and Year 3 and stuff. A bad memory was Uh um probably kindergarten 'cause ah I always wanted to go home to my mum 'cause like I had friends like but like uh I didn't really have about friends so I just went from group to group.
- What about High school? It's ah heaps different to primary school but I uh like high school heaps better than primary school. Cause of the different subjects, different range of things like so you don't have to stay in the one thing doing the Maths thing during the whole day.
- Can you think? Of your best

- primary teacher? My year 6 teacher . We did a lot of English and speeches and practical things and aw our year 4 teacher 'cause we did a lot of creative things like in um art and things
- What about High school Teachers? Well um well um there's a few.....One of them is Mr K my um drama teacher and I um like Mr V as well 'cause he's like when I had English last year [didn't like it] 'cause I had about 5 different English teachers last year on and off." [Mr K] like um like he gives you boundaries but he doesn't like um he isn't really strict like he lets you be open.  
He treats everyone the same like um he tries um to get the most we can put out like he tries to bring us out of our shell."  
He gets people up to do things that don't usually um like there's heaps confident people in our drama class but then there's like the quiet people and he gets them up and makes them have fun  
He goes um like we'll be playing a game and he'll go um how about you come up and do this thing and he let's them do it the way they like to.
- What about Mr V? He's different to Mr K but um he lets us express ourselves in a different way to Mr K. But he puts boundaries down and he um like doesn't make us follow the way he likes but um he lets us do our own thing. Like he [Mr V] says um we're not allowed to do anything we want but he says we have a contract and he says we can do things [negotiable changes] and he has different categories in it then he says if you've got any ideas come and ask me about it.  
He um helps us um a lot like with different words we can put in like vocabulary and things and like he lets us write a story about something like he gives us a little but at the start and lets us go on from that."
- What about discipline? "Um like he's [Mr V] got very good discipline in the class like there are some people there who like don't want to do it English and things like um they still muck up anyway 'cause they don't really care .... They are not interested.
- How do you behave? I see my role like I think like I always think how would I feel if I was in that position. So I'm like oh I should behave 'cause I wouldn't like it if I was trying like I know how its like how hard it's like when I'm trying to get someone to listen to me and I get really upset when they won't do it. Like um like um if I muck up like I'm another person so it will only make it worse."
- How would you define English? English is a um subject which lets you express uh your emotions and things in forms uh verbal or writing."  
Um well um if you're writing a story you have to be kinda creative.  
Oh yeah reading stories and getting ideas from stories.
- What about contracts? Um well ah you have a book uh like a novel and like you read it and like you've got questions on different things on the book like how [indistinguishable] teacher creates but you negotiate.  
I uh like doing them (contracts) but sometimes there's things which I don't like doing on them like um I like writing stories but I don't like writing them too long 'cause ah I don't like writing them again."  
(Only likes 1<sup>st</sup> draft)  
I get bored of it but I still do it because uh I still want it to be the best that I can do it.
- What things have

You done in Topics  
in  
English?

I just read Slake's Limbo and we are starting the contract today  
In term 1 we did a mixed set box (mystery) and  
Advertisements , and the play 'Two Weeks with the Queen',  
acted out each chapter. I really liked that.

### **Interview: Kareena**

*(Indian/Australian)*

Teacher : Mrs S

Pseudonym: Kareena

Interviewer

Kareena

Why choose Kareena?

I just have a passion for that name

What is Kareena like?

Friendly, nice spoken, well behaved as I am.

Can you tell me about

Your family?

There's mum & dad, and I have a 20 year old sister in pathology and a  
sister 9 and a brother 17.

Do you have goals?

I wish to become a doctor or someone in the medical line, Yeah and  
um I'm aiming now to keep my focus and to study right up to 100%  
and stuff so I can do well in my HSC.

Well I just like to be someone who uh saves peoples' lives and know  
all about this different stuff in the body and stuff anatomy of the body  
you know yeah I'd just like to become a doctor.

What about Mum?

She's a housewife but was a bank accountant.

Dad?

Dad packs and stores things at a toy company.

Can you tell me

A bit more about your

Background?

I'm Australian. Dad came from India and Mum is Malaysian (they  
met in Malaysia)

Mum thought moving to Australia would be a better life for us because  
up in India you need to know different languages and stuff and my  
mum thought that it would be better to have English mother tongue.  
She thought the education would be better here and everything (fades  
away)

Do you have hobbies?

I love to draw. I like studying as a hobby. Getting out and around with  
friends, movies, I don't do that much but I like it

Friends?)

My friends are ah (pause) a bit [emphasis] like me but no-one is like  
me ah. My close friend is Isabel and my other friends are like normal  
type people. Normal meaning discussing things, problems with each  
other, trying to solve our problems telling about home, family and  
stuff like that in our situations. Our feelings and actually Isabel and I  
talk mostly about study. [Peers think this is strange]

Where did that love of study  
come from?

Inside of us. I've always had it. I have a really positive attitude to  
school.

What did you think

- Of primary? Primary school was Yeah like a type of bludge type thing. Mostly Primary school is things you must know kind of thing. You need to follow the rules and stuff. Help other children, younger children living the right way learning the basic things about studying and stuff.
- Do you prefer Primary or High school? "High school because in high school it's more like advanced type of things. Whereas in primary school its about little children and stuff um little children and then you don't learn stuff up in high school it's the same level and you learn more about it the next year and you meet new people. I like different subjects and different teachers.
- A good moment from Primary? I don't have one.
- Bad one? (pause) no  
I felt yeah it was being childish and stuff yeah (pause) immature like aw other type of people (pause) aw there's other not other people that you can discuss and stuff [ie. Subjects, work] .....Primary is like little something whereas high school is bigger in Primary you don't focus or you don't think nothing about your future or nothing.
- What makes you feel good At highschool? Most of the teachers. They always co-operate with you and they help you out if you don't know something well they always ask and uh help you out with something's and if you don't know or if you're not sure they'll come up to you and speak to you and tell you what to do about it and save you struggling for the moment and you can discuss it with many teachers.  
Something social and not just academic.
- Do you trust in teachers? Yes I do.
- Have you always had that trust? Yeah. It comes frominside myself ah ah actually when you first discuss with teachers and stuff usually kids think that when they go to the teacher, the teacher will yell at them and scream at them. They never realize that he teacher can be nice and come down to your stage and your level and your thinking. That's one thing.
- How would you describe yourself? Friendly, kind, understanding well-behaved um well brown. Well if I met somebody for the first time I'll quickly talk about myself. I am and let them know how trustworthy and hones I am so they won't get me wrong after a few days and stuff.
- How have teachers described you [on your reports]? [laughs] Uh wonderful, working hard student, co-operates, um ah well-behaved, co-operates. Yeah.
- Can you talk more about English in high school and perhaps compare it to English in primary? In Primary English was firstly about comprehension, like read a passage and understanding what its about and ah writing sentences and stuff basically missing out words and putting them in the passage so the passage works.  
"Yeah and up here in high school you get to do a variety of things. Learning log, journal, contract work which involves representing and viewing work. And that's why I like high school better because English is something where you can really really learn much about and

you get to do lots of variety of things that include English and related to English not just one thing like in primary [like comprehension]. There was no film but some writings. We usually did story writing but primary the great thing is in English well if you hadn't done all this comprehension and stuff then you wouldn't you would've struggled in high school, so you needed the basics.

How would you describe English at High school?

In high school I do reading of a book and have to usually like do something similar to the book like if you were the person in the story how would you react to the situation that's what I really like. (She only remembers her favourites). I like stories ah reading ah um stories in throughout English because when you're reading a book it makes you feel like you're in that book and in that situation and how you would react.

Do books teacher you anything else?

Yes. Ideas on how how to react to those situations and if you don't know words you ah ah get to know those words and how to do things in real life.

Does English help you be a better person? How?

Yes I do think so.

Vocabulary, usually how you pronounce words, how you use them and the way to and use different words in sentences [and elsewhere] like fantastic... and all the adjectives. And books teach about how to behave. They talk about how others feel.

Um it could actually teach you say if someone did something right or something wrong and yeah and you did something wrong you know yeah that it is wrong and you'll do it the right way.

Can you talk about Good and bad teaching?

Aw no [laughing] not really, there are no bad teachers.

Well basically all the teachers are nice to me and they all have the some standard to me.

You learn equally well with all of them? Why teachers help you learn?

Yeah

They are nice, approachable, trustworthy

You learn how to co-operate early on with teachers. Say if you didn't understand a passage or something the teacher has set and you put up your hand and then ask then "Miss what does that mean? Then the teacher will tell you what it is. And that's what helps you [to learn] makes it more easier and that's what makes you more trustworthy with the teacher until you get more contact with the teacher to talk.

Teacher / child relationship.

Kareena sees good teaching as a partnership and she is responsible.

Good teaching/learning

So trust / conversation / engaging in room = good learning / teaching Kareena sees learning in terms of it's her responsibility [especially to establish a dialogue with teacher]

Discipline / class room Management

Actually I think that's important jus because you [teacher] is nice to you [student] it doesn't mean that you [teacher] have to stop all your

discipline and work on others for that person. I think it should be all around the classroom.

What does she mean here?

Fair discipline and niceness for all and can occur?

**Interview Isabel**

(Chinese/Australia)

Teacher: Mrs S

Interviewer

Isabel

Can you talk about  
your family?

There's my brother Gary (he's 5), myself, Mum (who does home duties) and Dad who is a cabinet maker. I am Mandarin and came from China 6 years ago because of the one child policy (Mum and Dad wanted more children) and for a better life.

Do you have hobbies?  
Can you talk about home  
and school?

Reading, drawing, painting.

My parents expect me to um do well um very well here. I do well in most of the subjects well they were very disappointed when I didn't make it into a selective school. They ah basically expect the best.

Is this a strain?

Yes. I am not allowed to draw until I have done my study then after dinner I study then I read and go to bed, sometimes I get some time to do painting but it is often late so I don't get to. My parents expect a lot from me.

What about all  
the study?

Um it's okay ah but I wouldn't say I enjoy it.

I study because it's like necessary for me and I'll use it in the future.

I want to get a good job. I'm interested in designing and basically anything creative, I want to go uni.

What about friends?

I'm not a very social sort of person ah um and at the moment I have F\_\_\_\_\_ as my best friend. I don't feel at the moment um many people don't seem to like me. [Isabel began to cry. We have a break but she wants to continue].

What was primary like?

We didn't get much homework. We had a different routine we didn't have the number of subjects like at ah high school. I like excursions .

What was  
English like  
in primary?

Spelling, drama, comprehension and basically all parts of English film. There was a teacher, she ah pay attention to our mistakes and ...basically she gave us a lot of work sometimes it was too much work.

What about English  
This year?

Um we done with Mrs S Drama which hadn't done before um as I'm a shy person you know ah [laughs nervously] um I'm not comfortable with ah that amount of attention it's a bit difficult.

[When I did it] I was okay um I was not that bad ah (nervous laugh) I used to, I used to be nervous but not so much any more... I feel better now uh. I like family stories about families.

I can't remember anything else [nervous laugh]

What do you  
understand about  
contracts?

A contract is a set of work which goes with revolves around a novel you study and it has like it uh gives more depth to the novel ah

We can ah negotiate with the teacher. I like contracts yeah they are more interesting to do. They are useful because sometimes people might read a book and they need more depth to get it. It's sort of like um kind of like explain the book to you (inaudible)

- Why bother doing English? It's the most important subject in the world because in life you have to read and write like um and understand what people are saying to you like signs, um newspapers and things that you read that's important.. Books, books um tell you about some people's life stories as well as how some people react to difficult situations and show you yeah how to cope with it yeah.
- What do you think of teachers? All uh the teachers are uh really good uh effective. Well basically they are teachers and their job is to teach you and um and I think all the teachers I have yeah they do a good job. Yeah.
- How do they do a good job? Um they explain try, try to um make you understand before um they go on to the next step. They tell you what you are doing and why.
- What about discipline? Yes it is important. (definite tone)  
Because some kids might not want to learn and it's important to control them otherwise it might affect the others [inaudible]  
[pause] Tell them uh not to do something [pause]
- Have you had a bad teacher? No.
- Favourite subject Oh I have a few but I like art the most because basically I want to improve and be in that area.
- Do you see yourself as good in that area? Oh I don't know but basically I try my utmost to improve because I'm interested in it.
- Least favourite subject I don't like PE or Practical um I'm not a very (nervous laugh) outdoor person. I'll be at sport and sometimes I'll be embarrassed and doing in front of others ...(drifts off)
- Subject or teacher The subject because it doesn't matter about the teacher because I'm interested in the work I do not and not the teacher.
- What topics have you done?  
This year?
- We are doing books by Paul Jennings and we are ah and I think his books are quite humorous and most people yeah enjoy it and uh we watch Round the Twist uh and that's based on his books.

## Interview Mike

Year 8

Teacher:

Mrs S

Pseudonym

Mike

Age

12 years turning 13

Interviewer

Tell me about yourself, your family.

Mike

*I live with my grandparents now and my twin Richard who is my older brother (18. I don't know where my other oldest brother is, he and my sister who is 20) live in Mt Druitt. Mum's name is J\_\_\_\_\_and she's an alcoholic. She lives in Mt Druitt and my dad lives in Lawson. Mum does drugs so my grandparents have taken us in. I don't see my mum or dad or anyone but my brother. Gran and Pop give us jobs at home [braces / lisp]. I remember walking to school at Mt Druitt and there was this pipe like thing and a big drop and it was always full of needles and stuff. It's much safer and cleaner here.*

- Interviewer I'm terribly sorry \_\_\_\_\_ it must have been awful.
- Mike I'm okay. I have friends and I like it here and Pop and Gran are my parents now so it's okay and I do things with my mates.
- Interviewer What kinds of things?
- Mike *Skateboarding. I'm not that good not the best but I', alright. It's something to do rather than sitting inside .But I also like TV movies, funny movies. And I have good friends like Steve, Adrian ... lots of friends and we met at youth group Christian school.*
- Primary *Went to 3 Mt Druitt schools (Living with mum) then \_\_\_\_\_[local primary]. Don't see mum. I don't mind. Remembers pretty bad place see druggies there and take long .....*  
*I don't remember much.*
- Interviewer *What about good teacher?*
- Mike *Good teachers are nice, kind, they didn't try and force you to do work you didn't want to do ..... Like if we found something hard they would help us ....and if we found it easy then they were more interested in us tan actually teaching us.They wanted to make the school work fun for us, instead of dull and boring. They do things like play games, like if we had a maths test that day or a spelling test, before that to get warmed up we'd stand around the room and play a spelling game and then the test was easier because we learnt it playing the game. If we done something wrong we'd know about it like we'd get in trouble but it wouldn't be too hard. Like we wouldn't get suspended if we accidentally dropped something ... but if you got into a fight you'd go onto an orange card its like a blue book.*
- Interviewer Have you been disciplined?
- Mike *Yep. I've been suspended. I got into a fight for helping my brother and I got suspended. It's one of the memories like I wouldn't like to have a reputation about. 'Cause if I did then everybody would think ..... I'm bad and a trouble maker.*
- Interviewer *Do you prefer primary or high school?*
- Mike *I like high school 'cause there's more things to do such as PE games and in English there's more selecting of stuff to do than in primary school. It's harder and a more of challenge and ya get electives and stuff and you get longer breaks as well. I don't mind about more teachers it's better because ya get more used to different people and meet more new friends in different classes.*
- Interviewer *How would you describe yourself?*
- Mike *I think of myself as an interactive person. Sometimes I'm annoying and loud and sometimes I'm hard working and not loud. I'm quiet and just do my work.*
- Interviewer *What is your favourite subject?*
- Mike *PE 'cause its active and I'm excited but I'm not easily distracted in PE. And I have aims, like I had an aim to be good that day and active and quick and not to refuse any of the games.*
- Slight stutter *Visual Arts "I like drawings and I like the activities and stuff. The only part I don't like is painting.*
- Interviewer *Do you see yourself as good at subjects that you enjoy like PE?*
- Mike *Yeah I'm alright. I'm not the best person in the world but I see myself as good and succeeding. I'm usually good, it just depends on what people I'm around like what conditions I'm in like if I don't like the game.*
- Interviewer *How important is the teacher in the subjects you like?*

- Mike *I'd still like the subject even if I had a teacher I didn't like 'cause I'd still be doing the same work. But maybe if I had a subject I didn't like with a good teacher that make it more interesting and I might like it."*
- Interviewer *What was English like in primary school? In English now we read novels, we do our learning logs and journal but in English in primary school we ah did sheets an' um we were less responsible and we had to listen to things by tape I don't mind but if we wanted to read extra at home we couldn't because we'd be listening to it on tape.*
- Least likes subject *Probably ah maths. It's not that fun, it's boring. There's nothing good about it like it's usually numbers and stuff. Aw usually the teacher writes stuff on the board and we copy it into our book. I think I'm alright at maths because I'm in like the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest group but still I'm not really into doing maths. I just think of it as something I have to do, but not something I prefer to do. My behaviour... I'm more easily distracted because it's less interesting and I'm more loud.*
- Interviewer *What's English about?*
- Mike *It's normal English but it depends on the teacher as to what we do like Mrs S. likes us to read and draw pictures and do stories but I it was Mrs P we'd do drama and things that make us think more clearly and when we go onto doing journal we do it with a clear mind that focused we discussed ideas, doing learning logs, making speeches, interacting with different students.*
- Interviewer *What about how you are taught?*
- Mike *I like doing groups but Mrs S says we can't do it much. We aren't independent learners and we've got a few muck-up in our class like idiots and they don't like to shut up ... I've had my fair share of being a muck up but it just depends on what work we're doin' to see if I'm sitting down and doin' it. Like the other day Christopher M came into our class and like he's an office duty and he like pushed me over a chair so I hit him with a cardboard thing and I got sent out and the teacher said I done pretty good work by myself out there. I had to write a story.*
- Interviewer *How do you see yourself as an English student?*
- Mike *Aw I think I'm pretty good at English and doing the work and I can do a pretty good story sometimes. I don't like the listening part too much. I don't mind the talking but ah the listening I prefer not to do it. I use contracts. That's work that is set out for us that we have to do. It can be negotiated [what's that mean?] it means like changed to suit us better like if there's 16 pages of writing and we can't we can negotiate it down to 14. Contracts are alright but I'd prefer not to have them just get set work. Aw like contracts like get pretexts and stuff but they're good like instead of ah spending 2 weeks on a project we can do it over a period of time to do the work and it can be split up.*
- Interviewer *What work do you remember?*
- Mike *We done drama game to get used to our teacher and like get to know each other and we can trust the teacher more and that she's not going to set us boring work and just make us do it like she's just showing us that um we can have fun in English. Lately [with Mrs S] we've been doin' a unit on witches like we watched a film Witches by Roald Dahl and then we had to write a story on witches and I think I went pretty well on that. It was pretty good 'cause we got to watch a video and every now and again our teacher would stop the video and ask us questions about it. [inaudible] it was pretty good.*
- Interviewer *How much does the teacher have to do to get you to work?*

Mike

*Not much. I have to listen 'cause I'll get in trouble when I'm doing the work I don't really notice.*

**Interview Moria Sachs**

Teacher: Mr K

- Interviewer *Thanks very much for staying with the study. How do you feel about the study?*
- Moria *Well I feel special because I've never been in something like this before and I feel good because only 16 people have been chosen and I can help English.*
- Interviewer *You've got a very positive attitude about the research.*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *You were very excited about it today you said.*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *That's wonderful so. Do you feel comfortable about the questions that I've mentioned to you. There is no right or wrong answers if you want to talk more on one thing and then come back to it we'll talk about these things then end of question we won't talk about it again. Lets start with your special name what would you like to be called?*
- Moria *Moria*
- Interviewer *Moria. Why did you choose that name.*
- Moria *I knew someone ages ago with that name and I've never heard it before so*
- Interviewer *Pretty good name we'll come back to that at another time. Family who have you got in your family?*
- Moria *Me and my mum just live together I don't live with my dad but I've got a brother and sister my sister live in Bondi beach her name is Kristie*
- Interviewer *How old is she*
- Moria *She is 26 and brother Daniel lives in Penrith and he's 27*
- Interviewer *And your how old?*
- Moria *12 turning 13 in September*
- Interviewer *Mum's occupation is she home all the time working hard or?*
- Moria *Yeh sbe likes to clean she sort of a clean freak she likes to clean. She doesn't have a job at the moment she's been looking for work but*
- Interviewer *Right and dad*
- Moria *I don't live with my dad I don't know dad*
- Interviewer *You don't know dad*
- Moria *I like when I was 11 10 or something I knew him but now I don't see him*
- Interviewer *Mum and divorced or separated*
- Moria *divorced*
- Interviewer *And you live locally?*
- Moria *Yeh I live in Kingswood on Bringelly Road up near the QUIX*
- Interviewer *But you don't go to Kingswood High you go here*
- Moria *The reason why is cause I went to Kingswood High but I had a few problems there so my mum changed schools*
- Interviewer *You weren't happy there so you came here. We might talk about that a little bit later. So you're much younger than your brother and sister*
- Moria *Yep a lot*
- Interviewer *Did you grow up with your brother and sister do you know them well*

- Moria *Yeh I knew them. I don't see my sister that much any more cause she lives in Bondi Beach but I see my brother a lot.*
- Interviewer *You and mum get on well*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *That's nice isn't it. Did mum do the school certificate. Did she go onto year 10*
- Moria *No I don't think so. She went to grade 4. Not grade four she went to year 9 or something she got a letter it had that she worked hard at school and that sort of thing.*
- Interviewer *She keeps it still? Has she shown it to you?*
- Moria *Yep she thought it was very important cause it was a nice report.*
- Interviewer *Yes it is so she values what was said about her and she shared it with you. We must talk about reports another time. I'll talk about if mum wants to have an interview or if wants to have a meeting. Most parents want to be phoned. We'll talk about that later. What mum attitude to school*
- Moria *Well she wrote down that you should have your head down bum up. She reckons you should study and study only.*
- Interviewer *And she's very supportive of you.*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *What are your hobbies? What do you like doing?*
- Moria *Well I'm a good dancer and runner.*
- Interviewer *Tell me about those*
- Moria *Last year I was in the festival for dancing for Grease Lightning we had a concert.*
- Interviewer *School performance*
- Moria *And we made it into high dance testing and running I got junior girl champion.*
- Interviewer *Junior girl champion fabulous*
- Moria *Cause I'm a good runner*
- Interviewer *Do you train?*
- Moria *I actually don't train I'm just a natural runner. I've got a lot of ribbons*
- Interviewer *Anything else you like doing particularly Moria?*
- Moria *I like doing work like school I love coming to school*
- Interviewer *Why do like that?*
- Moria *Cause when you're at home there's nothing to do like you just like enjoy coming to school. Meeting people.*
- Interviewer *Meeting people. We'll come back to talk about that a bit more later. What about primary school?*
- Moria *I like primary school I used to go to Kingswood South and it was pretty good English was heaps heaps different.*
- Interviewer *What was it like?*
- Moria *In English like I thought I would be good because in High school you go to different classes and different teachers and primary you learn from one teacher and like maths you go to different maths classes but you wouldn't have maths for the first hour and then English for the second hour you just do it all in one you get a stencil and do it all together its not like your getting taught. Like particularly English its just got English in it. It's a lot different.*
- Interviewer *Can you remember the things you did in English? Like activities and skills*

- Moria *We used to get pieces of paper with missing letters on it and you had to fill it in and a lot of reading things and you had to answer questions. Just things like that.*
- Interviewer *Film did you do anything like that? What about talking did you do group work or discussions?*
- Moria *I think we went we did a reading group we went in different groups and you read for half an hour with your mates a page each.*
- Interviewer *Peer reading sort of thing. What about writing did you do recount or retell.*
- Moria *Oh yeh we did stories make up stories*
- Interviewer *Did you do listening games?*
- Moria *Not really we had one thing but I had a combined class where there is a wall in front. This teacher I didn't really like and she used to open the doors and then she used to take over the class. She was the one that organized it and she would keep one table and you would go and listen to it and then go back. We all had a chapter book and we used to go and read it and then you'd get a stencil and chapter book and listen to the tape.*
- Interviewer *I understand what you mean. If you think about teachers in primary school. What is your memory of good teaching, who was a good teacher.*
- Moria *I had Mrs O'Connor she was a part time teacher because our full time teacher had to go to hospital for a while just for a few months we had about four teachers. We had her for a while. We had Mrs O'Connor she had to go because she was getting married. She was nice.*
- Interviewer *What was nice about her? What did you like about her?*
- Moria *She was like you could sit there and read a book and you could read out loud but not loud and she wouldn't like say you know how some teachers say read in your head and do this and do that way. As long as you were good you could do it anyway. You could read it in your head but I read out loud so I could understand it more. I'm not a very good reader I like to read out loud because when I read it in my head I don't get.*
- Interviewer *Your strategy was to read out loud and she allowed you to do that. Did she allow you to go outside so you didn't distract others?*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *Anything else you remember about her?*
- Moria *She was kind she would let you have a joke with her. She wouldn't be the teacher that would say sit down, don't talk, don't laugh you were allowed to have a laugh and stuff.*
- Interviewer *And a joke. Any other things about her you remember. Discipline.*
- Moria *She was disciplined if you went overboard she would settle you down other than that she was pretty kind.*
- Interviewer *How would she settle people down?*
- Moria *If they went a bit overboard everyone liked here so they listened to her. OK that's enough now and she would pretend to draw on the board. They would sit down*
- Interviewer *They knew that was a ritual?*
- Moria *Yeh. But you could get it rubbed off. That was pretty good.*
- Interviewer *So she would write your name up and say we're going to have some discipline about this in some way but if your on task or well behaved we will take that away. The kids liked that. They were better?*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *Did you get your name on the board?*
- Moria *I think once or twice.*

- Interviewer *What about a teacher from your memory that you didn't enjoy.*
- Moria *There was one teacher her name is Miss Kitchen she was very strict we weren't allowed laugh you weren't allowed to talk out loud. No excitement what so ever. When you used to get into trouble she would be so close to your face it was like WOW. She used to like spit at times so everyone didn't like her. And a lot of people told her and she just didn't care. She was a bit like say you had some work and you just finished it then she'll say you've got to read or something and you finish off some work just before it she will get really angry and she'll say you can sit at lunch and do it. OK like aren't you allowed to finish off work?*
- Interviewer *You were using your initiative to do something before you went onto the next task and you thought she was telling you off because of that. Because she didn't have any flexibility in the way you wanted to learn. Do you think she was a nice person really?*
- Moria *She did have a good side but when you got on her bad side you were on the bad side forever. You can't get off it.*
- Interviewer *Your class how did they react to that?*
- Moria *We didn't like it because she was the one that uncombined it and took over. Some of the teachers used to get angry too because they had to sit down. It is supposed to be their class to teach and the other teacher just barges over them and takes over.*
- Interviewer *She was too dominant and you resented that. Did you like your own teacher at that time?*
- Moria *Yep that was Miss O'Connor. Miss O'Connor is sort of a softie so she didn't say so I'm taking this class.*
- Interviewer *She probably thought it was unprofessional to do it maybe too. And you were aware of that. That is very interesting. Thank you Moria. So a nice memory from primary school.*
- Moria *Yeh it was good. It is a lot different from high school. You have to go to different classes and pack up and be in there for 45 minutes where as you have to be in the one classroom all day except for maybe maths when you go to different classes and functions in your own seat and sit next to your friends. It's a lot easier.*
- Interviewer *Say at high school you had one teacher for almost every subject would you prefer that?*
- Moria *No I actually like it better sometimes it is a bit easier. So like you have to pack up and go to the next class. Sometimes its so long to go to the next class like you're all the way down at Visual arts and your next class is all the way up to computers and you've got to go all that way. Oh my god.*
- Interviewer *You've got to cart that big bag around don't you?*
- Moria *But other wise its ok*
- Interviewer *So you prefer different subjects and different teachers? We will come back to that in a few minutes. So you thought primary school was quite good? Is there anything about it you didn't like? Besides that teacher you were talking about.*
- Moria *I like actually primary school and the thing about high school is like you have to get a note to go to the toilet and go get the key and go where in primary school you just went to the toilet and the toilets were basically there so you don't have to get a key and unlock it and stuff. So that was pretty good. I don't get why they have it at high school because let's say you don't want to be long but you have to get the key where if you just go straight to the toilet.*
- Interviewer *To answer your question because we have 921 students here and I was Deputy 9 – 10 in the toilet were stealing the key so they could have a smoke and truanting and loitering in the toilets. Can you see why?*
- Moria *Yeh but cause I think I see it a different way it not good but like year 7 don't really do that sort of stuff.*

- Interviewer *No but you see if from your perspective and it's a valid one but unfortunately that is something we could look at through the SRC. Are you in the SRC?*
- Moria *No*
- Interviewer *You are so vocal I thought you would be very strong on the SRC. You would be a good candidate. English at primary school did you enjoy it?*
- Moria *It was actually good you didn't really know when you were having English. You just get a stencil that you had to fill out sheets. The teacher wouldn't say you are doing English now. Just give you something to do or write on the board.*
- Interviewer *Did you think about English as a separate subject?*
- Moria *No I actually didn't we didn't have subjects like Geography or history we just had the basics like maths reading spelling.*
- Interviewer *That's what English was but it was just called spelling and things like that. We talked about high school and you said you preferred moving around a bit. Can you tell me what your favourite subject or subjects are?*
- Moria *I like PE and I like English I love coming to English. I like PE because you get to go outside and do more active things. I don't really like maths. I good at maths but it's a bit like no fun what so ever you've just got to do maths maths maths.*
- Interviewer *What do you have to do in maths maths maths that isn't fun?*
- Moria *Basically you've just got to sit there you're not allowed to say a word and just . It's good cause you're learning but you're not allowed to do anything. In music you play recorder in visual arts you draw and stuff and in PE you run and English you do this sort of stuff.*
- Interviewer *Describe a typical lesson in maths. You come in and sit down*
- Moria *Come in sit down you do like factorizing and factors*
- Interviewer *From a text book or group work. What do you do?*
- Moria *We stay at our desk we just do out of a book*
- Interviewer *Individual work from a text book mostly.*
- Moria *On the board and stuff*
- Interviewer *Have you done any group work or pair working in maths yet? Have you gotten up and given a talk in maths?*
- Moria *Nup nothing*
- Interviewer *Coloured in some diagrams?*
- Moria *No its more since I've been here it's been board stuff and text books.*
- Interviewer *Here a question that I might have to ask you twice. You've said your favourite subjects and we will come back to that about why you like them soon. If you had the choice between your favourite subject taught by a teacher you didn't like so much and like in the sense of good teaching technique for you.*
- Moria *I like music because the teachers are a bit funny weird. Its like Miss Yealland and I don't think she likes me that much and I'll be sitting there and Elise will be talking to me and I'll get on her bad side cause Elise is talking to me I'm not talking to her so she has it in the back of her mind like Moria was talking and that makes me on the bad side and I'm like I wasn't talking in recorder I had to do a test and I couldn't do it cause if I can't do it I can't do it and she was angry and stuff. She didn't even give me a second chance. I could do it and I showed her and she said she I'm not changing your mark. But that was so good I finally done it for once and you're not going to change my mark. And I got zero for that so its going to go on my report and stuff so mum won't be happy.*
- Interviewer *Why didn't you do it when you were first asked?*
- Moria *Because I couldn't do it.*

- Interviewer *Because you hadn't practiced enough?*
- Moria *I couldn't get the beat it is so fast. And you're like slow down its like WOW I don't think I was there for one lesson even.*
- Interviewer *Did you practice really really hard*
- Moria *Yeh but we had a written test on Tuesday I don't even know anything about written because it's a bit hard because I came half way through the term and not even half way through and they learned all that stuff back in the start I'm not going to know any of it so I'll get a bad mark. It will be hard she won't let me do it one lunch time. We I get more into it. It is really unfair because they learnt it already before they got onto recorder.*
- Interviewer *We will come to those issues you have brought a lot of those up. If you had a subject you didn't like but a teacher you really wanted which subject would you choose theoretically you could choose any one you liked. Which one would you choose?*
- Moria *Every subject I don't like I don't like the teacher either so but I actually go the thing I like because the teacher as long as you don't do anything wrong just do the thing even if your teachers mean doesn't even matter you will still enjoy playing the recording or drawing.*
- Interviewer *With your teachers. English is one of the teachers you like? What about do you like the teacher of English. What do you like about what he does or who he is?*
- Moria *He is a softie. Its not hard work where you have to look at a book you can draw and use colour and make your books look nice you are having fun even though your not doing like playing recorder or drawing you are doing something good. I just enjoy it I don't know why. Now this has come along you're more like Mrs Pizarro might be coming today.*
- Interviewer *The research part of it interests you that it might affect your learning. With teaching and English what have you been doing in English?*
- Moria *We've been doing poems, autumn and seasons so we had to pick leaves and draw it and write a poem on it. We are going to start moving on we've been reading Mrs Frizby and the Rats of Nimh that's pretty good and we half way through that.*
- Interviewer *What other activities? Have you got a contract? Does Mr K writes in your book about the activities you are going to do?*
- Moria *I haven't got that yet. I think some other people have. If you don't get to finish it you get to finish it when we get back in. If you don't get to finish it it is alright. He doesn't get angry you just do it another time.*
- Interviewer *We will discuss some more things next time. Thank you Moria*
- Interviewer *Hi*
- Moria *Hi*
- Interviewer *All right are you ready?*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *Right we're going to talk a little bit about contracts and what a contract is in English. Would you like to tell me about that?*
- Moria *Well a contract's like do you mean like saying something?*
- Interviewer *yes*
- Moria *having something well a contract is something that it's a sheet of something that you actually promise that you contribute with it*
- Interviewer *Right Mr. K do those in English for the work you've got to do you write it in your book or something*
- Moria *Yes he has some people in this little box and you have 3 strikes and you have 1, 2 and 3 and that's just for the people that they're not bad they're just sometimes now*

- and again a bit chatty and um he sort of has sorta got a contract with them if you do something else you're gunna get a strike 2, 3 and then your gunna get a yellow form if you get on your strike three that's sort of a contract but contract is basically when you sign like an agreement.*
- Interviewer *thank you Now did I ask you last time I've forgotten what you wanted to be or goals in your life*
- Moria *I don't think you did actually but um what I want to be when I'm older is a High court judge*
- Interviewer *right*
- Moria *or a Solicitor*
- Interviewer *why do you want to be that*
- Moria *because um I just want to achieve something high when I'm older and that's what I like and there is nothing else I would really like*
- Interviewer *where did you get the idea*
- Moria *well when I was little I was like a chatterbox I used like play judges and then when I was a bit older I new what it was and just I wanted to be a high court judge or a solicitor since I was 7 so I just kept what I wanted to be*
- Interviewer *or right then what do you have to do to get there do you think*
- Moria *well you have to go to year 12 got to Uni go to law school and you don't actually go straight to the high court judge you do like you start off as a solicitor or just a messenger then you get achieve higher and when you get higher eventually you get high court judge it might take a few years when you start it but eventually you'll get there*
- Interviewer *ok thank you Um lets have a little reflection on classes now and teachers lets look at the idea of good teaching or effective teaching now you've talked about that and you've written a bit about it in your learning log I don't want it to get boring the idea is for you to come up with um think about specific things that you think make good teaching and you talked about English I think was your favourite one*
- Moria *Well um English, Science and language I like um well I love every subject but there is just a few subjects that teachers have a favourite and leave this one out like its just like I don't think its fair like that's why I don't want to be a teacher because like when as I'm older I've gotta say sometimes like if there is a like if say there was a boy and a boy if I had to pick out one say I would pick the best looking one because that's like I'm too young yet I'm not older nough I don't actually like look at the personality or anything and that's why I don't want to be like that when I grow older I'm learning not to do that anymore like*
- Interviewer *so you think some poor teacher teacher you don't like as much one thing that they do is they have favourites*
- Moria *yes like um my music teacher like I won't say who but my music teacher like I I used to sit next to Elise Brown and we used to chat chat and then I had a point where I just stopped chatting I'm gunna get I new my report was coming up soon I have to get a good report like and um I got to the point where I just had to stop sitting next to Elise so I've not sat next to Elise for ages now and I've been the best kid I can in English which I can try to do in every subject but like Elise Brown and her other friends chat chat and she*
- Interviewer *the teacher*
- Moria *still favours them than me I'm sitting up the back like hi I'm here you know like I haven't even got a merit from music yet and like I'm so good Elise has got a thousand of them and she chats chats chats chats chats*
- Interviewer *right*
- Moria *chats 24/7 I think its unfair*

- Interviewer *so you think the merit cards you've said there behaviour isn't good enough the teachers rewarding them and taking notice of them*
- Moria *yeh like in my geography teacher kyle Edwards he calls out swears everything else a kid could do and when me and Bianca/Beyonce just say oh whats this or something we get yelled at and its like*
- Interviewer *what does your teacher yell*
- Moria *like she just says you've got to be quiet do you know yous are so talkative and bla (mumbled) and then kyle is up the back swearing and doing everything else that you can hear she just gives him a little look where does give him scrap or detention or anything its always us*
- Interviewer *right are there any other subjects that's two subjects that it happens in is there any other subjects it happens*
- Moria *oh its just like ..... Sometimes I talk and I think like am I the worst kid going like every teacher picks on me for some reason even in my favourite subjects every teacher every teacher*
- Interviewer *pick your ..... what do they say*
- Moria *Moria stop talking and like I stop and then look around and then think aren't you gunna tell them to be quiet too like or is it just me*
- Interviewer *but you are talking though*
- Moria *yeh I talk a little bit but when I'm told to stop I be quiet and then I see every one else and I put up my hand and say excuse me miss or sir I think it's a bit unfair like everyone else is talking I say my opinion and I get in even more trouble I know you should keep your opinions to yourself but sometimes you just can't hold it in any longer*
- Interviewer *alright so you feel how do you feel in those times do you feel*
- Moria *I feel like I just feel so angry and like um there's this thing there was this thing report going around about me listening*
- Interviewer *progress report*
- Moria *test going around say*
- Interviewer *just pause for a sec*
- Moria *I think like*
- Interviewer *now we are just continuing our second interview Moria and Moria you've just mentioned to me that you were a bit frightened about telling me that you were on a Blue Book for the Deputy Principal*
- Moria *Um like for all the classes*
- Interviewer *For all the classes. Yeh and that's a book for misconduct. So lets and would that cut you out of this research. The answer is no. You do this research but I do need someone who is trustworthy and I can rely on them doing things*
- Moria *Yeh I'm trustworthy like I want to do anything cause I'm like grateful to be in this research and like*
- Interviewer *Fabulous*
- Moria *Being here but like*
- Interviewer *So now can we go We're going to talk about that today I talked about it to two other people today we looked at our behaviour and other peoples behaviour and we started talking a little bit about that and teacher behaviour What are you on the blue book about*
- Moria *Or because like*
- Interviewer *What happened*

- Moria *Like in every class I sit next to my friends right and well like I said in music me and Elise have split up because like I've had enough I really haven't done nothing in other classes we sat together our talking went a bit chatty and stuff where we didn't get as much trouble as we did I did in music and I just didn't realize it and they put this report about me around just to see how I was going. I didn't even know about it they didn't at least let me know that it was going around like I could improve my behaviour before they writ something down they didn't even tell me or anything it sort of like got me off guard like you know like um your on a blue book now here's your blue book like wow like [mumble]*
- Interviewer *A blue book is a year coordinators book*
- Moria *Yep like its not bad it's just to see how you're going like its not*
- Interviewer *You think its bad don't you*
- Moria *Yeh I think its really bad because like my mum is gunna go off*
- Interviewer *When did you get that blue book*
- Moria *Today*
- Interviewer *Today right so do you now understand that that doesn't matter*
- Moria *Yeh*
- Interviewer *That doesn't matter I'll have to sign that blue book for you though if you are with me in the period*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *Understand that*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *All right are you comfortable with that*
- Moria *Yep That's good like I just don't like if my mum comes and meets you can you just not mention the blue book like*
- Interviewer *Sure*
- Moria *Like my mum will think if everyone knows she gunna think I'm the badest kid in the world and I just want to keep it like just me and her I want to tell her by myself you know*
- Interviewer *Yes Yes*
- Moria *Like*
- Interviewer *No No No*
- Moria *Like I wouldn't say you tell but like some teachers like comes to me might like say so how has Moria being going on that blue book it's like what blue book like or like that or um she's going pretty good she is gunna be like oh I'm the baddest parent like everyone knows that Moria's on a blue book and like she's just gunna*
- Interviewer *She's gunna feel unhappy about it or embarrassed by it*
- Moria *About her parenting everyone*
- Interviewer *Do you think your behaviour effects on your mums parenting OK and does it do you think*
- Moria *No it like my mum had a lot we've had a lot of problems in our life you know like its just like we're just starting to go good were if my mum found out like everyone knew shes just gunna think we went off track again we moved schools like my dad went to goal and stuff and so*
- Interviewer *Right*
- Moria *So my mum and dad got a divorce and we lost our house, our car and our dog and stuff so we're sort of like just getting that back so*
- Interviewer *Right OK you just feel like you're getting back on track and your worried about this upsetting mum*
- Moria *Yeh*

- Interviewer *Yeh ok No I don't speak about that kind of thing with her if I was Head Teacher English and phoned her I would tell her*
- Moria *Yeh*
- Interviewer *Do you understand that?*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *Yep alright so we've got that out your relaxed now*
- Moria *Yeh*
- Interviewer *Good always remember that you um trust me alright nothing you say can be bad as in the sense and what it is doing is trying to help me understand and hopefully yourself whats going on and maybe help you move on from there alright as well as my research hopefully. Now with with the things you have done that you were talking about talking a lot that's the most things you do and you don't get all your work done*
- Moria *And calling out*
- Interviewer *You call out*
- Moria *I don't talk but its more like putting my hand up and my hands been there aching and she and people just put their hand up all the teachers ask them and like I've been waiting here for half an hour now and then I'm like Miss and she says be quiet Moria and then someone else answer and another half an hour Miss and then that's when it gets me in trouble*
- Interviewer *Right and what are you wanting to know*
- Moria *Like just like like in PE today she asked what the wildlife and the pollution like does it like to the animals and stuff*
- Interviewer *Yes*
- Moria *And everyone says like thing and I had like snakes and stuff and like up here up here and noones answering and like anyone else and I here you know*
- Interviewer *And the teachers not seeing you*
- Moria *Like she is she said wait there Moria and I go Miss and shes like don't call out Moria and I go Miss you know and its like it gets on your nerves like you try and like you've got a good answer or idea and noone is listening to you like its like you don't even like*
- Interviewer *Exists*
- Moria *Yeh exists and you don't even matter to people*
- Interviewer *Right*
- Moria *It sort of hurts you*
- Interviewer *You're getting hurt you're getting angry*
- Moria *And then your steam goes up and your like Miss and that's what gets you in trouble I try to control myself don't say it don't say it and then I'm like Miss[angry] oh it just comes out*
- Interviewer *Ok have you tried talking to your teacher quietly after class or lunchtime*
- Moria *No cause like half of them never got time oh I can't talk to you right now*
- Interviewer *Oh right ok*
- Moria *Like Mr. KI love Mr. Klike not in that way but like he's so he's fair*
- Interviewer *Yeh*
- Moria *Sometimes I might be a bit Sir [loud] but its alright like he's pretty good like but they're just like um*
- Interviewer *So cause they're so when you're in Mr. K's class you know that you call out and you're doing the wrong behaviour*
- Moria *Yeh*
- Interviewer *Right*
- Moria *And I hold myself in*
- Interviewer *And try and pull in hold back cause you know it's not right*
- Moria *Yep*
- Interviewer *And why is that*
- Moria *Because if I know I do that like I'm cause I'm like up on the bored and I've got one strike I know if I get that second try I've only got one more strike for the rest of the*

- year that's gunna go like that if I don't improve myself so I haven't trying to get on my second thing so like I know if I call out I'm on the second strike and then the third strike
- Interviewer *And what happens to the kids on the third strike?*
- Moria *You get a yellow form*
- Interviewer *Right So Mr. K has got something very clear there regarding the consequences of your behaviour if you're naughty.*
- Moria *Basically*
- Interviewer *Do we call it naughty behaviour or what do we call it what do you call it*
- Moria *Its just a warning but cause we got a warning then say and like yes sir and next lesson might be a bit touchy cause we're like one strike off three and he'll put our initials there and like half the class is up and then that's it some people have got two and noones got three yet I don't think and um yeh and then that's how it sort of what he'll give you a warning clearly and then next time you do it will be one strike*
- Interviewer *Right ok*
- Moria *But you've got for you to get your strike you've got to be not just like sir you've got to SIR WHAT ARE YOU DOING LIKE COME ON [loud] to get or something like*
- Interviewer *That's an example of what kind of behaviour wouldn't be acceptable*
- Moria *Wouldn't be acceptable that's what will get you a strike*
- Interviewer *Right now Mr. K then um you said you your voice is very warm when you talk about his teaching style*
- Moria *Yeh*
- Interviewer *So he's got these consequences you think he is fair you said what else about his do you behave better for Mr. K class than other peoples or what*
- Moria *IIII actually think I do I pretty good at language like I behave myself straight in language I do call out a bit because Miss A gets a bit on my nerves too and so does Mr. K sometimes but everyone gets on each others nerves sometimes now and again*
- Interviewer *Right and*
- Moria *And especially if someones a teacher like*
- Interviewer *Right ok lets take bits of that what is getting on your nerves what gets on your nerves*
- Moria *Oh just like*
- Interviewer *What do they do*
- Moria *They never listen to ya like you know Moria um you try to ask a question like they take stuff off you like um today I was in language and I was I had to fix up this part in my ..... it had to be handed in right then and I was like wait there Miss just fixing this thing up because it came un..... it didn't work properly and I'm like Miss and she just snatches it like well if I lose marks its your fault you should have just let me finish the thing I was doing would have only taken two seconds*
- Interviewer *Right when should you have done that work though?*
- Moria *Yeh I done it at home and my friends saved it on a disc and brought it into school but then like the printer and the bell rang and I had to go to first class and that's my first class and ..... Miss I've just got to do this letter and then its done cause like you know how you've got like 1 2 3 like*
- Interviewer *Yes*
- Moria *Well one of them went 3 3 4 it should have gone 3 4 5 so I just quickly just like liquid papered it out waited for it to dry and I'll be there in a few*
- Interviewer *It was language homework was due*
- Moria *Assignment*
- Interviewer *An assignment ok*
- Moria *I think that's gunna make me lose marks if its 3 3 4 you know*
- Interviewer *Ok so you were frustrated about that what other things what does Mr Kdo that gets on you nerves*
- Moria *Oh like he doesn't really gets on my nerves just sometimes like I love English but sometimes it gets a bit boring like something else we've been doing poems for like the last like decade like about the same thing like so get something else so like but then you think oh they're actually quite fun or sometimes your like poems you know*

- Interviewer *like rhyming and stuff like lets do something else*  
 Interviewer *Um ok now with that we're going to go off with that in a moment but with that getting on your nerves things when you get angry and you get frustrated um why do are you calling out to get attention*
- Moria *Yeh I think that's a problem*  
 Interviewer *You want attention from whom*  
 Moria *The teacher because like I've got a good question I'm like Miss Miss and like I want to get their attention so I can answer the question*  
 Interviewer *You feel left out*  
 Moria *Yeh like yeh like there's sometimes like where some people get sent out the front of class to read a book oh can I go out as well sir Miss or Sir like there are some people that get on my nerves too then he'll go no or she'll go no that's like a no*  
 Interviewer *And why is it no*  
 Moria *I don't know its like it's always when I ask always say no*  
 Interviewer *So could it be because could it be because of the behaviour you've been doing so they don't think they can trust you*  
 Moria *They can trust me*  
 Interviewer *Right*  
 Moria *Like I I get to basically all the teachers but like some just like you know like here I'm here I want your attention everyone else is getting the attention but me like and like when I get like*  
 Interviewer *There is 30 kids in the class are they really getting the attention Moria or is it you are thinking they are getting all the attention*  
 Moria *I I I just don't know its just like*  
 Interviewer *Alright*  
 Moria *Its in my head*  
 Interviewer *Its in your head that's how you see it*  
 Moria *Yeh I don't know how to say it but like just like I think I'm the badest person on earth like what have I done to deserve it but then I think there is other people that feel exactly the same but I don't see that it my head they feel the same but I think that its just me I think well you know like*  
 Interviewer *Ok*  
 Moria *I think its just me*  
 Interviewer *Right we've got to continue this one next interview*  
 Moria *Yeh*  
 Interviewer *What I'd like you to think about and write about in your learning log reflect on what we have been talking about the other thing is when you call out and that do you think about what is going on or around you at all regarding other students rights in the room and how the teachers feel how the teacher feels with 30 kids and that sort of thing can you write about that and that's what we'll talk about next lesson*  
 Moria *Yep*  
 Interviewer *Alright good*  
 Moria *Thank you*

**Inter view: Roger**

Teacher: Mr V

- Interviewer *Let's talk about subjects at highschool.. So you like going to different subjects and different teachers. Terrific. Now your favourite subject in high school*
- Roger *Um um um can I list three*  
 Interviewer *Yeh*  
 Roger *Music, Visual Arts and Science*  
 Interviewer *Your favourite subjects can you say them again for me*  
 Roger *Yep music, visual arts and science*

- Interviewer *And why do you like those*
- Roger *Cause I like music and visual arts is fun cause you get to draw stuff*
- Interviewer *Uh um*
- Roger *Um science because we get to do a lot of experiments*
- Interviewer *Ok terrific. What is the subject you least like*
- Roger *PE*
- Interviewer *Why is that*
- Roger *When its really hot you have to go running*
- Interviewer *Right what do you think of English*
- Roger *Its alright*
- Interviewer *Ok its alright lets go from there what do you think English is if you have to define it tell somebody from another country what English is about what would you say?*
- Roger *Grammar and reading*
- Interviewer *What's grammar*
- Roger *Like punctuation and stuff*
- Interviewer *Is that all you do in class you just do grammar and reading*
- Roger *We also do some autobiography and stuff we do booklets and [mumble] in our journal*
- Interviewer *Pencil writing journal and you did [sheets] what kind of activities did you do in your autobiography? Did you do any computing or drawing or anything?*
- Roger *In the booklets we had to do these booklets and did most of it on computer.*
- Interviewer *Terrific what sort of things did you have to in your autobiography?*
- Roger *Title page, [mumble] and stuff*
- Interviewer *Did you do timelines or anything or line life*
- Roger *Don't know*
- Interviewer *Did you do that term one? What did you term 2?*
- Roger *We read Harry Potter. Write imaginary stories about journalism we are about to watch a movie*
- Interviewer *Your going to do a full [mumble] too. So all things you've done do you think they would understand English if you started of saying it is grammar and reading do you see how all those other things are very different from just reading and grammar in English. But you think first of all grammar and reading why is that.*
- Roger *Cause they are usually what English is about*
- Interviewer *Who told you that*
- Roger *I just know it*
- Interviewer *Jjust from primary school or high school?*
- Roger *Primary school*
- Interviewer *Good you're a terrific subject you know you're doing wonderfully. Are you still comfortable talking what is the best lesson you can remember in English is what we are going to talk about next time and the worst English lesson we're going to talk about but we're not going to talk about that yet so we're going to think about that. So its your worst and best English lesson the other thing I would like to talk about is a little question and its this with your favourite subject how much does the teacher count.*
- Roger *Heaps*

- Interviewer *Why is that? Talk about that*
- Roger *Because they're good teachers*
- Interviewer *What makes them good teachers*
- Roger *They do good stuff*
- Interviewer *What's good stuff?*
- Roger *A lot of free drawing and let us do heaps of experiments*
- Interviewer *And are you interested in music and drawing outside of school*
- Roger *Yes*
- Interviewer *Does that mean you're more likely to like that subject do you think?*
- Roger *Yeh*
- Interviewer *What do you. If you had to choose a subject and it was between say music or art and a teacher you didn't think was so good or a good teacher say in a different subject which would you choose? Should I do that one again. If you have a subject you know how you choose your electives or you could choose any subject if it was a choice between a subject that you really liked but with a teacher you liked less or thought was not as good as another one or a really good teacher that you like and that subject you didn't like as much. Which would you choose?*
- Roger *The teacher I like*
- Interviewer *You would, would you*
- Roger *Yep*
- Interviewer *Why was that?*
- Roger *Cause it would be better I would like the subject better*
- Interviewer *So at the moment you have teachers you like in your favourite subjects that's terrific. Now what did we say we would talk about*
- Rogerf *Good and bad memories of English*
- Interviewer *Good and bad memories of English. Is that the time already.*
- Interview: Fred**
- Interviewer *I'm with Fred and we are just talking about subjects we like and don't like what about history itself the actual content of it*
- Fred *Well some of the stuff is really interesting but most of the stuff we've been taught before like because we've had all different teachers and we've been taught the same thing but in different ways*
- Interviewer *Oh right so the same topic what topics that*
- Fred *We are doing ancient Egypt*
- Interviewer *Egypt Which is a fantastic thing I liked it when ..... I used to drama with it which was a bit radical alright lets go to lets think about this I'll say it twice because it's a bit might sound confusing. If you have a choice between your favourite subject and a teacher you didn't think was so good and a subject that you didn't like as much say History with a good teacher that you really liked which would you choose? If you got to choose.*
- Fred *The subject I didn't like most with a good teacher*
- Interviewer *Ok and why is that*
- Fred *If I like to subject but didn't have a good teacher I wouldn't really learn much and it would kind of like ruin the subject for me*
- Interviewer *Ok*
- Fred *Were if I didn't like the subject and I had a good teacher I could try with the*

- subject try to make it better and look forward to the subject*
- Interviewer *Ok and we'll come back to that in a couple of times too. Ohhh ok English what was English to you in primary school? How would you define English in primary school?*
- Fred *Um*
- Interviewer *What things did you do in English?*
- Fred *Most of the time we did comprehension*
- Interviewer *Comprehension*
- Fred *Reading stories and answering questions*
- Interviewer *And did you see films, listening games, drama*
- Fred *Not really sometimes we did a bit of acting and sometimes we did spelling*
- Interviewer *Right and what about writing what kind of writing did you do*
- Fred *Um*
- Interviewer *Did you do poems*
- Fred *We got to do everything we got to do narratives, reports, recounts anything free choice*
- Interviewer *And what did you think of English in primary school?*
- Fred *I thought it was fun*
- Interviewer *And what did you like about it?*
- Fred *Basically everything, the reading was good too I like writing stories and reading*
- Interviewer *So that works well for you*
- Fred *Yep*
- Interviewer *Now go to high school um we're trailing a new syllabus at the moment which you know about that's why I'm doing this research for. Are there any differences in English in primary and English in high school?*
- Fred *High schools got the ..... buddy which I like now and um the novels which is good normally we wouldn't go to they library and pick up that book*
- Interviewer *Right so you do wide reading and stuff*
- Fred *Yep*
- Fred *Improve our reading and um well the teachers really nice as well*
- Interviewer *Ok whats nice about him*
- Fred *Well um*
- Interviewer *Or her whats nice about your teacher?*
- Fred *Um she's caring*
- Interviewer *What way is she caring?*
- Fred *Well she helps out if you don't like that sort of thing she'll make it so you like it. She makes it interesting and*
- Interviewer *And how does she do that? Does she offer alternative books*
- Fred *Yep*
- Interviewer *Or alternative tasks um as a said we'll go round the whole idea of these interviews is you take it were you want to and I just ask you these are just guides. So the um we'll talk about the contract system a little bit later on but um so in*

- high school do you like you like the different subjects and teachers don't you
- Fred *Yeh*
- Interviewer *And you like English because your teachers caring and she will change what you are doing to suit you do you see lots of evidence not just for you but for other kids does she do it for everybody*
- Fred *Yeh*
- Interviewer *Lets talk about the contract system what do you think about that do you understand it or*
- Fred *I like it so much better because its not boring subjects its got the film side is Harry Potter*
- Interviewer *Um um*
- Fred *They've really stepped up the level with like the kids and their interests most kids like Harry Potter*
- Interviewer *So you like the content of it and contract what does it mean to have a contract.*
- Fred *Well its good so you can plan for the stuff that's coming up cause we might have a speech that you have to write and you can start it and ...*
- Interviewer *So what do you see as a contract? So if you had to explain a contract to a kid coming to Jamison High on the first day in Year 7 they sat next to you and had to talk about contracts what would you say?*
- Fred *Well its got all different stuff that we have to do in a term and its got dates when its due and that explains it its about stuff that we do in class*
- Interviewer *Do you know it's an agreement between you and the teacher and therefore it can be changed and if you sign it it has to be that's the way its supposed occur do you understand that or is that not clear*
- Fred *What do you mean*
- Interviewer *Well a contract is an agreement between two people in this case the teacher, the pupil and the parents so do you understand that that's the idea behind a contract when you get the parents to sign the purposes one of them is to see that. You do understand*
- Fred *Yep*
- Interviewer *Do other kids understand that?*
- Fred *I think so*
- Interview:**  
**John**  
**Howard**
- Interviewer *Alright. Good. Now. Anything else about your teachers attitude that makes you like English?*
- John *Um they just like basically makes you want to go to the classes because they have fun things planned*
- Interviewer *Ok and um have you got any questions about English that you don't understand?*
- John *Not really its pretty straight forward*
- Interviewer *Straight forward so you understand it all?*
- John *Yep*
- Interviewer *You could be a teacher when I went to school I had great difficulty[laughter] um what topics did you do then this year so far?*
- John *What in English?*

- Interviewer *Mm*
- John *Or well we've done Boy autobiography which was really good*
- Interviewer *So you read autobiography The Boy which was about how Boy does life and you did your own autobiography*
- John *That was fun because like we got in touch with ourselves and stuff that we didn't really tell other people but we got to express it in a booklet*
- Interviewer *Right and what kind of activities did you do in the booklet*
- John *Well we talked about our childhood and what we did in childhood compared to the future and what we do now why it was different from before*
- Interviewer *And how did you present it*
- John *Well I did most of it on the computer*
- Interviewer *Did you like that?*
- Fred *Yep*
- Interviewer *Why*
- Fred *On computer? Well I its just better because my handwriting my hand gets sore when I write*
- Interviewer *Mine looks pretty dogs sprawl*
- John *[laughter]*
- Interviewer *Ok and you're doing Harry Potter film study now*
- John *Yep*
- Interviewer *And with that Harry Potter film study you're also doing reading and things like that*
- John *Yep*
- Interviewer *Terrific. I'll get a copy of those contracts. Um I'm just looking to see if I had to do something else. How would you define English in high school?*
- John *We read and write and do journal and it teachers you things*
- Interviewer *Such as...*
- John *How to understand other people and to do things you have to do in other subjects*
- Interviewer *Yep*
- John *We read lots of things and do stuff like posters and mystery boxes.*
- Interviewer *Speeches and reading what else do you do*
- John *Um well sometimes we do group work on the contract thing we've got to do group work*
- Interviewer *Yep*
- John *Um*
- Interviewer *Is that important to do group work*
- John *Yep yep*
- Interviewer *Why*
- John *You get sort of like to really know the people around you and the stuff that they like as well as you like learn about them*
- Interviewer *Right so do the kids in groups muck about*
- John *Not really*
- Interviewer *Ok so you think it's a good way to learn. Do you do group work in all your subjects?*
- John *Um pretty much*

Interviewer *That's good ok I think that's it today Fred. Thank you very much*

**Interview: Bob**

- Interviewer: Do you think you are smart?]
- Bob I'm not smart' [How do you know?]'cause um I can't spell and um.
- Interviewer What's your favourite subject?
- Bob Visual arts and drawing pictures.
- Interviewer What's a good teacher? How do they help you learn?
- Bob Um someone who teacher um someone a teacher who listens and um knows what they're talking about.
- Interviewer What about discipline?
- Bob aw not too strict, not too light. Not like lets you get away with everything and not strict either.
- Interviewer Can you describe a good lesson you have had?
- Bob Art. I was learning how to draw it and then she got us to write down notes an [indistinguishable]. She showed us how to draw it on the board. [wouldn't have changed it]
- Interviewer What's a lesson you have hated lately?
- Bob Language...um the learning having to like um learn a different language um I don't like it. I don't like the teacher, she's as strict as...Don't like what I do in French and I don't like the way she teaches. Like um a specific word she doesn't tell us we're gonna learn it she just teachers us. She keeps me in, she yells, and he doesn't let you do anything except work [writing]
- Interviewer What suggestions would you give the teacher to be better?
- Bob Don't be so strict and don't do stuff that's too hard.

**Interview: Steve**

- Interviewer What happens when you are in trouble?
- Steve Mrs S she tells us like [sigh] how like putting in form and doing scab duty and stuff.
- Interviewer What do you do to get into trouble?
- Steve Nothing much, just the same as everyone else. I talk, well I talk after I finish my work. She gives us work straight away when we finish and we don't get a break .
- Interviewer What do you think of the Subject English?
- Steve Um ah um don't care really, um I like it or bits of it like watching films and making the booklets (me, myself, I), and doing drama. I love drama. I used to like making up stories but I don't do it now 'cause I can't think of anything. I don't like writing a lot.
- Interviewer [are you smart?] "I'm not smart' [How do you know?] "'cause um I can't spell and um"

### Sample Discussion groups between student Participants

*Students were asked to talk amongst themselves on a range of topics deriving from their initial interviews and learning log entries. I began by asking them to think about how they behave and why they do or don't.*

Twitch	I get into trouble in English and in the rest of the school but I get my work done quickly. I sort of get bored. I want to talk to my friends. I like to see them and ...
XXX	Really talkative, talked a lot, seemed to get into trouble a lot.
Leyla	I did what I got told to do, I just did it. In trouble in Year 8 because when I'm finished people talk to me and I get into trouble. I don't see any point
Fred	Last year really quiet and do my work and just sit there. I'm a bit more loud and talkative. Depends on my friends (adjusts to friends)
Interviewer	Do you behave well or not because of peer / mates?
Twitch	I'm good in history sometimes because I'm with smart people and I don't have anyone to muck about with. But work can be boring.
Roger/XXX	Yeah, doin' work all day is boring"
Fred	I always do my work and listen to the teacher. I don't want much attention.
Fred	I sit in different places. I shut them out.
Twitch	It's me the teacher blames but it's T_____ and S_____ who are the nuisances and do the trouble making). They irritating voices.
Roger	I get isolation if I'm in trouble. I'm not proud of it. I'm not proud of being loud and stuff its just fun. But the teacher sent out for muckin' 'round with Twitch.
Fred	It's not the right thing to do when you're in class, to muck around I mean. It's not nice and I get embarrassed for the teacher. It's not fair on them..
Biance	II research what moods different teachers are in and I watch their and tempers and if I'm not rude I test the limits now and again. It's an activity.
Twitch	Teachers have different personalities Mr K is mad. He's great.
Fred	Sometimes muck up be`ause teachers aren't strict. Mrs C (once a week year 7) – very strict compared to Mr C. "let more things go" (eg behaviour) "Class went out of control" [class discipline)
Fred	I like Mrs C. You really can understand what she's talking about. She's good to talk to them!" XXX
McKayla	A good teacher, like Mr V doesn't always "go off" at you for not completing work. They yell every now and again but they know their subject area
Nick	I feel I can talk to Mr V .
Leyla	Mrs C, she's okay mm just the way she acts and teachers [pause] like when someone in trouble she sticks with it. She doesn't investigate when you say you didn't do it or you did it for a reason she just goes off.

- Leyla Mrs C can be good like when she's teaching English and she makes it fun but teachers are too serious about getting work done.
- Steve When they [teachers] are in a good mood and they who actually spend time just doing somethings like drama.
- Interviewer Can you talk more about what makes a good teacher?
- Leyla They have good communications skills (general nodding and agreement).
- Twitch And a sense of humour.
- Fred They know their subject and their kids. They know how to teach and they make learning fun (shouts of agreement).
- Interviewer Can you describe a bad teacher?
- Steve They yell and scream (Mike nods vigorously) and go on and on. Bad teachers pick on you.
- Leyla And they have favourites.
- Roger They use textbooks and the stuff they teach is boring.
- Isabel I haven't had a bad teacher. They are nice to me and do their job (Kareena nods in agreement and so does Fred). Kids just aren't good.
- Interviewer Can you talk about how you have behaved in English in school now and in the past, maybe last year?
- Twitch I was in trouble in English in school, but in class normally when I get my work done quickly I got bored
- XXX I was really talkative, talked a lot, seemed to get into trouble a lot
- Leyla I did what I got told to do, I just did it In trouble in Year 8 because when I'm finished people talk to me and I get into trouble. I don't see any point."
- Fred Last year really quiet and do my work and just sit there." "I'm a bit more loud and talkative. Depends on my friends (adjusts to friends)
- Do you behave well or not because of peer / mates?
- XXX I'm good sometimes but in history my friends disagree a lot and niggles and egg me on so I show off and tease and Twitch makes me laugh and he stirs a lot of people up. Twitch teases Matt "Doing work all day is boring"
- Kareena I always do my work and listen to the teacher. I don't want much attention.
- Leyla I talk and so do others so I get into trouble. It's unfair. And the teacher tells me to be quiet. It's annoying"
- Steve I sit quietly and try to shut the noise out but it's hard and annoying.
- Steve It's me, and some others who muck about the teacher says we're a nuisance, and that we make trouble. She also says I'm bright.
- Matt I'm not proud of being loud and stuff but its just fun.
- Bianca It's not the right thing to do when your in class." "I research what moods different and tempers and that way I know how to behave and my limits. Now and again I push the limits too much but it's a game.. It's an activity.
- Interviewer What else can you say about Teachers?
- Nick Teachers have different personalities

- Kareena My teacher's great. She's nice, really nice and kind and she cares ya know.
- McKayla Once we had a different teacher from Mrs C once a week who was not very strict compared to Mr C. He let more things go and the class went out of control. He was okay but he didn't seem to count
- Bob Mine's good. You really can understand what she's talking about. She's good to talk to them!" She answers your questions and really helps.
- XXX Mrs C "she's a good enough teacher, she doesn't always "go off" at you for not completing work "Does yell every now and again" Knows her subject area "Depends on how the class is. She'll build up for an hour and let it out
- Boys "I feel I can talk to her." "Some things she thinks isn't appropriate."
- Leyla "She's okay mm just the way she acts and teachers [pause] like when someone in trouble she sticks with it." (She doesn't investigate)
- Leyla When good teachers are teaching well they make it fun.
- All boys "When they are in a good mood + who actually spends time."  
It's the basically the class before that lesson if had that impacts on you or when you're sick as well.
- Steve Good always mix so and don't get to talking
- Leah Good teachers have good communication skills and can take a joke and have a laugh

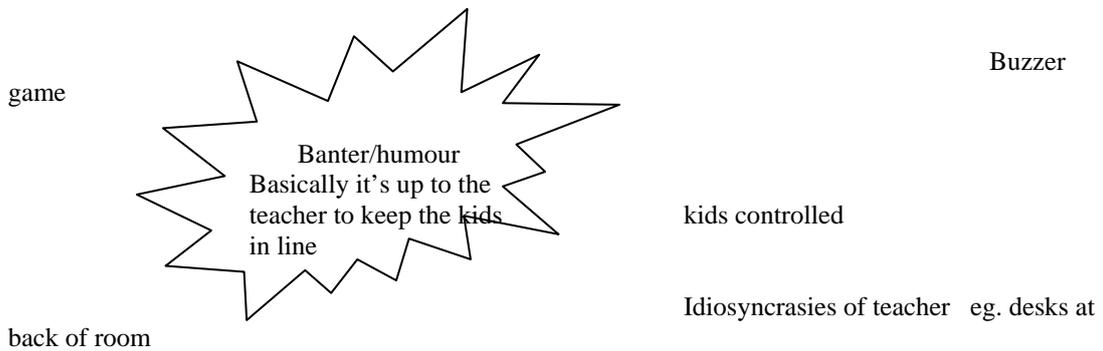
Appendix F

**Learning Log Samples**

**An extract from Kareena’s log:**

*My teacher...*

- knows field of study
- Interactive with students
- Wide range of activities
- Good natured teacher
- Doesn’t overload with homework but gives us a “good” amount
- She tells students to aim for something / a goal by the end of the year
- Makes the work interesting - topic – thinking games – variety of activities
- Don’t do the Maths stuff over long periods [move new topics except assignments]
- Don’t be too strict, firm but fair (humour) [he threatens to explode]
- Teacher cares
- Take note of personality – books ..... – feels secure – dialogue – student / opinions – tells them
- “cool group” science I am puzzled why they are there ...they annoying why don’t they go to another school or do something else?



- |                     |
|---------------------|
| Mrs C               |
| Nice                |
| Helped at lunch     |
| Helped with problem |
| Youngest teacher    |
| New topic           |
| Sense of humour     |

Shouts but not at me Favourite

An extract from Moria Sack's log that she entered after being upset at being placed on a behavioural book:

*All I want in life is to go GOOD!*

*I love learning and I am interesting person I love all subjects but I have somethink for English is it fun and I just love it. In my subject[s] (all except Eng, Sci, Language) [that] I don't like the teachers don't like me, but I don't not like them because I don't like the subject it is that they don't like me. So I don't like them. I would like to talk to you [researcher] about me approving (improving) my behaviour. Can you make me a better person I now (know) I am good and a good person but please make me better (someone please). When I was on my blue book[behaviour book] I felt angry at myself and I hated myself because I knew all the teacher has none and I felt the badest person every (ever) seen there (school) and I knew I wasn't but I felt like that and I knew I had to be the best thing on the blue book and I knew I had done it to myself.*

**An extract from Mike's log:**

How do they feel in subjects you don't like?

**It feels like**

Anxious  
Nervous

Angry  
Rejected  
Disliked  
Ignored

**It looks Like...**

shy / clumsy / hard to engage  
quiet uncomfortable  
unconfident  
distracted  
arranged  
silly  
restless

**An extract from McKayla's log:**

*Good teachers like to have fun with the class and they try and make work interesting and they try and ask us what we want to do. They don't set heaps of homework and you can talk to them. They seem to enjoy their job and they really get excited about it in their own ways. They know their stuff, like how to write a story and things like that. They don't take their bad moods out on the class and they give you a chance to explain. They're strict but fair. Teachers who are good don't just tell you to look at the textbook and when you don't understand they explain things. They're patient. They have firm discipline and they know what they are doing.*

**Extract from John Howard's Log:**

*Good teachers like Mr K encourage people to learn and they let us do fun things in English like free choice journal and reading cool books. He helps people to learn by explaining things on the board. Good teachers notice when you do things well and give you merits. I like teachers like Mr K who are laid back, relaxed and like to teach. My idea of a perfect teacher is who is nice and close with the students and makes learning fun and easy.*

**Extract from Isabel's Log**

*I do not understand why people cannot get along with others. Why do kids have to be unkind to the teacher and to me. I keep to myself and am kind. I try hard to be nice to everyone but kids like Mike, Steve and Leyla [pseudonym for real names] are loud and don't want to learn at school. They just want to talk and to upset the teacher or take up class time. No matter what we do, even when we are doing things that I find hard like speaking and drama because I am shy, they are loud and want everyone to look at them. They make me unhappy.*

**Extract from Twitch's Log**

*Yr 8*

Pseudonym Twich

Mum and dad split up. I live with mum and sister. I still see my dad

Dad: Waterproofing (construction sites) (Wales)

Mum: Hairdresser (Irish)

Middle class: Leaving in Year 10

Hobbies: Boxing, moto riding, waterskiing

Funny, nice – out and about

Middle – classroom – middle – academically

Lot better in Year 8. Heaps of fights in Year 7, green.

Trouble in primary (Year 1) got blamed for something I didn't do.

Aggressive behaviour

I'm calmer now

I'm sick of getting into trouble

**Extract from Bob's Log**

*Year 8*

Pseudonym Bob

My mum and I have 2 sisters who don't live with me. Australian

Works in warehouse

Middle class

Hobbies: Playing guitar, music and rugby league

Out and about

Funny, speaks mind, sporty, jumpy, fun

Probably most of it in classroom

Goals: HSC Year 11 & 12, University, Guitarist in a band

**Extract from Leyla's Log***Year 8*

I have a mother (stepmother) and father. 2 brothers. They younger one is 18 months the older one is 16 years old. I also have a sister she is 12. my mother is a scientist. She works with minerals. My dad works at ACI a glass management. My dad is Turkish and my step mum is English.

(Fake ID)

Middle class

Hobbies: Playing netball and I sometimes play the keyboard.

Description: I do not have a sense of humour. As a person I am nice to my friends, but people who I do not know I just be kind to. In class discussions I am silent. I am shy (sometimes) around people I do not know. I am in the high maths and science class. I am smart. When I speak in public I get nervous. I work to the best of my ability..My Goals: are to go to University, Study law.

## Appendix G

**HEARTBREAK HIGH ENGLISH FACULTY UNIT MAPPING OUTLINE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE FOR STAGE 4 AND STAGE 5: YEARS 7 TO 10 (**

YEAR 7	STAGE 4	FOCUS: ME, MYSELF AND I – NON-FICTION	UNIT 1												
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11</b>		<b>Modes: Reading, Speaking, Representing &amp; Listening</b>													
		<b>Term 1</b>													
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>		<b>Evidence of Learning</b>													
<p><b>Listening:</b> Listening games/exercises, discussion, question/answer, reflection, analysis, aural comprehension.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Voice exercises, speeches, mystery box, show and tell, drama/collaboration games, debating.</p> <p><b>Reading: Wide reading</b> (auto/biography&amp; non fiction) Picture books. <b>Close Reading:</b> ELLA preparation &amp; : <u>MyRead – Home</u> (<a href="http://www.myread.org/">http://www.myread.org/</a>), activities.</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Journal (set including letter, factual texts, such as, procedure/instructions &amp; free choice), autobiography/biography, text types (focus on narrative &amp; recount).</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> autobiography/biography media/multi media.</p> <p><b>Representing: Exhibition piece/s on biography/autobiography (eg. prose/research/photostory, powerpoint, mystery box, etc), e-mail, text message, tables.</b></p>		<p><b>Exhibition Task #1 Speaking, Representing &amp; Listening Task.</b> <b>Class talk with representation &amp; listening marking sheet.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal.</li> <li>Collaboration/engagement diagnostic profile.</li> <li>Literacy observations.</li> <li>Extended autobiography/biography Composition.</li> </ul>													
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b> <b>ICT:</b> <u>MyRead – Home</u> (<a href="http://www.myread.org/">http://www.myread.org/</a>), <a href="http://www.myread.org/guide_guided.htm">http://www.myread.org/guide_guided.htm</a>) visual literacy CDROM, internet sites. <b>Booklets:</b> Drama Exercises / Text types &amp; scaffolds. <b>ELLA</b> tests/support material. <b>Prof. Library/Film/DVD/Video:</b> <i>Lionheart, Australian Story, Stolen Generation.</i></p>		<p><b>Quality Teaching</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Intellectual Quality</th> <th>Quality Learning Environment</th> <th>Significance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Deep knowledge Deep understanding Problematic Knowledge Higher order thinking</td> <td>Explicit quality criteria.  Engagement. High Expectations. Social Support.</td> <td>Background knowledge.  Cultural knowledge.  Inclusivity. Connectedness.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Metalanguage</td> <td>Students' self regulation.</td> <td>Narrative.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Substantive - Communication.</td> <td>Student Direction.</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Intellectual Quality	Quality Learning Environment	Significance	Deep knowledge Deep understanding Problematic Knowledge Higher order thinking	Explicit quality criteria.  Engagement. High Expectations. Social Support.	Background knowledge.  Cultural knowledge.  Inclusivity. Connectedness.	Metalanguage	Students' self regulation.	Narrative.	Substantive - Communication.	Student Direction.	
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Metalanguage	Students' self regulation.	Narrative.													
Substantive - Communication.	Student Direction.														
		<b>Feedback</b>													
		<p>Teacher, self &amp; peer - oral &amp; written.</p> <p>Teacher (written)</p> <p>Teacher/ peer (oral/written)</p> <p>Teacher/STLA</p> <p>Teacher -oral written/Display/publishing.</p>													
		<b>Cross Curriculum</b>													
		<p><b>Literacy:</b> Research, writing, ICT: wordprocessing, internet research.</p> <p><b>Key competencies.</b> <b>Difference&amp;Diversity.</b></p>													

<b>YEAR 7</b>	<b>STAGE 4</b>	<b>FOCUS: Gee-whiz Genre! Adventure/ Western/Outback/Animation</b>	<b>UNIT 2</b>
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</b>		<b>Modes: Reading, Writing, Fiction and Visual Literacy</b>	<b>Term 2</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>		<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Audio text/s, Listening games/exercises, Listening test, discussion, question/answer, reflection, analysis, aural comprehension.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Voice exercises drama/collaboration games.</p> <p><b>Reading: Wide reading</b> related to genre, Premier’s Reading challenge, teacher reading, peer reading and audio-texts.</p> <p><b>Close Reading: Reader’s journal: MyRead – Home</b> (<a href="http://www.myread.org/">http://www.myread.org/</a>) activities.</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Journal (set &amp; free choice), extended response/composition, literary text types, spontaneous sensory monologue, Being Something else, Predictions.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> media/multi media (viewing grammar &amp; test techniques)</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Visual (eg. mindmap, storyboard, timeline).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning logs</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task #2 Reader’s Response/Journal &amp; visual representation based on Premier’s Reading Challenge/Australian Texts</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task #3 Language Half Yearly Examination</b></p>	<p>Teacher/ Peer/Self oral/written</p> <p>Teacher – oral/written</p> <p>Teacher/Self/peer – oral/written</p> <p>Display.</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT:</b> (<a href="http://www.myread.org/">www.myread.org</a>), visual literacy CDROM, internet sites,</p> <p><b>Booklets:</b> Drama Exercises / Literary Text types &amp; scaffolds.</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b> Genre, film, multimedia, units.</p> <p><b>Film/DVD/Video/Multi Media:</b> <i>Babe, The Princess Bride, Harry Potter, Charlotte’s Web, Unfortunate Events, The Little Princess, Toy Story, Monster’s Inc, Chicken Run, The Man From Snowy River, Homeward Bound, Matilda, James &amp; the Giant Peach, Nemo, Spirited Away, Howls Moving Castle &amp; its sequel Castle in the Air, The Iron Giant.</i></p>		<p><b>Quality Teaching Professional Hint:</b></p> <p><b>Group/Classroom NORMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adopt a sense of responsibility for the group.</i></li> <li>• <i>Attend to others &amp; listen.</i></li> <li>• <i>Co-operate in good faith.</i></li> <li>• <i>Aim for a consensus in decision making.</i></li> <li>• <i>Confront problems respectfully.</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow &amp; give NO putdowns.</i></li> <li>• <i>Accept where others are at.</i></li> <li>• <i>Suspend judgements.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Literacy:</b> cultural, oral/aural, ICT.</li> <li>• <b>ICT:</b> wordprocessing &amp; site search.</li> <li>• <b>Key competencies.</b></li> <li>• <b>Multicultural.</b></li> </ul>

YEAR 7 STAGE 4	FOCUS: Personal Poetry to Hilarious Haiku	UNIT 3
<b>OUTCOMES: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11</b>	<b>Modes: poetic forms from different times and places.</b>	<b>Term 3</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment:</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Dramatic readings, website audio, audio cassette/CD, performance poets, interviews of poets, music, sound effects, critics/commentaries.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> dramatic readings, performance poetry, reader's theatre, chorus &amp; percussion, singing, improvisation, hot seat.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide reading of poetic styles from different times &amp; cultures (Shape, haiku, ballad, limerick, sonnet, epic, song, performance, epitaphs, acrostics, lyric, couplet, narrative).</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Journal (including sensory/ mental imaging, photostory), poetry guided analysis, grammar/vocabulary, own anthology.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Interviews with poets, critics, images (eg. photographs, pictures, clip art, film clips, landscapes, paintings), others' compositions and responses.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> use images to visualise poetic techniques (eg sketch narrative), postcards/ frozen moments/montage, special effects tape, put poem to music, rewrite a poem in another format, newspaper critic review.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Anthology of own poetry compositions (5) plus a critical analysis response.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to readings.</li> <li>• Performance poetry/Dramatic performance/powerpoint performance</li> <li>• Reading comprehension/learning log about poetry.</li> </ul>	<p>Self, peer, teacher oral &amp; written.</p> <p>Peer/Teacher oral &amp; listening.</p> <p>Peer/Self oral &amp; listening</p> <p>Teacher – written</p> <p>Peer/Teacher – written.</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT:</b> ETA CDROMs, metaphor, units (eg. Poetry Power by Lynn Marsh, (<a href="http://chesterhillhighschool.net.au">http://chesterhillhighschool.net.au</a> )</p> <p><b>Faculty Support Booklet:</b> <i>Poetry for All</i> (30 copies).</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b> recommend- <i>Ken Watson's' (ed), enjoying Poetry, Enjoying More Poetry, Excel 7-8 Poetry Guide.</i></p> <p><b>Film/DVD/Video:</b> Library video interviews with poets.</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Professional Hints:</b></p> <p><b>The Final Word:</b></p> <p><i>Purpose: to explore a text &amp; remain focussed &amp; at the same time build on one another's thinking.</i></p> <p><i>(see Quality Teaching support booklet for instructions).</i></p>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Literacy</b></p> <p><b>ICT:</b> clip art, images/text wrapping, formatting &amp; powerpoint.</p> <p><b>Multicultural</b></p> <p><b>Civics/Citizenship</b></p>

<b>YEAR 7 STAGE 4</b> Everyday & workplace texts, Popular/Youth Culture	<b>FOCUS: Speaking Out – Drama, Debating and Print Media.</b>	<b>UNIT 4</b>
<b>OUTCOMES: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11</b>	<b>Modes: Drama, Speaking, Listening</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Focussing/Relaxation/Concentration Drama exercises (eg. Stanislavski , Me You, Chinese Whispers, Theatre Sports, yoga/pilates breathing, listening games (eg. QT listening protocols, A to B), listening to performance feedback.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> dramatic readings, performance poetry, reader’s theatre, debating and voice exercises, singing, hot seat, improvisations, playbuilding, dramatic performance, role play, script auditions/readings.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide reading of material as the basis for dramatic works. Reading of reviews, playscripts, monologues, duologues, etc Wide reading from print media.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal (set must include a glossary &amp; learning log entries re: (a) elements of drama: eg. voice, language, symbol, mood, focus, etc) (b) Elements of Production, Director, dramaturge, actor, designers, audience, etc), Performance Styles/elements (eg. Greek, protest, Reader’s Theatre). Film grammar, viewing logs. Elements of print media.</b></p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Performances (real life and film – professional &amp; amateur), viewing of newspapers &amp; internet sites.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Drama log/process diary, newspaper reports, performances, collage, and video.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active engagement in drama activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 5 Performance (Monologue or Duologue / dramatic reading / extract / Reader’s Theatre Performance, debating). Listening notes.</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task #6 Yearly Examination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drama/learning log/Journal.</li> </ul>	<p>Self &amp; Peer written</p> <p>Peer/Teacher oral/written</p> <p>Self/Peer/Teacher – oral/written.</p> <p>Teacher - written</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/Media:</b> newspapers on line, print material, <i>Fine Line</i> series, <a href="http://ink.news.com.au">http://ink.news.com.au</a>)</p> <p><b>Faculty Support Booklet:</b> Drama texts, videos/film, excursions</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b>CDRom <i>Photography of media</i>, Drama Texts, Working With The Daily Telegraph (scaffolds, templates, etc)</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Professional Hint:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This unit is a wonderful opportunity to develop a quality learning environment that is supportive of student learning.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum Literacy:</b> Oral &amp; reading</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> research, word processing, websites</p> <p><b>Gender Work, Employment &amp; Enterprise.</b></p>

YEAR 8 STAGE 4	FOCUS: Fantastic Fiction!	UNIT 5
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11</b>	<b>Modes: Writing/ Reading/Picture books</b>	<b>Term 1</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> to Audio books, dramatic teacher readings, reading circles, film appropriations, radio renditions of fiction, etc.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Reading aloud excerpts, picture books, own responses and compositions to various audiences/contexts, reader's theatre</p> <p><b>Reading: Wide reading</b> (picture books, extract, short story, novella, prose, intertextual/postmodern texts), reviews, bookclubs, on-line forum, web quests. <b>Close Study – Fiction prose composer (author) &amp; text/s, ELLA practise.</b></p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Journal (including diary, eye witness memoir : Human Subject, Incident &amp; Phase, invented interior monologue). Genre, literary text type, Guided questions, point of view critical literacy, audience/s, structure, plot, personal response, analysis &amp; deconstruction. Extended composition.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Interviews, websites, bookcovers, appropriations, webquests, fan mail, author official websites, reviews, scaffolds, etc.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Reader's Theatre, Graphics, emails, letters, reading circle logs, extended composition, picture/comic captions, story board, back and front covers, DVD covers, talking books cover</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading log/diary one to be on powerpoint.</li> <li>• Journal</li> <li>• Discussion, dramatic readings in groups/responses</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 1 Book Cover</b></p>	<p>Self/Peer written &amp; Oral -Teacher</p> <p>Peer/Teacher written</p> <p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> Webquests, DVD games/PC games, Powerpoint wizard (publisher), units on – line samples.</p> <p><b>Faculty Support Booklet:</b> Literary Text Types/scaffold/model.</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b> Teaching Texts, Higher Order Thinking texts (see Hawker &amp; Brownlow texts especially), audiovisual library.</p> <p><b>Bookroom</b> –books, plays, picture books, aural tapes, units of work/Contracts professional support files, bookroom, online</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Professional Hint:</b></p> <p><b>Tuning Protocol ;</b> <b>Allows a multiplicity of voices to be heard &amp; active listening &amp; is an ideal strategy for building a quality learning environment &amp; inclusivity.</b> <i>(see Quality Teaching support booklet for instructions).</i></p>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Literacy:</b> Reading/Writing <b>ICT:</b> webquests, internet, CDRom games, interactive games on computer, etc <b>Aboriginal &amp; Indigenous Key Competencies.</b></p>



YEAR 8                      STAGE 4	FOCUS: Rad Radio & Thematic Poetry	UNIT 7
. <b>OUTCOMES: 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</b>	<b>Modes: Listening, Speaking, Writing</b>	<b>Term 3</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Wide listening to radio (community, commercial, national) and to all aspects, for example, music, news, quiz shows, radio – doco, reviews, commercials/jingles, talk back, news, interviews, jokes, dramatic role plays.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> voice activities emphasising: tone, pace, inflection, etc</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide reading including poetry on a theme &amp; non/factual radio texts.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (must include diary of listening, reporter at large, learning log/evaluation of unit). Interviews. Writing of poetry: sonnets, ballads etc.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Transcripts, scripts, documentaries, how radio works, visits, expert talks, websites of radio stations, polls, etc.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> (1) Visual representation/s to teach peers a deconstruction of an aspect of radio or a station, for example, flow chart, programme guide, poll, survey/research/ filming of performers and (2) Interview script/commentary. Compositions and deconstructions of sonnet, ballad, song &amp; other poetic forms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal</li> <li>• Listening diary/Reflection/learning log/discussions</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Scripted Interview for Radio.</b></p>	<p>Teacher - written</p> <p>Self/Peer written – oral/written.</p> <p>Teacher</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/Media:</b> Radio, internet, Podcasting eg: <b><u>ABC Online: Podcasting</u></b></p> <p><b>Faculty Support Booklet:</b> Radio</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b> Media teacher texts, listen excerpt tapes from radio, taperecorders, video/film hardware, sound effects tapes, units/contracts (see filing cabinet resources).</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Professional Hints:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A real audience for major exhibition pieces is invaluable in quality teaching, so creating a radio programme and presenting it to a target audience would be a terrific way of evidencing quality teaching, engaging students and ensuring intellectual quality, so why not give it a try?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Literacy:</b> oral/aural focus.</p> <p><b>Difference &amp; Diversity.</b></p> <p><b>Civics &amp; Citizenship.</b></p> <p><b>ICT:</b> Internet, word processing, publishing, Podcasting</p> <p><b>Work, Employment, Enterprise.</b></p> <p><b>Key Competencies.</b></p>

YEAR 8 STAGE 4	FOCUS: Comedic Cavorting	UNIT 8
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 11</b>	<b>Modes: Listening, Viewing, Writing</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Explicit teacher talk, jokes, extracts, media, multi media analysis, tableau, group discussions, class discussions, QT protocols.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> choral, dramatic readings, analysis, performance, parody, melodrama, satire &amp; tone oral exercises, improvisations.</p> <p><b>Reading: Wide reading</b> on theme of ‘comedy’. <b>Close Study of film/s and filmic technique &amp; revision of dramatic texts &amp; techniques. &amp; visual literacy.</b></p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Journal (including learning log and with a focus on correspondence). Sustained critical response. Sustained composing.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Wide range of comedic texts from different mediums including print, film, theatre, television, ICT and radio from different cultural perspectives.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Viewing logs, graphic representations/audiovisuals, acting for television, surveys/research, portfolio of humour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active listening class discussion/s &amp; question &amp; answer time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 5 Listening/Viewing Task based on comedic film.</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 6 Language Yearly Examination.</b></p>	<p>Self/Peer Oral -Teacher</p> <p>Teacher/s</p> <p>Teacher</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> <i>Shrek (1 &amp; 2), Ice Age (1 &amp; 2), Mr Bean, Madagasca, Round the Twist, Animea, Daria, Simpsons, ANTZ, A Bug’s Life, Emma ( Gweneth Paltrow), Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, Spaceballs, Big, Wrongfully Accused (Leslie Nielson), Mystery Men, Osmosis Jones, Shark Tale, Vicar of Dibley.</i></p> <p><b>Faculty Support Booklets:</b> Film, Drama, Poetry, Shakespeare.</p> <p><b>Professional Library:</b> Teaching Texts, video/film library</p> <p><b>Bookroom</b> –books, anthologies, aural tapes, units of work/Contracts professional support files – see on-line &amp; those in Junior bookroom, film &amp; video Faculty Library, documentaries on humour available from Library.</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Remember to try the <b>Quality Teaching protocols</b> which are especially effective for active engagement in listening (see support teacher QT booklet).</i></li> <li><i>Try <b>Socratic Dialogue</b> for higher order thinking skills and sophisticated oral synthesis (see workshop &amp; support notes)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Literacy:</b> Filmic/aural/ writing/comedic literacy.</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> Video camera, Internet, interactive software, word processing, websites.</p> <p><b>Work, Employment &amp; Enterprise.</b></p>

<b>YEAR 9</b>	<b>STAGE 5</b>	<b>FOCUS: Spotlight on Poetry &amp; Creative Writing</b>	<b>UNIT 9</b>
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 4, 11</b>		<b>Modes: Writing, Reading, Representing</b>	<b>Term 1</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>		<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> to Audio books, song/s, film clips, dramatic teacher readings, reading circles, film appropriations, video interviews &amp; critic forums,  <b>Speaking:</b> Reading/dramatic reading (individual, choral, etc), group &amp; class discussions, question/answer responses, oral reviews, speaking and voice activities, reading, class discussion, fishbowl discussions, hot seat, role play, impromptu talks, debates, speeches. <b>Reading: Close Study</b> of a poet/songwriter: close study of at least 3 poems/songs; research reading on the life of the composer; social, religious, political, economic context in which s/he lived/lives. Wide reading.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (Must include learning log &amp; speech graphic organisers &amp;/or drafts on: I feel Strongly About...(speech), My favourite song writer/poet...., Encyclopaedia); poetic terminology, short answer analysis. Creative writing (narrative, letter, diary, speech, pamphlet, script, other).</p> <p><b>Viewing / Representing</b> Biographical detail about the lives of poets /social contexts in which they lived</p>		<p><b>Exhibition Task # 1 Creative Writing based on poetic stimulus.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal</li> </ul>	<p>Teacher</p> <p>Peer/Teacher oral &amp; written.</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b>  <b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> Film, video, CD, Internet.  <b>Professional Library:</b> Teaching Texts on poetry/song, Biographies, teacher texts, student texts, Higher Order Thinking texts.  <b>Faculty Booklet:</b> Poetry  <b>Bookroom</b> – Various poets.</p>		<p><b>Quality Teaching</b>  <b>Substantive Conversation has:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Intellectual substance.</i></li> <li><i>Dialogue.</i></li> <li><i>Logical extension &amp; synthesis</i></li> <li><i>A sustained exchange.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b>  <b>Literacy:</b> Oral &amp;Aural.  <b>ICT:</b> Websites &amp; word processing &amp; publisher.  <b>Difference &amp; Diversity</b>  <b>Civics, Citizenship</b></p>

<b>YEAR 9</b>	<b>STAGE 5</b>	<b>FOCUS: Genuine Genre: War; Science Fiction; Action!</b>	<b>UNIT 12</b>
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11</b>		<b>Modes: Viewing, Listening, Speaking, Writing</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>		<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Games, exercises, Question/answer, A to B, retelling, story extension, to audio extracts, books, song/s, film clips, dramatic teacher readings, reading circles, film appropriations, video interviews &amp; critic forums, listening &amp;/or viewing tests.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Discussions, role play, oral: reviews, reading aloud from print media, small group discussions, explanations, recounts, narratives, jokes, commentary, reports, synopsis, interviews, etc.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide reading from the genre/s.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (Must include learning log &amp; fact &amp; opinion from media/multimedia sources, feature article, &amp;/or collage or photostory). Essay planning and essay writing. Text types(reviews, letters to editor, propaganda etc)</p> <p><b>Viewing :</b> Film, graphic organisers, print material, films by the same actor/director/genre.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Essay: mindmap, plan/s, draft/s published typed copy</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement, initiative, evidence of active listening and viewing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 5 Speech on Film</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 6 School Certificate-Style Examination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journal – checkpointing.</li> <li>Essay</li> </ul>	<p>Observation by teacher &amp; Self.</p> <p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> Websites on essay, models, video on how to write an essay.</p> <p><b>Faculty Booklet:</b> Faculty literary text type booklet &amp; essay plan Scaffolds, &amp; bookroom texts like : <i>Essay Clinic</i>.</p>		<p><b>Quality Teaching</b></p> <p><b>Metalanguage:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Are aspects of language/ grammar /technical vocabulary being foregrounded? Try the 1 to 5 self-reflection grid ( Q.T. document).</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum Literacy:</b> Written.</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> Websites/ word processing &amp; publisher.</p> <p><b>Work, Employment &amp; Everyday Texts.</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal &amp; Indigenous.</b></p>

YEAR 9 STAGE 5	FOCUS: Amazing Advertising	UNIT 11
<b>OUTCOMES: 3, 7, 9, 10, 11</b>	<b>Modes: Representing, Writing, Reading, Viewing.</b>	<b>Term 3</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Listening to a wide variety of advertisements/infomercials from various television stations including free to air, DVD/video, radio, Internet/SPAM, etc.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Discussions, role play, oral: reviews, reading aloud from print media, small group discussions, explanations, recounts, narratives, jokes, commentary, reports, synopsis, interviews, etc.</p> <p><b>Reading: Wide reading</b> from library, bookroom continues.  <b>Close reading:</b> print/visual media/multi media advertising  Eg. pamphlets, leaflet, posters, billboards, theatre programmes, 'junk mail'; deconstructions and articles about advertising.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (Must include learning log on advertising, survey &amp; program or leaflet or pamphlet or junk mail).</p> <p><b>Writing: Print media</b> articles, letters, comics, ads, classifieds, etc</p> <p><b>Viewing :</b> video/DVD critical analysis</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Composing of a piece of advertising and a visual (eg label/written) response highlighting salient features including: target audience, context, salience, language, icon, images, symbolism, vectors, modality, point of view, purpose, effectiveness, concept.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement, initiative, evidence of active listening and viewing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Viewing and Reading Task based on Advertising Genre. Composing of own print advertisement and analytical response.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal – checkpointing.</li> </ul>	<p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher – written/Peer – written.</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b>  <b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> <i>The Corporation</i>, Advertising: Coca Cola (Library).  <b>Faculty Booklet:</b> visual literacy student booklet.</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching</b>  <b>Connectedness Beyond the Classroom:</b>  <i>This unit provides a wonderful opportunity to explore this QT concept</i></p>	<p>Cross Curriculum  Literacy: visual and reading.  Gender. ITC websites</p>



YEAR 10                      STAGE 5	FOCUS: Critical Study Fiction/Non Fiction	UNIT 14
OUTCOMES: 1, 5, 10, 11	Modes: Reading, Writing, Viewing , Listening	Term 2
Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment	Evidence of Learning	Feedback
<p><b>This unit requires close study of text/s structure, language, style, themes/concepts, characterisation, positioning, alternate readings (dominant/variant), setting, context, values and is focussed on responding and composing.</b></p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> How to write a speech, voice exercises, impromptu talks.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide and Close reading from a range of literary and factual text types; silent reading, reading circles, dramatic readings.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (Must include learning log, diary/journal writing home – made encyclopaedia, dialogue converted to an essay). Writing – Creative writing exercises and sustained response.</p> <p><b>Composing including short story and essay planning</b> and essay writing, arguments for &amp; against,); variety of writings, past S/C papers. diary, letter, e-mail, texting.</p> <p><b>Viewing /Listening:</b> visual and written texts focus: graphics/images, comics, cartoons, extracts, song/poetry, review, interview, diary/journal, advertisement, factual texts, feature article, letters, editorials, scripts</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Speech cards and posters.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Task # 2 Half Yearly Examination Creative Writing</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 3 Speaking, Listening and Representing – Work-Place Texts</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Work samples including all modes (speaking, reading, writing, listening, viewing, representing).</b></p>	<p>Observation by teacher &amp; Self.</p> <p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> Websites on essay, models, video on how to write an essay, ELLA support, Edod, on-line tests.</p> <p><b>Faculty Booklet:</b> literary text type booklet/texts, past S/C papers.</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Knowledge Integration – quiz yourself &amp; see if your unit is cross-curriculum. (see Quality Teaching Support booklet)</b></p>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum Literacy: Written/ICT Aboriginal &amp; Indigenous Civics/Citizenship</b></p>

YEAR 10      STAGE 5	FOCUS: From Prose to Pictures and Script to Screen – Genre Studies (Close study Film/Drama)	UNIT 13
OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 9, 11.	Modes: Viewing, listening, writing, reading	Term 1
Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment	Evidence of Learning	Feedback
<p><b>Students &amp; Teachers study novels and film novels, for example, <i>The Chocolate War, That was Then this is Now, Animal Farm, The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty, To Kill a Mockingbird, A Patch of Blue, When Dogs Cry, Dracula/s &amp; Dracula Dead &amp; Loving It.</i></b></p> <p><b>Listening/Viewing</b> Viewing &amp; listening tests &amp; choose from the following: games, exercises, Question/answer, A to B, retelling, story extension, to audio extracts, books, song/s, film clips, dramatic teacher readings, reading circles. Film appropriations, video interviews &amp; critic forums, listening &amp;/or viewing tests.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Discussions, talks</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Wide reading of genre/issue/author/director/critical reading/literacy theory.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> Learning log, free choice journal, set topics.</p> <p><b>Writing: Essay planning and writing.</b></p> <p><b>Film &amp; literary technique glossary/revision , creative writing:</b> Drafts, editing, publishing.,</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Extended response models, planning &amp; drafts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement, initiative, evidence of active listening and viewing.</li> <li>• Journal (free/set)</li> </ul> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 1 Listening, Viewing Task on literary stimulus.</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Work samples including all modes (speaking, reading, writing, listening, viewing, representing) [ongoing].</b></p>	<p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher</p>
Suggested support/resource: See above.	Quality Teaching: Intellectual quality (see QT Faculty support booklet )	Cross Curriculum Literacy: Film, written,

YEAR 10 STAGE 5	FOCUS: Shacking up with Shakespeare – Appropriation/Transformation Study	UNIT 15
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 7, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11</b>	<b>Modes: reading, viewing, writing</b>	<b>Term 3</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment (Also revision for Literacy examination is integrated in this unit)</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning Critical Literacy teaching Approach</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> To various readings, performances and documentaries on Shakespeare.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Reading aloud, performance poetry, drama games.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Sonnets (he expected to be remembered as a poet; not a dramatist), research into his life and times. Knowledge of Shakespearean &amp; Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre conventions, performance styles, actors, scripting, properties (props), venues, producers, patronage, social status/entertainment, political role, costume, makeup, reactions by critics, language, conceits &amp; the intellectual games, devices, appropriations, innovations &amp; how Shakespearean Drama has been re(presented) through to modern times. Exploration of various readings/appropriations/transformations &amp; how ‘original’ texts by Shakespeare were appropriations in themselves, gender roles, values and concepts of each text.</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal</b> (set journal must include a theatre review)</p> <p><b>Writing: Front of house material</b></p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> photographs, stage diagrams, theatre performances,</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Appropriations/transformations (eg picture book, Marxist or feminist reading versus a dominant reading.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Task # 4 Work samples including all modes (speaking, reading, writing, listening, viewing, representing) [final grade/mark].</b></p>	<p>Teacher – written.</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources: Critical Literacy pedagogy.</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> Internet on-line Tour of the Globe, The Royal Shakespeare websites, performances, DVDs, DVD series on Shakespeare (Baz Luhrman one) &amp; the series of 4 DVDs available from Penrith Library are excellent, <i>Shakespeare in Love</i>.</p> <p><b>Faculty Booklet:</b> See Ken Watson’s units &amp; Karen Yager’s units</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching</b></p> <p><b>Explicit quality performance Criteri:</b> <i>How explicit are each of the tasks so that students can show what they can do? See Support booklet (p. 16)</i></p>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Literacy:</b> Reading/writing Literacy Test Revision.</p> <p><b>Gender Difference &amp; Diversity.</b></p>

YEAR 10 STAGE 5	FOCUS: Terrific Television!	UNIT 16
<b>OUTCOMES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11.</b>	<b>Modes: Viewing, Representing, Listening, Writing</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
<b>Integrated learning experiences, instruction and assessment: Appropriations/transformations: Critical Literacy the positioning of the reader/viewer. (Also revision for Literacy examination is integrated in this unit)</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<p><b>Listening:</b> Various excerpts/extracts/readings/films/radio responses, listening/viewing test/ revision of terms &amp; language techniques.</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b> Class speech on one genre from television, interviews with viewers, group/class discussions, improvisations, checkpoint talks.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Critics of TV shows, novels, poems, short stories, scripts, drama blueprints, Shakespeare, papers, video reviews, teen magazines, literary reviews, web sites, student work, research on the time, critics of the time/archives).</p> <p><b>Writing: Journal :</b> learning log, poetry, reviews, focus on Television, survey/polls.</p> <p>Writing: Script, commentary, survey/questionnaire.</p> <p><b>Viewing:</b> Wide viewing of television shows, interviews with media personalities, viewing of text scaffolds &amp; deconstructions &amp; critic websites, media on – line cites, visit to shows if possible/expert speakers.</p> <p><b>Representing:</b> Speech (in person, on tape, on film/video). Questions and Answer panel.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Task # 5 Trial School Certificate Examination</b></p> <p>Choose a television show from the same genre in contemporary society (eg. games, soap opera, music, comedy, satire, news, current affairs) from different stations (eg, SBS, ABC, Commercial, Free to Air, Digital TV) OR the same genre from different nations, or the same genre show from previous times and compare with contemporary shows. Research of the genre, the chosen texts, comparison of elements, audience, language techniques, how meaning is made, how different audiences view/ed the texts, social context, subject matter, treatment of social issues (eg. gender stereotypes, sexuality). Present a speech on your conclusions.</p>	<p>Teacher</p> <p>Teacher, self &amp; peer feedback with final written comments from teachers. (2 classes together).</p>
<p><b>Suggested support/resources:</b></p> <p><b>ICT/ Multimedia/CdRom/Media:</b> on –line sources, TV, digital.</p> <p><b>Faculty Booklet: <i>Listening Please</i></b></p> <p><b>Faculty Library:</b> Teacher Texts, contract/Unit samples.</p>	<p><b>Quality Teaching Student Self Regulation (p.19 Support)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Choose a lesson/lessons you have taught in this unit &amp; try the scale as a part of your evaluation.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Cross Curriculum Literacy:</b> Oral/Aural &amp; media Literacy.</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> TV, VIDEO, DVD, Work,Employ Enterprise</p>

APPENDIX H  
**FILM STUDY WORK REQUIRED CONTRACT FOR STAGE 4 ENGLISH**

Work required assessment:  
 S- successful  
 N/S – not



**SHREK**



**Date of Production: Dreamworks, 2001**

**Director: Andrew Adamson, Vicky Jenson**

**Script: Ted Elliott, Terry Rossi (screenplay), Roger S.H. Schulman, Joe Stillman, and William Steig (book)**

**Rating: PG**

**Cast:**

**Voices of Mike Myers as Shrek, Eddie Murphy as Donkey, Cameron Diaz as Princess Fiona and John Lithgow as Lord Farquaad.**

**Outcomes:**

1. Composing & responding to a wide range of texts for understanding, interpretation, critical analysis & **pleasure** (this means that we create, we analyse & we should enjoy our learning).
2. Responds to & composes texts in different technologies (this means we are using video – camera, internet, computers & digital camera).
3. Identifies, considers & appreciates cultural expression in texts (This means we are looking at myths, legends, fairy stories & recurring stories & appropriations)
4. Uses & assesses individual & collaborative skills in learning.

**READING, WRITING, LISTENING, TALKING, REPRESENTING**

**Before Viewing Activities**

■ Ongoing wide- reading from the adventure/fantasy box or from your own sources. Keep a brief diary (see handout). *Individual & pair activity.*

■ Listening to teacher dramatic reading of the storybook *Alchemy* in serial form. *Individual.*

■ A to B listening talking activity each lesson. *Pairs.*

■ Learning log journal. (individual & class through sharing/reflecting discussion).

■ Reader’s Theatre mindmap & learning log on conventions & modelling of *Little Red Riding Hood*. *Class activity.*

■ Wide-reading in class of classic stories, storybook appropriations, including *Shrek & Shrek’s Gag Book*. (pairs – you need to read with a different partner everyday & record comments in your learning log).

■ Exploration of the conventions of the classic stories/rhymes/myths /legends using Rapunzel exercise and pictures of icons/symbols. Class mindmapping using grid. Teacher demonstration followed by group w presentation :friezes, mindmaps, grids, etc. *Small groups.*

■ Reader’s Theatre : scripting, folders, drafting, rehearsal, performance for Primary audience& par *group.*

Self - Assessment

Teacher

Teach

**Viewing of *Shrek*: Close Study/Reflection focussing on the HOW & WHY.**

■ Viewing log/learning log on *Shrek* (see guides). *Individual activity.*

■ Listening/drama games :Keys to the Castle, Dramatic tension, storytelling. *Class activity/pairs.*

■ **MAJOR PIECE: REPRESENTING.** This activity, together with wide reading/wide viewing activities, forms your homework for the next 5 weeks. You need to choose ONE of the tasks & complete it for peer & parent audience (mystery box, short, short film, internet, front of house publishing, photostory, describing or reporting from different points of view, power -point display or series of emails, business cards for each of the characters or creators, music or movie promotional clip, creative reading of the storybook or own writings on audiotape, music or movie promotional clip, storyboarding short, short film creation of a scene from..) Desktop publishing time is available from the library will have A few lessons in the computer room, but YOU must organise other times to do the

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**Viewing Guide:**

1. View the film all the way through without interruption except for ten to fifteen minutes viewing learning log time at the end of each of the viewing sessions which will usually be determined by the

bell. Teachers need to carefully monitor and model the depth of answers required to provide students with guidelines that ensure quality responses.

2. Select about five scenes (use the pre-viewing activities to give you a guide)
3. Students write in their Film Learning Log that is the right hand page of each student's note-book (students must begin on a double page).

Prediction	PLOT EVENT CONTEXT	ISSUE/S CONCERNS THEMES	CHARACTER Initial thoughts (Name, occupation, dress, role, mannerism, accent)	SETTING MOOD	SYMBOLS ICONS MOTIFS

**This chart, or the questions included in it, is recorded on the left hand page of the students' books.**

Where am I in the film?*	What question/s, Confusion Conclusions have I?	What have I learned ?	How have I learned?	SCENE

**Refer to Jack Thomson's work on Iser's reading theory. Iser suggests that good readers explore the range of levels represented by these questions. Please note that I have adapted the original questions, I also use these questions in reader's response.**

**at this moment are you:**

1. **Outside the film thinking of something unrelated?**
2. **A disinterested, objective viewer not involved but aware of the events, characters, etc?**
3. **In the film, so to speak, on a hill overlooking the events?**
4. **Close to the action?**
5. **'On the shoulder' of a character?**
6. **One of the characters?**

### **Reading the Film:**

**(Focus: Reading, Writing, Reflecting)**

 A close and personal reading of the film can be engendered through the adoption of reader's response techniques. Students could create a **viewer's journal** of the film. Teachers have different opinions about the content of a viewing journals, I have recorded my preferred view of it. The purpose of the viewing journal is to have each student engage with the film and explore it in a very personal manner and in doing so interrogate the text, enjoy it and learn from the process. Some content is included, but the viewing journal is NOT successful if it merely tells the story. Predictions, questions, charts, diagrams, sketches, jottings, impressions, personal memories, anecdotes, quotations/dialogue, sub-text bubbles/alter – ego character recordings, personal opinion, commentary on plot, costume, mis-en-scene, narration, context, editing, cinematography, sound, direction, dramatic tension, criticism, **reflections on previous learning**, etc are all invaluable but my students must also apply the concept behind Iser's reading level (see above) and include these perceptions in the viewing journal. The latter is essential in my opinion if students are to become aware of their learning style/s and viewing skills.

Teachers could select say five to ten scenes from the film and **play each twice and provide plenty of time for recording ideas in viewing logs. These need to be shared with a real audience to make it a valid experience but students need to be allowed to choose the parts to be made public to protect the privacy of some thoughts and memories.** The audience might reading excerpts to peers in groups or via a class fishbowl\* discussion. Other classes or teachers/parents might be invited to participate. Teachers should also model viewing journals by writing their own and be willing to share. Perhaps teachers from other faculties who have seen the film might come and listen to extracts or maybe extracts could be emailed to appropriate websites.

### Focus: Representing

 Students create a **representation of the film**, perhaps in mixed ability groupings. The form of these representations is limited only by the imagination and motivation. The topics depend on the interest and ability and independent learning capacity of the students. **All students have to present a talk/tutorial on their representation.** Some representation forms include:

1. **mystery boxes** where students create an appropriately decorated box and fill it with items that are that provide insights into topic. For example, one student might create a box painted symbolically green, and fill it with play-dough models of the main characters in *Shrek*, a miniature story book, crown, monster mask, sunflower, picture of a computer, poster of *Gladiator*, and a joke written on a piece of paper. Topics could include characters, a job at Dreamworks, themes or conventions of the film/icons/symbols, techniques such as humour. The focus is on HOW meaning is made and the impact of this on the audience. Alternative tasks might be
2. **Power -point display or series of emails** based on the film which could include comments, reviews, competitions, composites, or simply dialogue between two or more class members discussing aspects of *Shrek* and/or reflecting on their views.
3. **Photo – story** using student paintings/drawings/sketches or drawn from other stories.
4. **Front of house publishing/s** based on the notion of *Shrek* being made into a play (**tickets, biography photographs, director, producer biographies, fliers, program**).
5. **Business cards for each of the characters or creators** (for example, computer publishing programs have business cards that could be adapted, especially using wizards).
6. **Creative reading of the storybook or own writings on audiotape.**
7. **Music or movie promotional clip** based on the film but using original music.
8. **Dubbing** in which students select a scene or part of a scene (perhaps only one minute) and dub an appropriate and alternative dialogue/sound effects/sound.
9. **Storyboarding and short, short film creation of a scene from a** stimulus showing film techniques or a compilation tape exploring the concept of fairytales/classics.
10. **Describing or reporting from different points of view** (refer to Moffett). For example, students choose a incident/scene from the film, analyse it carefully using their viewing log/learning log and several viewings of the film, and record the incident/scene from Lord Farquaad's perspective (mimic the *True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* perhaps).