MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Silent Voices: A Study of English Teachers' Responses to Curriculum Change

by

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan

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The Academic Senate on 16th August 2005 resolved that Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan had satisfied the requirements for admission to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis represents a major part of the prescribed program of study.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Moya and Denis,

my inspirational voices and my first teachers,

with gratitude.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tennyson's poem, *Ulysses,* provides a stimulus for the introductory and concluding chapters of this thesis. I have experienced a connection with Ulysses' voyages of discovery during my own explorations in this study.

I have not travelled alone. My deep appreciation and esteem is acknowledged to all the "souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me...".

In particular, I would like to thank:

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(all quotations from Tennyson, A.,1842, *Ulysses*)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the nature of the discourses and practices of English teachers as they implement major reform to a senior curriculum. The introduction in New South Wales, Australia, of a mandatory new Higher School Certificate syllabus in 2000 challenged the prevailing paradigms of the school subject and disturbed the existing beliefs and pedagogies of English practitioners. This period of change provides the historical context for the present investigation. A major focus of the study is the relationship between teachers' discourses about curriculum change and their actual practices. Having presented its findings about that relationship, the thesis goes on to explore the implications for curriculum change theory.

The study was developed predominantly within a qualitative framework through semi-structured interviews with fifteen teachers from a range of secondary schools from both the government and non-government systems in metropolitan and non metropolitan locations in New South Wales. The participants, who included eight Head Teachers of English and seven teachers of English, were identified using a purposive sampling technique and were chosen from self-selecting respondents to an initial statewide survey. The data-gathering techniques also included the collection of a unit of work prepared by each teacher for study in the HSC Standard English course. The theoretical perspectives of grounded theory, discourse analysis, and curriculum change informed the analysis of the data.

Contradictions and ironies were found to be inherent in every aspect of the teachers' discourses and practices. How the teachers perceived their implementation of the early stages of significant curriculum change was markedly at odds with their classroom actions. Paradoxically the more active the teachers became in trying to come to terms with curriculum change the further they seemed to enshrine and confirm the professional identities they had previously established. The study showed that the teachers' impressions that they were implementing the new syllabus often concealed the fact that they were actually just adopting appearances of change.

It is well recognised by theorists that it takes some time for teachers to absorb and adopt change. It is argued here, however, that because English teachers have extremely strong professional identities and subject values, the close alignment of these with their sense of self tends to make them highly resistant to change at any deep level. It would seem that for professional development to be successful in a situation of this kind much closer attention needs to be paid to teachers' voices, and to how they view their subject and their sense of self in relation to it. It is only with this as a starting point that new paradigms and practices are likely to become firmly established.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

.....K-A O'Sullivan.....

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan

April, 2005

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY:

SEEKING A NEW WORLD

··· to seek a newer world...

(Tennyson, A., 1842, *Ulysses*)

Introduction

Just as Tennyson's heroic figure Ulysses embarked on his voyage of discovery to chart unknown lands, this study explores the ways English teachers respond to their challenges of the unfamiliar and their views about dealing with a new world of mandated curriculum. The specific purpose of the research is to analyse the questions: "What is the nature of the discourses and practices of teachers when a new syllabus is introduced?" and "What are the implications of this analysis for theories of curriculum change? " The focus of this investigation is English teachers in New South Wales, Australia, as they commence a new course of studies with their final year students.

How teachers respond to a new syllabus, what they say and do within the challenging landscape of educational reform and curriculum implementation in the contemporary postmodern world attracts considerable research interest from scholars. The analysis of English teachers' perceptions and actions presented here is set within the context of significant change to the senior secondary English curriculum in New South Wales. Teachers now have 'a newer world' to seek in their teaching with the introduction of a senior English

syllabus that is "reconfigured, reconceptualised, (and) rejigged" (Green, 2000, p.12) and which was set for external examination for the first time in 2001.

Justification for the study

> *The notion of the teacher's voice is important in that it carries the tone, the language, the quality, the feelings, that are conveyed by the way a teacher speaks or writes...It can represent both the unique and the collective voice...* (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992, p.57)

To hear and to understand teachers' voices and their discourses about significant curriculum change are important for both educational theory and practice, and for the effective implementation of change within a contemporary school context. However, Hargreaves (1994, p. 4) believes that "in much of the writing on teaching and teachers' work, teachers' voices have either been curiously absent, or been used as mere echoes for preferred and presumed theories of educational researchers." What English teachers have to say about their responses to the new English Stage 6 syllabus and how they represent these views and actions is the focus of this research. To attempt to capture the authentic voices of those charged with the implementation of this major and compulsory change, the study adopts both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It explores the ways the teachers' rhetoric is constructed into an evolving discourse about change and considers the implications that may be drawn from the features of their discursive practices. How the teachers talk about this major curriculum change reveals their pedagogical beliefs, their perceptions about the subject English, their attitudes towards the new syllabus, and the ways in which they plan to implement its intentions.

The nature of discourse and reading

The study is framed by an understanding that discourses always communicate more than a literal message (Gee, 1996). Discourses present layered expressions of partial and constructed meaning which convey unique ways of being and acting, and which reveal particular perceptions and realities. The words that are used by teachers in their discourses about change provide insight into their underlying beliefs and actions and therefore need interrogation. Eagleton (1985, p. 205) suggests it is worth studying "the kinds of effects which discourses produce, and how they produce them." Drawing on this suggestion, the research investigates how English teachers select and use language within certain social and cultural contexts to construct their discourses and voice their meanings in particular ways.

Further, the work in the 1970s of poststructuralist scholars, such as Derrida, Foucault and Barthes, has contributed to theoretical and critical understandings that problematise the act of reading. Their view is that "meaning in text is never entirely fixed and that language is endlessly diverse" (Antsey & Bull, 2000, p. 8). This theoretical stance leads us to ask questions about the ways teachers read, and make meaning of, the new English syllabus and how they implement its intentions in their classrooms. In reference to current ideas about the nature of texts, Antsey and Bull (2000) summarise key reading principles. They indicate "text-based meaning may be constructed for the reader as well as by the reader...there are multiple meanings and discourses in texts, some of which may be dominant and some contested" (p.8). This study, therefore, seeks to explore the nature of these various and constructed meanings and the discourses teachers create about their readings of one particular text, the English Stage 6 syllabus.

Weiner (1994, p. 66) points out that "any analysis of the impact of curriculum policy needs to consider its interpretation as well as its intentions or impact." This research investigates the ways English teachers read and interpret a new curriculum document and considers how these interpretations shape their implementation of this policy. It draws on contemporary theoretical understandings about the nature of reading, the various methods readers use to make meaning from texts, and the constructed nature of individual responses to texts. It raises the issue of how the reading theory being embraced in the new English syllabus also applies to teachers' reading of that syllabus. Eagleton (1985, p. 138) notes the poststructuralist perspective recognises texts as "irreducibly plural, an endless play of signifiers which can never be finally nailed down to a single centre, essence or meaning." This perspective informs this research as it examines the connections between teachers' reading of mandated policy and their implementation of it. Curriculum policies "need also to be read as a fluid relationship between the author's (government's) intention and reader's (teacher's) interpretation" (Weiner, 1994, p. 82).

There is no single discourse about any one subject that is transmitted in classrooms; various discourses and constructions are in production at any time. Specifically within the subject discipline of English, there are differing theoretical and epistemic views and understandings about the subject. Because of the contested nature of English and its various dominant Discourses, there are a variety of possible interpretations and responses that teachers may make to anything new.

Gee (1999; 2000) makes a helpful distinction between discourses (lower case d) as language in use or stretches of language, and Discourses (capital D) as encompassing a larger field - language integrated with many other elements to construct specific identities, positions and

activities. Both uses of the term are incorporated into this research. Discourse (with a capital D) is used throughout to represent not only ways of using language but the "thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group" (Gee, 1996, p. 131). In other words, language viewed as Discourse indicates particular ideologies – embedded within a Discourse is a certain belief structure and a way of seeing the world (Luke, 1995, 1999). Discourses constitute knowledge and social practices, modes of thought and indicate relations of power (Weedon, 1987). As Gee (1999) suggests, Discourses involve values, beliefs, situated identities, and perspectives. In this way, particular values are advocated and others can be marginalised through the ideological nature of each Discourse.

The inherent character of curriculum can itself be problematic in determining the meanings that are attributed to any change. Its map contains many dimensions and contours. As Luke (in Lee, 1996, p. xii) explains, "curriculum is always multidiscursive and heteroglossic. The mediation of curriculum by teachers takes place within a local context and the transformation of syllabus intention that occurs is influenced by a number of variables. In their practice teachers realise different potentials for curriculum enactment. This study emphasises a dynamic reading of the syllabus and the view that the act of reading is mediated by its context. The competing Discourses and the various cultural frames that teachers experience in their professional lives all play a part in shaping their implementation of change.

The relationship of teachers and curriculum change

Listening to teachers' voices provides insight into the ways that teachers appraise new ideas in relationship to their established practices and what they decide to do about the inclusion or

use of the new. As Olson (1992, p.4) states, new ideas are "shifts in orientation, new sets of unclear meanings, whose implications take time to emerge. What these meanings are we must learn from teachers who can tell us what they understand the new ideas to be and what significance they attach to them." In this study attention is given to the nature of the meanings teachers make to change, as indicated in their responses to the new syllabus, so as to learn how new ideas are valued and whether they are adopted in practice.

Most researchers suggest that the role of teachers in curriculum reform and implementation is important and this role has been studied with ongoing interest. The investigation details English teachers' roles within a specific and new context of significant change in both curriculum policy and theoretical requirements. It highlights the centrality of teachers' work and their relationships within the school context, their beliefs, attitudes and perceptions, their subject epistemologies, and how these various domains affect their implementation of substantive curriculum change. Its intention is, as Olson (2002) advises, "to find out what teachers think of reform – to ask those who have intimate knowledge of what happens when grand schemes are launched" (p. 129). Following this line, Bruner (1996, p. 84) reports that "a major task for any effort at (educational) reform is to bring teachers into the debate and the shaping of change. For they are the ultimate change agents".

The broader contemporary context of teachers' work also exerts an influence on the ways in which their meanings of change are constructed. Postmodernism questions the establishment of definitive theories, it acknowledges there are no absolutes, and that discourses are shaped by social, political, cultural and historical contexts. A feature of the contemporary postmodern world is that its diversity of voices and the multiple texts that are produced are set within a rapidly changing landscape.

Sikes (1992, p. 38) believes that the decisive factor in the implementation of change is "how individuals come to terms with the reality of change in the context of their familiar framework of reality." Thus, of central interest here is not only the locating of teachers in the contemporary postmodern context and within their known environments of the school, but also more particularly, in investigating how they cope with profound changes to their familiar frameworks after many years of a stable English syllabus and accustomed practice. 'Both the unique and collective voice' carry the stories of teachers' responses as their discourses reveal "the ways they construct their own change meaning as they go about reform" (Fullan, 1999, p. 67).

The approach of this study

As the unknown overturns the familiar, this study charts and identifies the processes by which a new landscape is being formed within the territory of English. In order to investigate the identified areas and to capture both teachers' written and spoken voices, the research is developed predominantly within a qualitative framework. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen teachers from a range of secondary schools from both the government and non government systems in metropolitan and non metropolitan locations in New South Wales. The participants, who included eight Head Teachers of English and seven teachers of English, were identified using a purposive sampling technique from self-selecting respondents to an initial statewide survey. They are from a range of school systems and locations in New South Wales, and have a variety of teaching experiences between them. The data-gathering techniques also included the collection of a unit of work prepared by each teacher for study in the HSC Standard English course.

Context of the study

The following overview highlights some key points in relation to this study's contextual background and the understandings about curriculum that inform it. This is not the place to provide a detailed account of the nature of curriculum definitions and the theories of curriculum change. The focus here is on the definition of curriculum adopted for this investigation, and to present a brief survey of the main aspects of the history of curriculum change within Australia, to identify features of New South Wales secondary schools, and to give an overview of developments in NSW curriculum. A brief history of English syllabuses in New South Wales and the distinguishing characteristics and requirements of the new English Stage 6 syllabus are also provided.

Defining curriculum

Curriculum has been viewed in the literature as "a prescribed core of knowledge", as "a hidden set of values, expectations, and routines", and as "a set of lived experiences of teachers and students". Central to this study, and adopted here, is a more recent view of curriculum as discourse, "specifically as discursive practice that follows certain rules to construct the objects it studies"(Moje & O'Brien, 2001, p. 30). Johnson and Reid (1999, p. ix) also take this position, stating "the curriculum is all those discursive practices which affect what and how students learn, and what and how teachers teach." Discourses are conceived of as oral or written texts mediated by society, politics and history, "that shape and are shaped by the way people think about knowledge in social and material relations" (Moje & O'Brien, 2001, p. 41). As Weiner (1994, p. 79) notes, curriculum or policy texts "constitute a form of discourse, that is, they embody both a language and requisite social practices." These views recognise that

curriculum as discourse is part of the political and social milieu in which it exists, it is value laden and communicates particular ideologies, and it is subject to the construction of multiple responses about its nature.

In spite of ongoing debate about the definition of curriculum it is sometimes defined in a narrow way by teachers as referring only to prescribed syllabus documents (Laird, Grundy, Maxwell & Warhurst, 1998). When curriculum is perceived as an 'object', it is represented in written documents, policies and programs whereby knowledge is transmitted to, or bestowed upon, students (Grundy, 1998). This research brings together these discourses about the curriculum as syllabus with the broader understandings of curriculum as discursive processes and practices. From a perusal of the research it is evident that a number of scholars, (see, for example, Sadker & Sadker, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Grundy, 1998; Lovat & Smith, 1998; Leach & Moon, 1999; White, 2004) adopt the position that the curriculum is a dynamic construction. This view underpins the study. Curriculum is created as a result of the various transformations and interactions of teachers and students with the syllabus, policy documents, and other materials and learning strategies within a range of contextual situations.

Features of curriculum change in Australia

The 1901 Australian constitution established that the governance of education resided with its various States and curriculum decision making has continued to be determined by the relevant State and Territory educational bodies. Since the 1960s the ways in which curriculum is defined have broadened and its decision making processes have become increasingly complex. The period of the late sixties and seventies in Australia were times of unprecedented

educational change and the growth of new ideologies, shifts in morality, and the increased focus within society on the individual had significant impacts on curriculum (Barcan, 1988).

The 1972 Federal Labor government "generated powerful new impulses for change in Australian education" (Barcan, 1988, p. 273). In the 1970s considerable school-based curriculum change occurred because schools were now able to receive funding directly from the Commonwealth Schools Commission and could produce their own curriculum documents for the compulsory four years of high school (Brady, 1996). During this period the State departments provided broad aims and guidance for curriculum development and inspectors had oversight of the school-based curriculum (Braithwaite, 1994). The non-compulsory years continued to be regulated by State authorities and external assessment boards. There was a dominating and active political influence on education evident in the federal government's considerable spending and its strong emphasis on equity issues and policies. Schools were subject to a huge range of new policies to implement - some in tension with others, pressure from various external sources, increasingly diverse student populations, and disrupted programs of curriculum. Barcan's (1988) summary of the educational situation by the end of the seventies is that "the curriculum was in disarray, particularly in state schools, in consequence of the wide range of abilities among pupils, the doctrine of school-based curricula, and the influence of special interest groups" (p.315).

By the late 1970s, concern about this educational confusion saw the institution, at federal and states level, of a number of committees of investigation. Consequently, restructuring processes occurred which included important reviews of curriculum policy and practice. The dominant factors affecting Australian schools were more powerful than in previous times and included falling economic conditions, an increasing diversification of the cultural mix in the

nation's population, and the need to meet the widening requirements of the workforce (Braithwaite, 1994). New frameworks were established to assist curriculum development and the federal government continued to exert influence through its instrumental emphases and economic priorities. Braithwaite (1994) identifies the major shift in the perspectives on curriculum that took place from 1981 to 1991:

> *the curriculum policy documents changed from being statements of intended learning outcomes that tangentially addressed social issues and problems to emphasizing the key instrumental role that curriculum can play in determining issues of national economic futures and personal life outcomes* (p. 541).

During the 1990s the most significant curriculum reform in Australia was the development of a national curriculum framework of statements and profiles in the key learning areas (Watt, 1998). This project brought together representatives from federal and state ministries with the aim of establishing the typical progression students demonstrate in achieving learning outcomes. However, there has been continued resistance by State authorities to accept a national curriculum (Brady, 1995), and many of the issues based around the development and implementation of a curriculum incorporating national statements and profiles are yet to be fully addressed (Watt, 2000).

Although the national curriculum framework remains on the current Federal government's agenda, each State continues to assert its own stamp on its curriculum amidst frequent controversy created by government reforms and political debate. According to Watt (2000), the present influence on curriculum developers in Australia are the principles of standards-based education that "define content and performance standards as important elements of the outcomes specified in curriculum frameworks and syllabuses" (p. 47).

Secondary schools in New South Wales

The organisational context for this study is the New South Wales secondary or high school where students study from Years 7 through to 12. The last year of compulsory schooling is Year 10, and the post-compulsory Years 11 and 12 for senior secondary students, aged sixteen to eighteen, are completed with the exit examination: the Higher School Certificate. The school curriculum is constructed around subjects determined largely by academic disciplines and English is the only compulsory subject for the final examination. Some senior students select a course of studies with a vocational emphasis in the post-compulsory years that will not permit them to gain this credential. Schools may belong to one of a number of systems: the government (overseen by the NSW Department of Education and Training); the independent sector; religious systemic schools (for example, some Catholic schools); and some are community based. Non government schools have to be registered by the NSW Office of the Board of Studies, and all schools follow the mandatory curriculum requirements of the Board. The size of high schools ranges from fewer than four hundred enrolments in some rural areas to over one thousand; the largest comprehensive government high school in NSW has a student population of about eighteen hundred.

Curriculum in New South Wales

Control of the curriculum for secondary schools in New South Wales has been carried out under the direction of various Boards, established by the Education Acts. Supervision by those Boards ensures that all curricula meet government and community expectations and that a cohesive plan for students' education during all their school years is maintained. Systemic educational reviews and reforms initiated by a NSW Liberal Coalition government in the late

eighties produced considerable changes to curriculum structures and led to the 1990 Education Reform Act. The Board of Studies, an independent statutory body, was established to have governance of curriculum development for all school years. The state Minister for Education has the final power in approving curriculum decisions.

The NSW Office of the Board of Studies is currently responsible for the development of all subject syllabus documents and the related assessment measures, in particular, the final post-compulsory examinations. This centralised system of curriculum generally promotes a top down model of curriculum policy making. Opportunities to participate in decision making about change are given to teachers and other stakeholders throughout the syllabus drafting process as part of the published syllabus development procedures. Although Kirk and Macdonald (2001) state that it is an established characteristic of curriculum reform in Australia that teachers participate in key stages of the process, this is sometimes disputed in the literature and certainly remains a point of contention with many teachers.

The syllabus documents that are produced embed knowledge, skills, attitudes and values into their learning outcomes and make assumptions about instructional strategies. Under the 1990 Education Reform Act, the Board does not have responsibility for school operations or curriculum implementation. Although broad parameters that teachers should follow are provided in the syllabus, the Board's curriculum is essentially an intentional one. Teachers are not told explicitly how to teach and implementation decisions largely reside with them. When new syllabuses are developed, the responsibility for professional development programs is with the various employing bodies such as Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools. Board officers assist through consultation and provide support documents with the new syllabuses. Professional

subject associations also make a significant contribution to the guidance of teachers, particularly in assisting with curriculum change.

In recent times, there has been considerable political intervention in the nature of curriculum development and implementation as various Ministers have attempted to make their mark upon education (see, for example, Young, 1993; Braithwaite, 1994; Gibbs, 1998). Prolonged conflicts between various interest groups, especially in the early 1990s, have caused excessive delays in the production of new syllabuses (Watt, 1998). In New South Wales over the past decade, the pace of curriculum change has accelerated and teachers have been subject to increasing pressure by government, the community and the media to accommodate the frequent shifts that occur. As Gibbs pointed out in 1998 there was "no five – year moratorium on curriculum change in NSW, as there is currently in the UK, and reviews, with promises of more curriculum change, are still the order of the day" (1998, p. 194). As the twentieth century concluded, the next major review of secondary curriculum in New South Wales was being enacted.

Changes to the Higher School Certificate curriculum

The Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination was introduced under the Education Act of 1961 as part of considerable reforms to secondary education instituted by the 1957 Wyndham Report (for further discussion, see Barcan, 1965, pp. 276 - 287). The changes were designed to ensure the retention of students at school until at least the end of Year 10, and the HSC was originally planned for a small percentage that wished to pursue tertiary study. Since that time, the number of students staying on at school and completing the final examination has dramatically increased. Until the release of a discussion paper, by Professor Barry McGaw in

1996, there had not been a major review of the structure of the HSC courses and examinations. Cusworth and Smith (1997, p. 3) describe McGaw's paper as "one of the most detailed and complete reviews ever presented in the history of educational reform in NSW". The final report, Shaping Their Future: Recommendations for Reform of the Higher School Certificate (McGaw, 1997) outlined 26 recommendations, which proposed major restructuring of curriculum and assessment. The adoption of this report resulted in significant wide scale changes to senior school education at a time when the traditional academic curriculum was becoming irrelevant for many of the increasingly diverse post-compulsory student population. After draft curriculum reports were presented for community consultation, new syllabuses were developed and further consultations took place during the first half of 1999, with the final approval of the syllabuses by the Minister in May 1999. Schools received the new documents in July 1999 for their implementation in the following year.

In 2000, the number of changes that occurred in the Preliminary HSC Year 11 curriculum had "the intention of raising standards and ensuring rigour and relevance" (Smith & Sinclair, 2000, p.68). A two-unit course as a base of study in every subject has been introduced with some differentiation of courses within a subject. There is an addition of more and varied subjects, new approaches to the assessment of students' skills and competencies, and the establishment of a standards-referenced framework for assessing and reporting. Students' results will be reported against their achievement of outcomes and a Course standard rather than the previous norm referenced system. In the revised HSC examination, undertaken for the first time by Year 12 students in 2001, two units of study in English are a compulsory inclusion in the ten units required for the calculation of a University Admission Index, which is a scaled ranking of the students' HSC marks and is reported separately.

New South Wales and the history of English syllabuses

In New South Wales the history of the development of English syllabuses is connected to major structural and curriculum changes in the State educational system. The reforms of secondary education by the first NSW Director of Education, Peter Board, (see Barcan, 1965), led to an English syllabus in 1911 which was divided into two sections: Literature and Language (Watson, 1994). An underlying assumption of this syllabus was the belief that English expression "is learned most effectively through the reading of good literature" (cited in Brock, 1996, p.42). Its emphasis was to instill in students an aesthetic appreciation of literary merit and the literature selected reflects a strong regard for the transmission of moral and cultural values (see Watson, 1994; Gibbs, Mullins & O'Sullivan, 2005). This syllabus remained in use, apart from minor revisions, until 1944 and Watson (1994) observes that the external examination system was the strongest influence on classroom practice. He also points out that the changes made for the 1944 syllabus demonstrated the widespread concern for students to possess grammatical knowledge but "in other respects it differed little from the 1911 document" (p. 37).

The educational restructuring of the Wyndham period caused major revisions to curriculum and in 1965, the first HSC English syllabus was introduced. Previously narrow conceptions of English were expanded. This syllabus was differentiated into separate courses of study and while literature still occupied a central place especially in the higher level course, more student centred pedagogy was encouraged. This reflected the changing theoretical ideas about English emerging from overseas and locally (Watson, 1994), and the syllabus emphasised the development of students' personal responses to literature, (for a more detailed discussion, see Michaels, 2001; Manuel & Brock, 2003).

A brief overview of the development of English syllabuses from 1965 to 1998 reveals a degree of consistency in the nature and intention of the curriculum apart from some changes to the prescriptions of texts for study and the increased inclusion of Australian authors. In the early 1980s new senior English syllabuses were produced and these endured until the current English Stage 6 syllabus was implemented in 2000. The rationale underpinning the 1980s syllabus was largely derived from the critical theories of F.R. Leavis. Literature remained as the focus of study for nearly twenty years using close textual analysis, especially of canonical texts, and with language skills taught through literary responses (Gibbs et al, 2005). A key feature of the English Courses during this period was their differentiation to address students' abilities and needs. In 1988, in addition to the 3 unit (highest) Course, 2 unit Related and 2 unit General Courses, a fourth course - 2 unit Contemporary English was added to the previous hierarchical structure. This was designed to provide a much less traditionally literary based Course for students who had recent non English speaking backgrounds or who now stayed on in the post-compulsory years for a variety of reasons other than to proceed to tertiary study (for further reference, see Board of Senior School Studies, 1982a, 1982b, 1988).

New English Stage 6 Syllabus

As a result of the McGaw Report (1997), there was significant reform in New South Wales in 2000 to the senior secondary curriculum and revolutionary changes to the English syllabus designed for students in Stage 6: Years 11 and 12. This syllabus was produced after a long consultative process with the key educational stakeholders. The conception of English has been rewritten to embrace the new century and to cater to a wider range of students' needs through the inclusion of popular culture and media texts, information communication technologies, and broader theoretical and contextual approaches. A major paradigm shift is

evident in the syllabus content, terminology, and text selections, which requires English teachers to investigate substantially new worlds.

The rationale of the English Stage 6 syllabus situates English as "central to the learning and development of students" as it "enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p.6). In line with a requirement of the NSW Education Reform Act of 1990, the syllabus focuses on student learning outcomes. All students should have access to these outcomes and their achievement of them will be reported uniformly on a framework of six standards for 2 unit Courses. The syllabus stresses the students' role as autonomous learners and points out that "meaning is central to the study of English" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p.7). 'Responding and composing' are identified as the ongoing, interdependent processes through which meaning is created.

Although the syllabus conveys a notion of how English is constituted, it generally does not prescribe any pedagogical approaches. How to teach the Courses is, therefore, implied and left open for interpretation by teachers. The effect of Cultural Studies approaches and semiotics on the contemporary study of English is evident in the syllabus view that making meaning is a relational process and that an understanding of context is important in the construction of texts and language. Texts are seen as sites for the production of multiple readings where contesting forces have shaped their meaning and influenced their production. A "diversity of approaches" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p.6) is advocated and, as teachers embrace the new syllabus after so many years of predictable and stable practice, this directive provides a significant challenge for them.

The new English Stage 6 syllabus is differentiated into a range of Courses. All students must study at least one 2 unit Course in Years 11 and 12, and may complete 4 units for the HSC. There is a common core of material for all students in the 2 unit Advanced and Standard Courses – the Area of Study – which is required for the first of the two examination papers in the HSC. Table 1.1 below identifies these Courses and indicates some of the distinguishing features of their intended candidature.

Table 1.1 Differentiation of English Stage 6 Courses and proposed candidature

Adapted from Board of Studies (1999c), *English Stage 6 Syllabus,* p.12.

English Stage 6 Courses	**Indicators for Proposed Candidature**
English Extension 2 – 4 units (Additional to Extension 1 & Advanced) For study in Year 12 only	sustained, independent creative & critical work; production of a Major Work;
English Extension 1 – 3 units (Additional to Advanced)	intensive specific study; complex conceptualisation;
English Advanced – 2 units	challenge of higher-order thinking; critical & creative skills; academic achievement;
English Standard – 2 units	increase communication expertise in English; enhance personal, social & vocational lives;
English as a Second Language – 2 units	Non English speaking, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background; less than 5 years of English language instruction;
Fundamentals of English - 1 unit Not examinable in HSC (Additional to Standard & ESL)	additional skills development; assist effective language use; support for Standard & ESL students.

A most notable change in the new syllabus is that students now have the opportunity to study a greater diversity of texts than in the past. The Introduction to the syllabus outlines the incorporation of newer textual forms and states the intended rationale for this study of various texts.

> *This development is significant in the broadening of English to accommodate the wider literacy demands of the 21st century. Students will study traditional literary texts in their historical context and relate them to ideas and experiences that affect us today. They will consider conventional forms such as drama and poetry as well as having the opportunity to study contemporary forms such as film, media and multimedia.* (Board of Studies, 1999c, p.2)

The broader framework established for textual exploration means that the traditional method of critical literary analysis generally applied through close textual study of a single text,

central to the previous syllabuses, is no longer the dominant focus. Texts are now arranged under a Module heading– conceptualised with a particular focus - these Modules are then further structured into Electives; for example, in the Standard Course, Module A is *Experience Through Language* and its three Electives are *Telling Stories, Dialogue*, and *Image*. Only one Module, of the four compulsory ones in both the Advanced and Standard Courses, permits the study of a single text as a separate entity. All other texts are organised within a specific Modular and Elective structure and a rubric description frames the approach for study. Connections between texts are stressed and related textual material, frequently of the students' choosing, is also required. A balance of the language modes: reading and writing, speaking and listening, viewing and representing are to be included and the use of technology should be integrated into the study of English.

Accompanying the English Stage 6 syllabus is *Prescriptions* (Board of Studies, 1999d), which details the texts to be selected for study for the HSC examination. In a new initiative, teachers can also access a support document, *Annotations of Texts Prescribed for the First Time* (Board of Studies, 1999a) which provides descriptions of, and comments about, texts that had not previously been set for study in senior English. Also available is the *English Stage 6 Consultation Report on HSC Elective and Prescribed Text Lists for 2001 and 2002* (Board of Studies, 1999b). This report details the criteria for text selection, the reference groups used as part of the text consultation process, and the findings related to the consultation.

Organisation of thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the study and situated the context of the research. Chapters 2 and 3 present a review of the relevant literature structured

by the use of two metaphorical clusters. Both these chapters are framed by a geographical metaphor to explore the social, cultural and political landscape of teachers and their work. The third chapter about subject English also employs the additional metaphor of a contest or battle to represent its disputed identity.

Chapter 4 provides an account of the research methodology employed in this study. The research questions are presented and details of the quantitative and qualitative methods utilised are given. The strategies adopted for the data gathering, management, and analysis are also described.

The following Chapters 5 to 7 present the research findings. The first chapter briefly describes the research respondents and participants, their schools and other relevant demographic information. For ease of reference table form is used to summarise some of this material.

Chapters 6 and 7 report the findings to the research questions. Chapter 6 identifies several significant categories of teachers' discourses - what they thought and said about their subject, about the syllabus, and about its implementation. Chapter 7 analyses teachers' practices – the decisions the teachers made, the actions they took, and what they did inside and outside the classroom as a result of their implementation of the new syllabus.

Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the processes that were discerned in these teachers' thoughts and actions, the nature and significance of factors which influenced their behaviour, and the ways in which their discourses and practices informed each other. In the conclusion, Chapter 9, the implications of these findings for further understanding of the processes of curriculum change are examined and recommendations for further research provided.

Accompanying these nine chapters are the bibliography and appendices. Included in the appendices are copies of relevant correspondence, the survey and interview outlines and questions and syllabus materials related to the study of one unit in the Standard English Course.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

CHARTING THE LANDSCAPES OF TEACHERS' WORK

Introduction

A review of the literature relevant to the concerns of this thesis is presented in the next two chapters. In Chapter 2 an overview of the work of teachers, their contexts and cultures, and the various domains that shape their beliefs, knowledge, pedagogies, and practices is provided. An understanding of how teachers work, and think about their work, is a necessary background for the exploration of the impact of curriculum reform on their responses and actions. Teachers' work is viewed in the context of the organisational structures that frame their teaching, and the impact that curriculum change has on their professional lives. In order to demonstrate the particular framework in which English teachers operate, the Discourses surrounding the contested identity of English as a subject are presented in Chapter 3.

The teacher is central to educational action and change within a school community. The initiation of the teaching and learning which occurs, the decisions made about a classroom's culture and its curriculum, and the beliefs, pedagogies and practices enacted daily for students all have their origins in teachers' thoughts and actions. There is little debate about the centrality of teachers in schools and the powerful impact that they have on shaping the lives of young people. What has remained elusive, however, is a precise and detailed insight into the workings of the diverse interactions of these individuals that occur within multiple contexts across a range of ages, grades, subjects, and demographics. In the last twenty years

or so researchers have tried to throw light on the many different understandings which contribute to this complex area.

Teachers are subject to increasing pressures within the contemporary postmodern context and the intensification of their work is an ongoing concern. Educational change and curriculum reform create new challenges and impact significantly on the time teachers have to complete their work and the ways in which they exercise their professionalism. Recent studies have documented the minutiae of these issues. The organisational structures of the secondary school site, in particular, the subject departments of which secondary school teachers have membership, also influence the nature of their teaching and culture. The competing cultures of teachers' work have been perceived through the frames of their relationships with others, and through the domains that shape their beliefs, thoughts, knowledge and actions.

The research in the areas referred to here covers a wide range and includes a vast number of contributions to the field. In order to synthesise and present an overview of the relevant research it is necessary to conceptualise a framework which does justice to the multiple shades of analysis and critique which are evident in the research. In exploring the social, cultural and political landscapes of teachers and their work in English during a time of change, a geographical metaphor has been developed to shape the account of the information of the two review chapters.

Both the interior and exterior geography of teachers' working lives is examined. To chart the research field, the path taken is to define teachers' work, locate its contexts and organisational structures, and then to map its cultures and investigate the competing frames and domains that form and influence teachers' professional identities. The research on teaching and change has

been separated from the research on how the subject English has been constructed over time and the influence it has had on teachers' perceptions and practices.

The second review chapter, which deals with the territory of English, continues the geographical metaphor but introduces a further metaphorical concept in terms of a contest or battle. Geographical and battle metaphors are rare in the teaching literature but quite common in scholars' descriptions of English as a subject. What is new here is the appropriation and modification of these metaphors to describe the intersecting fields of teaching and English as a subject area. English has a contested identity and so, its shifting borders and identifying properties are considered in terms of both the metaphor clusters. The map of the complex landscapes under study will be synthesised after examination of the challenging exterior world of English teachers' work and the exploration of the nature of their various interior domains and of their disputed subject territory.

Defining the Outer Landscape of Teachers' Work

Research in the 1960s and 1970s

In the 1960s research was generally focused on teachers' functions and limited to wide scale views of the somewhat predetermined and stable expectations of their formal instructional role. As Ball and Goodson (1985) point out:

> *... teachers were shadowy figures on the educational landscape mainly known, or unknown, through large scale surveys or historical analyses of their position in society, the key concept in approaching the practice of the teaching was that of role* (p.6).

Teachers were classically portrayed in the literature in a way that generally overlooked "the unique, moral character of education, the professional training and concerns of teachers, and the actual, interactive processes involved in instruction" (Biddle, Good, & Goodson, 1997, p. 2). Since the early 1970s the advances made in this field of research have opened up ongoing debate as to the characterisation of teachers and teaching. For three decades, Lortie's (1975) Schoolteacher, a detailed investigation into the ethos and working world of schoolteachers, has remained a seminal piece of research. Lieberman (1998) states that the contribution of Lortie's work is its demonstration of the complex social realities of teachers and their working contexts. Lortie's conclusions highlight the individualistic, conservative and present-oriented nature of teaching. Drawing on his Five Towns interview study of ninety-four teachers and wider survey data in Florida, Lortie acknowledges that teaching is an isolating occupation with relatively traditional purposes and that the teacher ethos is reliant on practicality with its immediate context the classroom. The limitation of this 1970s view is that it fails to include the wider social, cultural and political contexts in which teachers' work occurs, and of course, the obvious responsibilities and duties teachers have outside their classroom practice.

Research from the 1980s

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was an expansion of the landscape under investigation through a range of research about teachers from a broadly "interactionist" perspective (Acker, 1995, p. 106). This outlook is evident in Connell's (1985) Australian study of secondary school teachers' work. Connell's assertion that "teachers are workers, teaching is work, and the school is a workplace" (p. 69), reflects the growth in research interest about teachers' paid employment and their workloads. As Acker (1995, p.102) observes, the phrase "teachers' work" acknowledges that this work is paid and is regulated by industrial awards and

organisations, it has a career structure and is carried out in relationship to other workers within specific sites. Connell (1985) argues, based on six in-depth interviews into teachers' lives, that it is difficult to define the nature of teachers' labour because it is subject to an endless enlargement of the forces upon it. He believes that teachers are "vulnerable" (p. 99) because of their increased accountability for students' learning outcomes and as a result, they experience strong emotional pressure. Connell's empirical study adds, in particular, two areas to the scope of the map being sketched: firstly, an identification of the emotional dimension of teaching and the way teachers are shaped by their work; and secondly, the nature of teaching as structured work involving tasks, processes and relationships.

Locating the contexts of teachers' work

The contemporary, postmodern context

Influences of postmodernism on education

In contrast to Lortie's (1975) view that teachers reduce even global educational concerns to the personal, twenty years later Hargreaves (1994) adopts a much broader perspective as he examines the wider social context of school teaching. In contemporary times, the external 'geography' of teachers' work has changed and shifting and complex forces shape their professional identities. Hargreaves argues that the inherited institutional structures of education were created for a world that no longer exists and that there is a disjunction between modernist approaches to reform and the control of teachers' work and the reality of schools in postmodern times. Where modernism may be characterised by its mechanistic, structured nature, "postmodernism is organic, fluid, flexible and interactive" (Lau, 2001, p.36). The more recent literature suggests that the complexity of the postmodern,

postindustrial world necessitates a new view about teaching and schooling – one that engages with the uncertainty and fluidity of the current times of rapid change.

Based on their research into new pedagogical developments for Australian Physical Education teachers, Alexander, Taggart and Thorpe (1997) point out that "an amalgam of a postmodern youth culture, governmental inquiries and reports and economic and industrial imperatives constitute powerful forces to which even the most isolationist, yet committed and charismatic teachers are subject" (p.11). Acker (1999) depicts teachers' work as "vulnerable to restructuring, subject to new political and economic forces, and affected by postmodernity" (p.23). Highlighting issues related to school reform and change, Olson (2002) notes "that governments increasingly seek to politicize and industrialize schools in the face of global trends to privatize and downsize social services, cut taxes, and reduce wage costs" (p. 132). He adds, that for teachers, the pressures of external testing and increased evaluation of their work intensify the accountability measures adopted by governments.

Influences of gender and diversity

Within this shifting landscape, there are a number of influences, including demographic, cultural, economic and political forces, identified as shaping contemporary teachers' working lives. In the vast field of research, scholars such as Ball and Goodson (1985), Apple (1989, 1990), and Hargreaves (1994) examine the political, social and cultural contexts of teaching. Acker's sociological approach (1989, 1995, 1999) adds a contribution through her studies of gender and her acknowledgment of the significance of context in framing teachers' work.

The nature of the population inhabiting this broad area has also been identified. Acker (1999) cautions against any simple categorisation of teachers and stresses the need to recognise the

increasing diversity within the teaching community. Along the same lines, it is significant to observe that the demographic characteristics of the student population are also changing (Good, Biddle, & Goodson, 1997). There are other attributes to consider about teachers as Goodson (1997) points out, "class, gender and ethnicity are but part of the larger picture, teachers' backgrounds and life experiences are idiosyncratic, unique, and must be explored therefore in their full complexity" (p. 146). Nevertheless, in most industrialised countries, women teachers are now in the majority and teaching is increasingly perceived as "largely a feminized occupation" (Biddle, Good & Goodson, 1997, p.6). Acker believes that it is still difficult to make generalisations about teaching and gender although this is an area of expanded research interest, (see, for example, Acker, 1989; 1995; 1999; Nias, 1989; Noddings, 1992). Acker (1995) considers there are challenges for educational research to "keep gender considerations paramount whilst simultaneously deconstructing the concept of teacher and still managing to achieve some generalizability about teachers' work" (p. 145). At the same time, it is important to identify the teaching profession as "differentiated and fragmented rather than homogeneous" (p.144).

Postmodern challenges for teachers and schools

An overview of the research locates teachers in a rapidly changing world with the external landscape of their work subject to numerous challenges and expansions. Consequently, Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) assert that there is a need for teachers to change their ideas and images about themselves:

> *teachers need to view themselves as public intellectuals who combine conception and implementation, thinking and practice, with a political project grounded in the struggle for a culture of liberation and justice* (p. 109).

A range of perspectives is offered in the literature about the implications of the new demands placed upon teachers' work due to the impact of the contemporary age. It appears a shift may be required in teachers' practice from transmitting skills to promoting "growth, transformation and creativity" (Good, Biddle, & Goodson, 1997, p. 676). Arnold (2005) suggests that educators need to develop their 'empathic intelligence' through the unity of their thoughts and feelings as a means to transform contemporary teaching and learning. Lovat and Smith (1998) also argue for a change in the nature of the curriculum to better prepare students for the world of the future. This curriculum should not focus only on content or facts but on action derived from critical reflection "which is oriented to change, change for betterment of self, others and the world" (p.248). Fullan (1993, p.41), in his influential writing on educational change, considers the "ability to synthesize polar opposites where possible, and work with their co-existence where necessary" is essential to deal successfully with the acceleration of current society.

Within the postmodern context where teachers experience the multiple, changing and indeterminate characteristics of the contemporary world, Goodson (1997) points out an interesting paradox. The "circumscribed spaces and socialized trajectories of teachers' lives" are acknowledged but he proposes that teachers create their own professional identities "in juxtaposition to the institutionalized and socialized practices of schooling" (p.150). This setting, then, provides an arena for considerable contestation. Fink and Stoll (1998) maintain that "in spite of the convergence of powerful forces for change, schools appear remarkably untouched, and exhibit many structures, policies and practices of years gone by" (p. 298). Schools persist as places of considerable historical continuity within the disorder and uncertainty of the ever-changing contemporary society. Inevitably, close examinations of a teacher's work "locate the teacher's life within the deeply structured and embedded

environments of schooling" (Goodson, 1997, p.145). A challenge, therefore, for teachers and schools in this shifting and postmodern terrain is to meet the new and increasing demands being made of them (Biddle, Good & Goodson, 1997).

The impact of intensification

One of the strong themes emerging from the literature is that the particulars of the contemporary context create an intensification of teachers' work, with escalating claims placed upon them and their time. The need for teachers to do more work in the same amount of time appears to be linked to the increasing control of curriculum and teaching by centralised authorities. Apple (1989, p.41) describes intensification as "one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educational workers are eroded" and he considers this phenomenon results in the deskilling of labor. As teachers experience pressure to do even more work and to increase their productivity, they experience a loss of control over their work and a lack of personal satisfaction. Inevitably, the work focus becomes simply "getting it done" (Apple, 1989, p. 44). As leisure time and social interactions are reduced, there are implications for teachers' personal lives, particularly for women who comprise a greater part of the workforce (Apple, 1989, 2000).

When teachers with a strong personal commitment to their work feel overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them, they experience guilt and feel they are damaging the people they care about (Hargreaves, 1997a). The resultant effects of intense emotional and physical labor, especially if the workers feel unsupported and isolated, can be exhaustion, disenchantment, illness or even, resignation. Teachers feel under pressure to produce student results, they are subject to prescriptive assessment and curriculum demands, and accountable for student outcomes through the publication of measures such as results tables (Acker, 1999). Based

upon their case study of five Mid American secondary school teachers involved in a change process of school restructuring, Nolan and Meister (2000) identify four significant aspects related to intensification: teachers' increased workloads, their reduced preparation time, their isolation from others, and their personal guilt and stress.

As Connell's (1985) earlier study identified, other scholars also report the prominence of an emotional dimension in teaching. Noddings (1992) emphasises the importance of an ethic of care and relationships for teachers in their work. Similarly, from their case studies of change, Nolan and Meister (2000, p.207) report "the teachers' sense of caring for their students transcended all aspects of their work". Teachers with strong emotional attachments to their students approach their work, and changes in it, quite differently from other colleagues (Hargreaves, 1998a). Lortie (1985, p.137) reminds us that what teachers do is "people work" under "special circumstances, and therefore, teaching cannot be viewed merely as "labour power" (Harris, 1994, p. 1).

In terms of the relationship of teachers' work to the processes of the labour force, Reid (1999, p.187) claims "what teachers do is largely structured by their employer in particular ways, for particular purposes, and it is this which determines how teachers experience their work". In an earlier discussion, Harris (1994) adopts a critical perspective in his exploration of the consequences of viewing teachers as labour workers who are pressured towards "proletarianization". He notes that teachers work within a context of "decreased status and control, loss of autonomy, destruction of health, worsening of conditions which are conducive to lowering of morale, and subjugation to increasing external control of schooling and curricula" (p. 108). Harris argues that this context makes teachers subject to powers not directly connected to the classroom, and this creates an eradication of their professional

autonomy and a loss of their working conditions. It is Harris' contention that these forces are both commercial and political, and that there is an "appropriation of the educational discourse and schooling practice within a techno-rationalist and market-oriented agenda" (p.108). Apple (2000) believes teachers in the United States of America, despite the official rhetoric of professionalism, are increasingly more strictly controlled. He sees clear evidence of the intensification of their work as they experience a loss of autonomy over the processes of teaching and learning and curriculum change.

Intensification can serve to devalue and deskill the teaching profession. In ascribing to a reductive view of teachers as labour, there is an associated danger of accepting them as disempowered, and susceptible to a loss of control over their curricula and conditions. Any loss of agency by teachers has far reaching consequences (Harris, 1994), and in the prevailing economic rationalist climate, extends the pressures of accountability and performance indicators, and further intensifies the demands of their daily work. Not all scholars, for example, Apple (1989, 1993), fully accept the deskilling proposition and he considers that some teachers adopt strategies of resistance to exercise control over their work.

The perspective of time

The literature generally identifies time as a major constraint on teachers' work. It is directly related to the demands of intensification and it shapes the organisation of their daily activity. Teachers are responsive to the rhythms and timetables of school life and also experience a "tension of consciousness" (Elbaz, 1983, p. 20) as they attend to many demands at the same time. Both these aspects of time are mutually connected. Time defines and imposes on teachers' work, limiting it in subjective and objective ways (Hargreaves, 1994). Symes and

Preston (1997) describe teachers' work as "characterised by routines and repetitive tasks of a clerical and administrative kind" (p. 161) and these detract from their other intellectual, creative and transformative pursuits.

Reform and perceptions of time

Hargreaves' (1994) description of the differences in peoples' perspectives about time has direct application not only to the recurrent claims by teachers about the continual erosion of their time for teaching but it also adds to understanding about some of the problems of innovation and the implementation of change in schools. Hargreaves identifies two broad conceptions of time:

> *Monochronic time. This is a linear conception where one thing occurs at a time and it has a task focus. There is minimal awareness of context as attention is on deadlines and completion.*
>
> *Polychronic time. This is a multi conception where several things may occur simultaneously and it has a people focus. There is a high sensitivity to context and attention is on relationships not things* (pp. 102 – 103).

These differences in perspective indicate the potential conflict in curriculum implementation when administrators, usually operating under an objective time frame, impose change on the generally subjective time view of teachers. Fullan (1993) identifies the consequences of policymaking by the State as "unrealistic timelines and policy clutter" (p. 54). Teachers believe administrators constrain them to implement change with tight deadlines and more work with little regard to the pressure and demands under which they already operate (Hargreaves, 1994). Those who make new policies have themselves often worked under the

pressure of monochronic time with a specific task focus and thus, tend to see the world of the classroom only from the viewpoint of their imposed change. What Hargreaves argues is that the assumed superiority of this objective view of time does not take into account the social and political dimensions of time and its physical relativity. As he points out, "the sociopolitical dimension of time, the way in which particular forms of time come to be administratively dominant, is a central element in the administrative control of teachers' work and of the curriculum implementation process" (p. 107). Those who direct the change process often do not recognise time as problematic because they do not compare "the time perspective of the agents of change with that of those who are the targets, and that of those who will, in one way or another, participate in the process" (Sarason, 1971, p. 219). In a detailed explanation, Elbaz (1983) highlights some of the consequences for teachers and their perspectives of time when curriculum reform is imposed upon them.

> *For example, altering teachers' self-experience and social perceptions by imposing on them curricular reform which treats them as students who must learn the developer's materials inevitably has the effect of restricting spontaneity and heightening tension of consciousness, crowding the time perspective so that teachers despair of accomplishing the work expected in the time available, and calling into question the very nature and meaning of their tasks* (p.21).

Sarason (1971) suggests that those who have a key role in educational reform often do not know enough about the culture and norms of the setting where they want the change to occur. Fullan (1991) also perceives a divide between the worlds of the policy-maker and that of the practitioner, and warns that the mutual ignorance of the subjective world of each will lead to the failure of reform. The bureaucratic imposition of change creates an intensification of teachers' work, increased pressures and accountability, and even more authority placed over

their complex school day (Apple, 1989; Hargreaves, 1994). The tension between the perspectives of monochronic and polychronic time, therefore, further exacerbates the burden and constraint that teachers experience in their teaching.

Educational Change

The most pervasive force in the constitution of the geography of teachers' work is change. The processes of change emerge from both within and outside the education system, and these constantly redefine the contours of the teaching landscape. Change exerts a very subjective influence and involves "values, micropolitics, people's goals, interests and perceptions" (Scott, 1999, p. 47). Ball (1985) believes that changes in the surrounding political, economic and social circumstances of schools can impact on the content and operation of school knowledge and may also influence the ways in which change is actually initiated and experienced within the school.

Siskin and Little (1995) perceive the implementation of change has the potential to raise issues wider than the actual change itself. "Reform initiatives may bring to the surface the latent conflicts in teachers' conceptions of subject, teaching, and the purposes of schooling..." (p.13). As Hargreaves (1998b, p.560) points out, "educational change initiatives do not just affect teachers' knowledge, skill and problem-solving capacity". He believes emotions are central to the dynamics of teaching because teachers are passionate beings, and relationships permeate their work. In his view, the emotional dimension of change is frequently overlooked in the literature. Change impacts on teachers' emotional goals for their students, their professional relationships, their own responses to their work and its structures, and their planning and pedagogy. Another consequence, especially of centralised educational change,

identified by Goodson (1990, p.300) is that "the people most intimately connected with the day-to-day social construction of curriculum and schooling - teachers - are thereby effectively disenfranchised in the 'discourse of schooling'". This view is shared by Olson (2002) who considers that prescriptive reforms mean "most often, teachers are left out of the power process that leads to the 'roll-out' of policy" (p.130).

Research about educational change

The history of research about educational change reveals an important and evolving field of study as well as the identification of many complex approaches to both the implementation and evaluation of the change process. Fullan's (1991) review of this field is widely regarded as definitive. There is a wealth of literature that focuses on the nature of educational change, its meanings, and how teachers and schools cope with it, (see, for example, Sarason, 1990; McLaughlin, 1990, 1998; Fullan, 1991, 1993, 1997, 1999). In recent times research has identified the various factors affecting the implementation of curriculum change, (for example, Fullan, 1991; Brady, 1996; Gibbs, 1998); what is effective within an educational change environment, (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Acker, 1999; Scott, 1999; Nolan & Meister, 2000); and the ways people deal with change and move through its processes, (Fullan, 1993, 1997; Hargreaves, 1994; Nolan & Meister, 2000). Richardson (1990) considers that the change literature has shifted from "viewing teachers as recalcitrant and resistant to change to examining the structure of the organization and personal attributes of teachers that affect whether or not they implement new programs" (p.11). More recently in the research there has been an examination of the strategic processes of change and a recognition of it as a cultural process (Hargreaves, 1998a). Hargreaves (1994) suggests that although there is an extensive literature about the processes of change, limited attention is given to the purposes and

contexts of change. A consistent finding in the review is that educational change can be highly complex and dynamic, and it is subject to vastly differing forces. Because of these characteristics, few of the current theories fully address the unique contexts in which change operates within the contemporary educational system (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan & Hopkins, 1998).

The implementation of the change process

One of the reported difficulties of educational reform is that "to bring about educational change usually exceeds people's understandings of how to do so effectively" (Hargreaves et al, 1998, p.1). The introduction of new policy and the mandating of change do not necessarily ensure its successful implementation by teachers. Many factors contribute to the accomplishment of new ideas and curriculum changes, and these will vary within each educational site. Change has multiple dimensions, including the political, cultural and social. Both local and wider issues contribute to the different contexts in which change operates and no one prescription for change can be found to meet all teachers and situations. What the literature reveals is the multiplicity and intricacy of the demands that are created on those who are involved in its processes of implementation.

The complexity of the educational change process and the differences inherent in each individual teacher and specific context makes it hard to generalise about the constituents of curriculum change. Gibbs (1998) notes that the significance is in the distinctive blend of factors involved in any one case, and that these will "vary according to the particular social, intellectual and political context which is operating at the time" (p. 182). Scott (1999, p.7) points out that "each change situation is shaped by a unique mix of external, system and local factors". It is generally accepted in the literature that educational change moves through three

broad and distinctive stages: initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation (Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves et al, 1998), however, the relationship between these stages is extremely complex. Fullan (1991, p.92) stresses that "single factor theories of change are doomed to fail" and that the effective implementation of educational change is contingent on an active combination of multiple factors and features.

Various factors have been identified that affect the process of change as it occurs within the school, and Fullan (1991, p.65) notes that "educational change is technically simple and socially complex". He describes these factors or variables that interact and influence implementation in a causal way, as local and external factors. In the local set, Fullan includes those connected to a school itself: the local district, community and administrative organisations; the school principal, who is a strong influence on the leadership and eventuality of change, and importantly, the teachers. It is the teachers' individual characteristics and peer relationships that affect their responses to the implementation of change. Collaborative work practices and positive social interactions may contribute to an effective climate for change (Little, 1982; Hargreaves, 1994; Scott, 1999). Teachers' connections to their professional networks and subject associations will also assist (Scott, 1999). The external factors concern the wider social context of the school, such as the links with government and other agencies; and the allocation of resources and the provision of assistance, for example, through consultants, support documents, and professional development (Fullan, 1991).

A further and important theme acknowledged by Fullan (1991) and Scott (1999) is the need to monitor and evaluate the process of change. Monitoring is critical to cope with problems, to gather information about progress, and to appraise the success of implementation. There are frequently unexpected outcomes to change (Scott, 1999), and as Fullan (1991) points out,

monitoring is "probably one of the most difficult and complex strategies for change 'to get right'' (p. 87). Evaluation should be ongoing and is "the driving force of the change process" (Scott, 1999, p. 14).

Within the literature there is an increasing identification and recognition of the dynamic complexity and turbulence within educational organisations today (Fullan, 1998; Hargreaves, 1998a; Scott, 1999). Fullan (1991, p.32) notes that "real change... represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty". Educational change adds another layer of complexity to the many challenges confronting teachers in their work. Lortie's (1975, p.159) legacy reminds us that uncertainty is one of the most pervasive themes for teachers and there are "endemic uncertainties" complicating the contemporary landscape of teaching.

Teachers' work in times of change

This review of research about teachers' work highlights the impact of the broader educational and social changes of the postmodern context in which the diverse teaching population conducts its practice. This provides insights into the nature of the rapidly altering external geography of teachers' professional lives. It is not only the intensification of teachers' work that is important but its related emotional impact needs consideration. Issues of control over curriculum implementation and the prescription of timelines for change also appear as important factors that affect teachers' work. Questions about who should plan for, and who should implement, curriculum change, and in the ways in which reform can be facilitated within the contemporary educational context emerge. Is there an inevitable divide between those in administration and those in the classroom? In recent times there is little evidence presented that change strategies which are ideologically-driven and 'top-down' alter the

classroom experience in a substantial way (McLaughlin, 1990). Hargreaves (1994, p.109) contends that "the empowerment of teachers to take on responsibility for curriculum development, in addition to their current technical obligations regarding implementation" is of fundamental importance. How can this enhanced role for teachers be reconciled with the already significant and competing demands for their time? It would appear from the literature that the divide between administrators and teachers is growing, and as a consequence, "perceptions regarding the pace of change diverge more and more" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 114).

Mapping the cultures of teachers' work

Part of the exterior geography of teachers' work includes the particular ways the teaching culture is framed and constructed. Mapping the forms of connection and interaction between teachers further shapes the landscape that has already been presented. This map of teachers' cultures is not made of simple dimensions and patterns; there are complex shades colouring the various relationships established within the school context. Teachers organise themselves into a range of possible connections: powerful affiliations, conflicting and unstable groups, isolated clusters, or units that combine a number of these characteristics. No single formation adequately captures the complicated relationships and interactions that are in operation amongst teachers; a number of frames determine the ways in which individuals and groups interact. These are multi-layered, interconnected, and fluid in their membership.

Definitions of Culture

Williams (1961) notes that the study of culture involves "the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life" (p.63). There are various definitions of culture presented in

the literature and the word seems to encompass quite a broad lexicon. At its core, culture is "an ongoing critical description, analysis and engagement with people's dynamic beliefs and ideologies, practices and procedures" (Luke, Coomber & O'Brien, 1996, p.34). Apple (2000, p. 42) defines culture as " the constant and complex process by which meanings are made and shared"; he notes that it both produces and reproduces values and relations of power, and that it can be produced out of disagreements. Cultures generate informal rules that are frequently implicit and susceptible to change (Busher & Harris, 1999).

An overview of the research about teacher cultures reveals some identifying features. Teacher cultures are manifested in the shared beliefs and knowledge about work, and in the tacit acceptance of appropriate social interaction within the workplace (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Each school is defined by its own unique and complexly interrelated forces, many of which are implicit and intangible (Fink & Stoll, 1998). From his classic study of school culture, Sarason (1971) acknowledges that the strength of a professional culture has a direct connection to teacher satisfaction and student achievement. Along the same lines, Hargreaves (1994, p.165) suggests that "teacher cultures, the relationships between teachers and their colleagues, are among the most educationally significant aspects of teachers' lives and work". Hamilton (1993) considers teachers' knowledge and decision making processes are constructed from their personal cultural backgrounds and the cultures created by their subject, department and school. Sikes (1992, p.43) believes that it is through cultures that "change is mediated, interpreted and realized".

Any single definition of teacher culture is problematic because it requires an insight into teachers' knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes and these are not easily codified. It is difficult to account for all the individual characteristics, the particular contexts of the

workplace, and the various educational, organisational, social and political influences that shape the cultures of teaching. To assume cultural uniformity amongst teachers is baseless because of the differences in gender, age, cultural and social backgrounds, education, experience, domestic circumstances, talents and abilities, subject matter and the classes they teach. Because there is a considerable diversity of population in schools and amongst students, "the cultures of teaching are elusive" (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, p.508). Olson (1988, p. 169) contends that " what teachers tell us about their practice is most fundamentally a reflection of their culture, and cannot be properly understood without reference to that culture". Understanding about the nature of teacher cultures can also assist us in knowing how teachers are likely to respond to new reforms and provide guidance for planning the implementation strategies of policy. Further, such insight can aid in the improvement and innovation of teaching practice and facilitate the creation of more effective learning environments (Olson, James & Lang, 1999).

The frames of teacher culture

Across the educational landscape one of the enduring images, derived from Lortie's (1975) early work, is of teachers as individualistic. His view of the autonomous isolation of teachers has been corroborated in other studies, for example, in a national survey in America by Goodlad (1984); and Rosenholtz's (1989) study of 78 schools in Tennessee. To define teaching as a solitary activity presents only a partial view of teachers' work and overlooks their broader interactions and professional exchanges. This picture of isolation is at odds with the substantial studies on the subcultures of secondary school subjects and departments (see, for instance, Ball & Lacey, 1984; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995;

Goodson & Marsh, 1996) and the research on teacher collegiality and collaboration (see, for example, Little, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Riordan, 1996).

In order to understand more fully the nature of teachers' work, and the discourses produced within it, it is helpful to consider the teaching cultures that frame this work and that also contribute to the social and micropolitical contexts in which teaching occurs. In mapping the cultures of teachers' work, the distinctive features that shape the ways teachers connect with their colleagues and work within their schools are described here as frames.

The subject department

A prominent formation within the setting of the secondary school is the subject department. Frequently it is this construction, rather than the school, that is the defining and immediate organisational unit for a secondary school teacher (Siskin & Little, 1995). Although the school site creates an essential physical context for a teacher's work, Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) argue the particular subject discipline and subject department, including the teachers' perceptions about these, contribute to the formation of a conceptual context. This "helps to frame the work of high school teachers and mediates their responses to reform" (p.6). The distinctive beliefs, norms and practices of a subject, shared by the teachers of the same subject, create a subject subculture (Ball & Lacey, 1984). These subcultures create powerful socially constructed contexts for teachers' work and are a common feature of their daily lives (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995). The subject department is not only the micropolitical centre for most teachers but it is also the primary site for the formation of their cultural values and epistemologies. According to Siskin (1994) subject departments have:

> *ethnocentric ways of looking at things. They are sites where distinct groups of people come together and together share in and reinforce the distinctive agreements on perspectives, rules and norms which make up subject cultures and communities* (p.81).

The study of the subject department, the organisational unit of knowledge in secondary schools, has not been widely researched but it is currently a growing area of importance at this time of educational restructuring (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). Subject departments are "particularly important considerations in any reform program or initiative, or indeed any attempt to engage with the issue of quality assurance" (Green, 2000, p.12).

The subject department is frequently the site of contestation and tension over what constitutes knowledge (Siskin & Little, 1995), and how social relations are to be organised in terms of status, experience, latent culture and situational constraints (Ball & Lacey, 1984). The impact of the powerful social relations at work within a department – the friendships, alliances, and conflicts – the micropolitics - creates a primary social world for many teachers that may or may not exist cohesively (Siskin & Little, 1995; Goodson & Marsh, 1996). Talbert (1995, p. 70) advises that "for better or worse, collegial relations and norms of practice within a department appear to matter for how teachers experience their profession and construe their tasks". The subject department is the milieu where teachers pursue their careers, carry out special responsibilities and have leadership opportunities (Goodson, 1995). Importantly, subject departments determine "in crucial ways who teachers are, what they do, where and with whom they work, and how that work is perceived by others" (Siskin & Little, 1995, p.1).

The head of department

Central to this subject formation is the Head of Department, the middle manager charged with responsibility for the academic, pedagogical and cultural shapings of other teachers of the same subject and with performing operational duties and ensuring student learning in that subject. Sikes (1992) considers that the role of Head Teachers is important because their demonstrated values and beliefs can motivate others to follow their example. Significantly, they can define the reality of a department's culture. This view is widely supported in the literature where there is an explicit acknowledgment of the influence and potential agency of Head Teachers (see, for example, Siskin, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995; Goodson & Marsh, 1996; Busher & Harris, 1999). Research by Ball and Rowe (1992) into the attitudes adopted by different school departments towards the implementation of National Curriculum policy in England reveals the important role of Head Teachers. Different subject departments responded in quite different ways. They report that those departments with leaders who could critically engage with the materials, had a strong history of innovation and a commitment to proactive work, were better able to mediate and transform the new curriculum demands. From their case study of the implementation of a school wide change in an Australian high school, Riordan and Chesterton (1999) reach a similar conclusion. They consider departmental heads, through taking an active role in promoting the rhetoric and procedures of a particular change initiative, can provide significant leadership for changes in pedagogy and school culture.

The complexity of the Head Teacher's role is highlighted by Busher and Harris (1999) and Green (2000), amongst others. The literature reports the various functions located within a subject department that are consequently part of a Head Teacher's focus: for example, curriculum and administration (Green, 2000); management of departmental goals and

practices, group collegiality, improvement of staff and student performance, and external liaison (Busher & Harris, 1999); and administration and social relations (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). The challenge is for a Head Teacher's leadership to meet the sometimes competing demands and to exercise influence over a wide sphere of staff subject expertise, personal values and beliefs, pedagogical practices, and resource allocation. Green (2000, p.14) reports that the literature makes clear the critical role the Head of Department has "in curriculum development and policy implementation, in educational change and school renewal," especially with the ever increasing demands placed upon schools. It has been well established that a Head Teacher has the potential to transform the cultural context of the workplace, to work with others to initiate and lead change, to prove moral and academic inspiration, and to influence - through establishing the department's status - the wider school sphere.

Defining the Interior Landscape of Teachers' Work

The domains of teacher culture

To complete the map of the cultures of teachers' work, it is necessary to consider the significant components that compose and shape what teachers know, think, say and do. The interior landscape of teachers' professional identity contains a number of domains that influence their work. Scholars, in their attempts to define teachers' knowledge, beliefs and thoughts, identify many aspects that guide teachers' practice and which contribute to their values and attitudes. There are complex nuances and dialectic connections between the various domains; sometimes they are in harmonious and fluid existence, at other times, competition between them creates tension for teachers.

Research about teacher thinking and knowledge

Since the mid 1970s a significant and growing area of educational research interest concerns what teachers themselves say and think about their work, the stories they tell of their experiences, and the ways in which they represent their knowledge, pedagogy, and practice. Studies investigating teacher thinking illustrate the complexity of teaching and are important in providing insight into the types of knowledge teachers possess, the ways they learn and develop new practices and new knowledge, and how they deal with innovation and change. As Calderhead (1987) claims:

> *Innovative ideas are interpreted and reinterpreted by teachers over a period of time and translated into practice in a process that involves teachers drawing upon several different knowledge bases and interpreting and manipulating various interests* (p.17).

Within the literature varying strands about the domains of teacher culture and its various knowledge bases can be distinguished. Research includes teachers' subject knowledge (Goodson, 1985, 1987; Ball & Lacey, 1995; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995); teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987, 1999; Wilson, Shulman & Rickert, 1987); and the personal practical knowledge that teachers derive from their classrooms (Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Johnston, 1990). Other areas of scholarly investigation are the craft and survival values and norms teachers use (for example, Olson, James & Lang, 1999); the ways knowledge is utilised by teachers (for example, Fullan, 1991); insights into teachers' lives (for example, Ball & Goodson, 1985); the influence of gender upon teachers and their work (for example, Acker, 1989, 1995); the role context plays in informing teachers' decision making (for example, Segal, 1998) and the interrelationship of many of these aspects.

Although teachers' traditional theories appear well adapted to the situations of practice, there is a lack of classification of them (Olson, 2002). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) provide a useful definition of teachers' knowledge that attempts to connect both theory and practice:

> *That body of convictions and meanings, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from experience (intimate, social, and traditional) and that are expressed in a person's practices* (p.7).

They dispute the idea of any separation between theory and practice. They argue that although these terms create epistemological dilemmas in education, there is a notion of them being at one and simultaneous. In a classroom, practical expression is a quality of knowledge itself rather than being a utilization of it. While teachers have different uses for their knowledge, it operates in a holistic way, combining to orient them towards their work and to provide an impetus for their actions (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). As Schon (1983) points out it is very difficult to separate knowledge from practice and to describe what it is that teachers know. In his view, "our knowing is in our action" (p. 49).

The domains identified and considered here are drawn from the substantial literature about teachers' work. The frames discussed earlier highlight the exterior patterns and the micropolitical and social relationships of teacher cultures; the domains presented below acknowledge the interior influences on each teacher. These domains reflect the uniqueness in the formation, representation, and action of a teacher's work and culture. It should be noted that these domains are not entirely independent of each other. They capture what teachers believe, think and know about their subjects in particular, and the curriculum in general, and how they operationalise this through the ways they think, plan and act.

Subject discipline knowledge

A recurrent perception in the field of research is that high school teachers' identities can be realised through their subjects. Esland (1971) makes the assumption that all secondary teachers have a 'subject' identification and "a pedagogical perspective of varying degrees of theoretical consistency and clarity" (p.85). Little (1995) believes that having a subject identity is not just about the content that includes textbooks, assessment and curriculum, "it is more fundamentally a part of being a teacher" (p. 184). There is considerable debate about, and increased research interest in, teachers' knowledge of their subject, and their constructions and representations of its meanings. Clark (1995, p.12) takes the position that "what is most important and most neglected in teaching is the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter". There is a strong link between the nature of schooling and teachers' school subject knowledge because the discourses of school subject knowledge define the parameters for teachers' practice (Goodson & Marsh, 1996).

Teachers' understandings and knowledge of their subjects are shaped by the differing conceptualisations and realisations drawn from each individual's academic background, teaching and life experience, pedagogy, school context, and in some cases, own learning as a secondary student. In fact, Ball (1985) reports that, based upon his research, the most profound influence upon an English teacher's conception of the school subject English and its pedagogy is "equally as likely to be the teacher's own experience as a pupil as their university or college training" (p.81). Further, another important component in teachers' views about their subjects is derived from their perceptions of their particular obligations to their students (Little, 1995). As discussed earlier, teachers' leadership of particular subject departments can exert a strong influence over their ideas of their subject and their professional identity. These

elements all shape and define the nature and discourses of their academic subject (Siskin, 1994), and establish aspects of its epistemology such as teaching methods, values, curriculum and assessment, and content selection (Busher & Harris, 1999).

The nature of school subjects

Siskin and Little (1995) claim an emergent theme from debate about subjects includes the identification of what constitutes knowledge of the subject discipline. The stakeholders involved in this exploration include teachers, professional associations and academics who all "defend their canons, add to them, or adjust what it is they do" (p. 13). Within any subject there exist rival Discourses and factions where debate circulates around pedagogical practices, theoretical perspectives, core knowledge, and social purposes (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). These competing schools of thought gain continuity through time and can be characterised as subject "traditions" (p. 33). Ball (1985. p.53) states there are "internally differentiated epistemological communities prone to disputation over the content of subject knowledge and appropriate methodology". From their studies of teachers in different subjects, Grossman and Stodolsky (1995, p.10) conclude that those in subjects "characterised by greater scope and greater theoretical dissension, such as English ... will find it more difficult to reach consensus around specific standards".

The subject discipline and school subjects

A general distinction is made in the literature between a subject discipline with its epistemic community where meaning is open to debate and various interpretations, and the subject as it exists in schools. The significant difference is that the subject department is "a crucial mediating context in the translation of knowledge from the level of 'subject communities'

into the students' experience of 'subjects' in the process of classroom interaction" (Ball & Lacey, 1995, p. 99). Ball and Lacey (1995, p.95) believe that because "subjects are not monoliths; rather they are contextual realisations" teachers create their own meanings and define their subject based on their own values, knowledge and contexts. Rogers (1997, p.686) identifies inherent differences between a school subject and its original epistemic discipline, whereby "the common translation of disciplinary knowledge into school subjects lacks the animating factors that characterise a disciplinary field –the process of inquiry and building knowledge". Rogers fails to consider the connection teachers make to different conceptions of knowledge in his focus on the content of school subjects. He claims "the 'subjects' are so identified with and defined by content (the concepts, facts or topics associated with the subject) that they are disconnected from the modes of inquiry from which the particular concepts and understandings of the subject emerged". This opinion appears to ignore teachers' academic backgrounds and the dynamics of learning. It also overlooks the process of ongoing shaping and recasting that a school subject undergoes as teachers work with their particular classes.

By contrast, Shulman (1999) describes teachers' scholarship in the content discipline as resting on two foundations: "the accumulated literature and studies" of the content area, and "the historical and philosophical scholarship on the nature of knowledge" in the field of study" (p.65). In his view, teachers should have a depth of understanding of their subject beyond its content, to include its structures, critical issues, and conceptual framework that remains current and informed. Taking quite a different perspective, Olson, James and Lang (1999) believe that the demands of the contemporary knowledge-filled society and students' desires for autonomous learning challenge the traditional authority of teachers as possessors of superior knowledge at subject level. They see a necessary transformation occurring in

teachers' identity from their preeminence as subject experts to reflective, adaptive life long learners.

Although there is no general agreement in the research about the precise nature of teachers' subject discipline knowledge because "school subjects themselves are problematic" (Green, 2000, p.11), it is worth considering Esland's (1971, p.78) point that "teachers have certain core assumptions about their 'subjects'". Teachers' connections to their particular subject appear to be influential, and as Little (1995, p. 186) notes, teachers' subject identity is much more than just a "label".

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The concept of teachers' "pedagogical content knowledge" was first articulated by Shulman (1986, p. 10; 1987, p. 8) who sought to classify the domains and types of teachers' knowledge (including content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curricular knowledge), and the ways this knowledge is portrayed. In his view, pedagogical content knowledge blends content and pedagogy "into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (1987, p.8). Shulman (1999) argues that pedagogical reasoning is as much a part of teaching as is the actual performance because "teaching necessarily begins with a teacher's understanding of what it is to be learned and how it is to be taught" (p. 63). A major source of a teacher's pedagogical knowledge base is scholarship in the content discipline. Wilson, Shulman and Rickert (1987) characterise pedagogical content knowledge as a way of decision making that assists in the transformation of content for teaching. They believe that the "ability to represent the subject matter is an important aspect of an

individual's subject knowledge" (p. 109). Shulman's work is a starting point for several researchers investigating subject specific knowledge and exploring the links between teachers' content knowledge and their pedagogy.

Banks, Leach and Moon (1999) are critical of Shulman's conception because they believe it views knowledge as too fixed with the focus centred too strongly on the teacher's knowledge and skills at the expense of attention to the processes of student learning. Shulman (1987) acknowledges this perspective and the emphasis he places upon the intellectual basis for teaching, but thinks that teachers' outcomes needs to be considered as do those of students. The term 'pedagogical content knowledge' highlights one component of the professional knowledge base of teachers – the content as well as the pedagogy of the subject matter - although it does not fully address the related aspects of students' learning activities. It is interesting to speculate, however, as to whether some teachers do see their knowledge, particularly of their subject content, and the pedagogical strategies that they use to convey this, as contained and enduring.

According to Clark (1995, p.70), "teachers can discover what they believe by telling it to another," and therefore, they "make their implicit theories explicit". He suggests this "can affect how they teach and see and act subsequently". This is a debatable position and it is worth noting the warning Anderson and Burns (1989) give about not assuming that those teachers who are able to express more detailed knowledge of their subject or pedagogy are necessarily more effective teachers. Also at odds with Clark' s opinion is Shulman's (1987) work on the conceptualisation of teachers' knowledge where he indicates "teachers themselves have difficulty in articulating what they know and how they know it" (p.6). At

issue here are the discursive practices that may mask what teachers actually know and do, and the necessity for us to investigate both teachers' rhetoric and the reality of the classroom.

Personal Practical Knowledge

Recent qualitative research has investigated new ways of understanding teachers' 'personal practical knowledge' and this enhances our consideration of teachers' biographical and personal viewpoints (Goodson, 1997). As Koswnen (1994) points out definitions of teachers' practical knowledge and practical theories are an "interesting starting point for studying teachers' curriculum knowledge and curriculum action" (p.251). Connelly and Clandinin (1988, p.250) use the term "personal practical knowledge" to describe what a teacher knows of a classroom, that knowledge being broadly defined to include classroom practices. Personal practical knowledge as a concept "embodies a dialectical view of theory and practice" (Clandinin, 1986, p.20), where practice can be seen as theory in action, the two being inseparable.

In their review of the literature on teachers' knowledge and learning, Randi and Corno (1997) identify several studies which have characterised "teachers' knowledge as personal and experiential, based in episodic memories and stories of particular cases or instances" (p. 1196). They believe this research provides one framework for examining teachers' thinking, particularly when they implement new methods into their teaching practice. One of the difficulties of defining practical knowledge is that there is an inadequate vocabulary for explaining and describing much of what is tacit and unspoken (Clandinin, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). As Schwab (1959) argues, what is an appropriate description for one teacher in a specific context does not transfer directly for others in differing contexts.

Personal practical knowledge and images

Research by Elbaz (1983), Clandinin (1986), Connelly and Clandinin (1985, 1988), Johnston (1990) and Clandinin and Connelly (1995), reports that images are a component of a teacher's personal practical knowledge. Zaleski (2003) considers that the metaphors teachers use can represent the ways they think about their own learning. Images and metaphors can describe and provide information about the teacher's views about classroom teaching and learning. Clandinin (1986), based upon her two years of study of two elementary school teachers, considers teachers' personal practical knowledge includes images that represent their values, feelings, and aesthetics. These images may have their origins in actual events, reflections, beliefs or emotions (Clandinin, 1986). The following definition from Clandinin (1986) identifies the way an image can be used to convey a distinctive domain of experience:

> *Image is a personal, meta-level, organizing concept in personal practical knowledge in that it embodies a person's experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken* (p.166).

Elbaz (1983, p.137) defines an image as "a brief descriptive and sometimes metaphoric statement" which captures some fundamental aspect of a teacher's perceptions. It is related to a teacher's practical principles, encompasses "the teacher's feelings, values, needs and beliefs" (p.134), and finds its substance in the teacher's school experience and theoretical knowledge.

In their discussion of Elbaz's (1983) meta-level analysis of Sarah, a Canadian high school English teacher, and her use of her knowledge in practice, Randi and Corno (1997) note the

structures of practical knowledge that Elbaz identifies: rules of practice, practical principles, and images. They report:

> *Practical principles were defined as general constructs that may be acquired from theoretical viewpoints or intuitively out of experience. And, images were defined as personal pictures or visions of what teaching should be. Images are constructed from teachers' personal beliefs and experiences, theoretical knowledge, and school context* (p.1198).

Randi and Corno (1997) believe that the work of both Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1986) makes a meaningful contribution through their connection of teachers' knowledge with curriculum development and implementation. Elbaz (1983) considers her research shows teachers to possess both cognitive and affective knowledge, and that they use this knowledge in various ways that reveal them to be active, purposive and autonomous. Similarly, Clandinin (1986) concludes that the teacher is "an active knowing agent" (p. 9). Her research acknowledges that teachers need to have their personal practical knowledge recognised because "failure to understand the teacher as an active holder and user of personal practical knowledge helps explain the limited success of curriculum implementation" (p. 364). Both researchers stress the active agency of teachers operating as individuals.

As Johnston (1990) points out from her study of how six teachers developed and implemented a new subject in their respective secondary schools, "significant curriculum decisions were interwoven inextricably with the personality and beliefs of the teacher" (p. 467). Johnston employs and adapts the research perspective of personal practical knowledge with an emphasis on describing the images individual teachers use in their curriculum decision making. She suggests that these images are not expressed consciously, "but clues to images

come in threads or themes which persist in speech" (p. 464). The various images that emerge encapsulate and explain the teachers' knowledge, perspectives, and experiences, and are drawn from their personal and professional activities. For some of the teachers, these images operate as organising constructs that draw together and permeate their actions. Johnston (1990) concludes that the curriculum decision making by the teachers in her study "was seen as a personal activity rather than as an activity shaped largely by discrete or external factors" (p. 468). It is important to note that this curriculum change was initiated locally by the individual teachers and focused on their personal views of changes to teaching, rather than being driven by wider scale external reform or mandated policy changes. Johnston's (1990) acknowledgement that images are often subconscious, and Connelly and Clandinins' view (1988, p.182) that images suggest "modes of knowing" which are like "tools" integrated into the consciousness for use in plans, add to our understanding of the conceptual processes by which teachers take action in their classrooms.

The nature of teachers' subjectivities

Studies of teachers' knowledge and its domains form a picture of teachers possessing and employing knowledge to frame their daily work and to direct classroom practice. This research contributes a further dimension to the complex map of teachers' cultures that is being presented. The content of teachers' minds provides a rich source for investigation of their motivations, epistemologies, beliefs, knowledge and actions and the multiple ways in which these complexities are represented. Because, as Elbaz (1990, p.19) suggests "teachers' knowledge is not logically sequenced or linear", the non-linear quality of metaphorical representations can provide insight into the complex workings of teachers' interior landscapes.

Whilst some norms and practices have been highlighted in the literature there are also uniquely personal aspects that play a key role in shaping each individual's contribution to the teaching and learning processes within different contexts. Teachers' subjectivities are created by many influences and are expressed in a variety of ways, and the knowledge base for teaching is not fixed and unchanging. However, these individual qualities occur within various social and political structures and constraints. As Goodson (1997) notes, it is also important to recognise the wider public contexts in which this personal thinking and knowledge is performed because the teacher's life and work are also "politically and socially constructed" (p.137). Significant components that extend teachers' work into a broader, public terrain include their beliefs, knowledge and decision making about curriculum, and their relationships to the implementation of educational change processes.

Curriculum Knowledge and Beliefs

The role of teachers in curriculum

The research suggests that, on the whole, teachers have a transformative capacity to adapt a published curriculum to their own knowledge and beliefs, students and contexts, and therefore, they inevitably create a change from the planners' original intentions. Of course, "learning rarely, if ever, occurs in the ways that curriculum planners, including teachers, anticipate" (Leach & Moon, 1999, p. 271). Teachers' transformations of curriculum initially occur through their planning. How teachers make these curriculum decisions reflects their personal aesthetics, biases, backgrounds and expertise, and the domains of their various knowledge bases and beliefs. Teachers' thinking and decision making are significant elements of the "psychological context" (Clark & Yinger, 1987, p.84) in which curriculum interpretation and action occurs.

From their review of a number of studies on teachers' planning, Clark and Yinger (1987) conclude that teachers begin their curriculum planning with content and contextual aspects such as the available resources and instructional time. Then, in priority order, they consider their students, the aims, the learning situation, and finally, the criteria for making judgments and evaluation. Following a similar line, and based on a review of several Finnish studies, Koswnen (1994) considers most teachers generally show a greater reliance on learning materials than planning from the written curriculum document. Empirical research conducted by Hargreaves (1998b) investigating curriculum changes implemented by Canadian grade 7 and 8 teachers reveals

> *teachers started with knowledge and feelings about their students, with intuitive understandings about what would be likely to excite and engage those students, and with their own passions and enthusiasms about ideas, topics, materials and methods they could picture working with their classes* (p. 572).

Drawing on their studies of the implementation of new curriculum by Australian Health and Physical Education teachers, Kirk and MacDonald (2001) found that teachers' approaches to the new curriculum documents were determined mainly by their knowledge of their students. Many of the teachers were keen to adapt the materials they already had to fit in with the new syllabus requirements, and the practical realities of their school contexts were exemplified in their obvious concerns with the constraints under which they were operating. Kirk and MacDonald conclude, "learners' needs and abilities, teachers skills and motivation and the obdurate, practical features of classroom life are very real and significant considerations when teachers attempt to introduce reforms into their classrooms" (p. 560). Taken together, this research suggests that generally teachers will transform curriculum through their decision making to suit their own preferences for materials and topics, because of their students, and as

a result of the influence of their local contexts. An order of priority has not yet been established in the literature as to which of these various factors is the most influential.

Curriculum interpretation and teachers' responses

Curriculum policies are interpreted by teachers' knowledge and practices and curriculum is operationalised in a process that has been portrayed as 'dialogical' (Freire, 1973). The mediation of curriculum intention and its construction by teachers is a significant component in the complex implementation of change. However, as Parker and McDaniel (1992, p.98) point out, "mediation of curriculum intentions by teachers remains essentially a black box. Much happens, no doubt, but just what happens is largely unknown". Further to this, Weiner (1994, p.66) believes "any analysis of the impact of curriculum policy necessarily has to consider its interpretation as well as its intention or impact". Based upon the understandings drawn from poststructuralist theory and the work of scholars such as Derrida (1972) and Foucault (1978) over the past twenty years, it is now realised that each reader and audience actively constructs meaning and their own responses from texts. This view has direct application to the interpretation of curriculum documents by teachers. Because of the variety of possible readings that may be derived from prescribed curriculum documents, different potentials and interpretations may be realised in different contexts. Constructed meanings are potentially contradictory and different versions can be produced through both oral and written discourses. Apple (2001, p.85) argues that although changes in curriculum can be legislated by the State in policy documents, "all texts are leaky documents". In other words, "they are subject to 'recontextualization' at every stage".

Sikes (1992, p.38) notes that "there is often a great gulf between rhetoric and reality, between what is intended by the authors of the change and how the change actually turns out".

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) take the view that a teacher's 'personal practical knowledge' is a key determinant for classroom action and that theory and practice have a dialectic relationship rather than being separate entities. Grundy (1998), drawing on Stenhouse's early work about the importance of teachers' judgments in curriculum decision making, maintains that:

> *Since the curriculum is constructed in every act of teaching, teachers cannot wriggle out of responsibility for the curriculum by claiming to be simply implementers of something that gains its legitimacy elsewhere* (pp.33-34).

However, as Goodson (1995, p.19) argues, the "preactive construction may set important and significant parameters for interactive realisation in the classroom". Some things are already shaped or set in place before they reach the stage of classroom enactment. English (2000, p.30) adopts a similar position when he suggest that the selection of knowledge for inclusion in curriculum is "fundamentally a political act" whereby some benefit and others are excluded.

Curriculum change and teachers' responses

An overview of the breadth of literature available on teachers and change reveals there are a number of ways that teachers respond to imposed educational change and new curriculum implementation. Some teachers may respond as if nothing at all has happened (Sikes, 1992). Others may appear to change but "sometimes what teachers say suggests that changes have taken place but in reality the gap between rhetoric and practice is wide" (Sikes, 1992, p. 45). A gap may also appear between the operative or enacted curriculum compared to the one that is documented or espoused by teachers. This is described as "loose-coupling theory" (Reynolds & Saunders, 1987, p. 212) and this theory acknowledges the "dissociation of

discourse and practical conduct" within curriculum. Reynolds and Saunders (1987, p.212) explain that "this discrepancy develops because teachers find themselves espousing goals that are ambitious, broad, and often mutually conflicting, while having poorly articulated, poorly understood means for achieving those goals". The actual outcomes for students also need to be considered when viewing teachers' responses to change. Grundy (1998, p.30) thinks "what students learn in school is both more and less than, and in some cases, even a contradiction of, that which is contained in the officially documented curriculum (i.e., policy documents, syllabus documents and teachers' programs)".

Other studies of teachers' responses to mandated change include Acker's (1999) intensive ethnographic study of the primary school Hillview. She concludes, "material realities and school cultures influence the form taken by innovation" (p. 182). Her investigation, over several years, into the working lives of primary teachers who were dealing with the introduction of the National Curriculum and Assessment in England, identifies their many concerns about the changes and the daily realities of their attempts at reform. She observes that "teachers tried to square the circle: adapting to the new requirements while preserving their traditional ideologies" (p. 176). In other words, a process of adaptation occurs whereby reforms are made to fit the teachers' knowledge and their vision of their school, and thus, constructed to suit their prevailing local culture. Acker believes "teachers respond to imposed reform creatively with a certain amount of agency ... rather than mechanically and as victims of forces beyond their control" (p. 181). The lesson she draws from her study is for reformers to consult the local experts - the teachers- and to provide guidelines for change rather than impose it so as to allow each school culture to structure its own reform.

In a recent study, after three years of implementation of the National Curriculum in England, White (2004, p.180) argues there is much evidence available that "the curriculum experience becomes 'stuck' and increasingly disengaged from both the wider discipline and the lived experience of the teacher and student". He claims there are still echoes of "the prevailing orthodoxy of approach". Many factors contribute to this, including "the tug of custom" (p. 182), the demands upon teachers' time, and the various agendas promoted by different interest groups. White believes a critical challenge ahead is for the key knowledge-centred curriculum subjects to reform their identities to meet contemporary challenges, "to sift through their traditional content and reshape this in line with personal and social requirements" (p. 186). Looking towards the future prospects of centralised curriculum, he considers "the less prescription there is about requirements within school subjects, the more room there can be for imaginative and locally-responsive patternings at school level" (p. 190).

Senge (1999, p.13) believes "deep changes – in how people think, what they believe, how they see the world – are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve through compliance". A recurrent theme in the literature is that what matters cannot be mandated (see, for instance, Fullan 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; McLaughlin, 1998), and that policy is not able to do this - the more complex a change is, the less it can be forced.

Changes in teachers' practices

The research indicates that teachers frequently emphasise the practical in their instructional decision making. Thornton (1992, p.87) claims it is well established in the literature that "most teachers are preoccupied with 'practical' questions of 'what works'". Similarly, Brown and McIntyre (1993) agree that the key for teachers is what is practical, and that teachers' perceptions of impracticality is a major constraint in their acceptance of innovation. Fullan

(1991, p.72) describes practical changes as "those that address salient needs, that fit well with the teachers' situation, that are focused, and include concrete how-to-do-it possibilities". He considers teachers require understanding of the "operational meaning" (p. 128) of change, in other words, clear knowledge of what the change needs in terms of cost (personal and monetary), procedures, and how it will fit with their conditions and those of their students.

Scholars acknowledge that merely providing new documents and information to teachers will not change their behaviours. McCormick (1999) indicates that:

> *a normative re-educative strategy is required to enable teachers to change their attitudes, beliefs, values, knowledge, skills, roles and relationships so that curriculum change can take place* (p.216).

This position is in direct contrast to empirical-rationalist strategies that assume change will occur if teachers are shown the effectiveness of a particular idea or new practice based upon research, or if they are coerced by mandatory legislation. However, Hargreaves (1997, p. 18) states, unless "the passions of the classroom" are engaged, then pedagogical changes will fail. The mere spelling out of new requirements by authorities does not ensure teachers will implement change. The American Rand Change Agent study, conducted from 1973 to 1978, which examined four federally funded programs of change agency in schools, contributed a finding that has become "almost a truism: it is extremely difficult for policy to change practice" (McLaughlin, 1998, p. 71).

Scott (1999, p.47) advises the "hardest phase of change is making an innovation work in practice, not planning or pre-specifying and documenting it in minute detail". In his discussion of the implementation of educational change, Fullan (1991) states this involves a

change in a teacher's practice in the use of materials and resources; in the teaching strategies adopted; and the most difficult to achieve, in the teacher's own beliefs. In his view, for a successful change in practice to occur, it must do so in these identified and interrelated dimensions. He also notes, it is possible for teachers to adopt only one aspect of change, for example, to use new materials but to retain their former teaching approaches, or to alter some of their strategies without examining the underlying conceptions. One of the difficulties Fullan highlights is that "there is no assumption about who develops the materials, defines the teaching approaches, and decides on the beliefs" (p. 38). Ultimately, "shared meaning" (p. 46) has a critical role to play in the realisation of change; "change works or doesn't work on the basis of individual and collective responses to it" (p.43).

Changes in teachers' beliefs

As Fullan (1991, 1993) indicates, changes in teachers' beliefs are difficult to achieve. He acknowledges that the "hardest core to crack is the learning core: all of our attempts to alter formal structures will not necessarily change the norms, habits, skills and beliefs that have shaped our current conceptions of that learning core, the curriculum" (1993, p.49). Shepard (1995, p.512) characterises human behaviour and cognition as being oriented to the "status quo". In this way, he suggests, "resistance to change then, may be viewed as a product of previously established, automatic processing routes, the constructivist nature of individual learning, and the emotional attachments people acquire to their personal beliefs". Teachers' beliefs are frequently deeply held. For example, in her study of assessment - driven change, Cheng (1999) reports that changes in 1993 to the external English examination in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education did not assist efforts to fundamentally change how English was taught. Teachers adjusted their classroom work to fit in with the exam requirements but few

of their pedagogical beliefs about English actually changed. "The change of the public examination could, to a large extent, change the content of teaching, even the way activities were carried out, but very little change in the interaction pattern between teachers and students could be found" (p. 269).

Conceptual change is rarely created through imposing new content as it requires a deeper engagement with teachers' beliefs and the contexts in which these beliefs are expressed. Olson, James and Lang (1999) observe that teachers are not given many opportunities to reflect on and evaluate educational reform, and that they lack occasions for dialogue within many professional development programs. In the case of significant change, such as in "the subject definition or the nature of the related pedagogy ... teachers will be required to reflect anew on their practice" (p.79). Whereas this type of reform might create opportunities for professional growth, the failure to provide in-service that allows teachers to participate fully and to enhance their potential for innovation and new experiences, significantly reduces such possibilities (Olson, James & Lang, 1999). Because educational change involves new learning, "if there is any single factor crucial to change it is professional development" (Fullan, 1991, p. 289).

Exploring the nature of Teachers' Professional Development

Types of professional development for teachers

A variety of strategies can be identified in the literature regarding the ways of assisting teachers in their implementation of change, particularly through different forms of professional development. These include, giving teachers more opportunities to talk about

change and its meaning (Fullan, 1991); promoting interpersonal contact and mutual support (Fullan, 1991; Lieberman, 1995); real collaboration amongst teachers as opposed to contrived collegiality (Little, 1990; Hargreaves 1994); and active leadership and support by professional associations and outside consultants (Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1997b; Naylor & Bull, 2000). Further advice that is presented in the research includes treating teachers as adult learners (Scott, 1999; Nayler & Bull, 2000); enhancing critical reflection on practice (Olson, 1992; Butler, 1996; Naylor & Bull, 2000); encouraging teachers to solve their own local problems (Randi & Corno, 1997); creating an appropriate learning environment for teachers (Nayler & Bull, 2000); ensuring teachers' active involvement in their own learning (Lieberman, 1995; Butler, 1996; Naylor & Bull, 2000); and allowing time for the phasing in and out of materials (Reynolds & Saunders, 1987).

A report by the Australian Commonwealth Government (2000), Teachers for the 21st Century, summarises many of the issues identified in the research.

> *On the balance the research evidence confirms the value of ongoing teacher professional development. This investment is maximised when teachers work together within their school communities to identify goals, define standards and expectations, review and refine teaching practices and prioritise areas for action and improvement. They accept responsibility for assessing the impact of their teaching on student outcomes and report on and are accountable for these outcomes* (pp. 8-9).

This report highlights a view of teachers as collaborative learners. However, in general it appears that professional development programs are "created for teachers with little input from teachers themselves" (Naylor & Bull, 2000, p. 53). Butler (1996) considers that the dominant training model in current use has limited effectiveness because it is "an externally

prescribed skilling process rather than a problem-correcting process focusing on personal beliefs, values and experiential knowledge" (p. 268). This is usually available outside the workplace with teachers required to return to their schools and implement what they have gained at the training.

An extension of this form is the train-the-trainer model, "based on one lead trainer developing a highly skilled core group of teachers from around the state, who would in turn conduct workshops in their regions" (Sayre, 2002, p. 3). Participants at the workshops return to their schools and use the materials and skills they have gained to assist the professional development of their colleagues. These programs are frequently framed to present an instrumentalist approach, that is, "an authorised body of knowledge and a repertoire of accepted and transferable skills" (Naylor & Bull, 2000, p. 54). However, as Sachs (2001) states, teachers have multiple professional identities, there is no single discourse that satisfactorily shapes teacher professionalism. This reveals, then, the inherent dangers of adopting a 'one size fits all model' to meet teachers' diverse needs. Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) remind those preparing professional development programs that they must be responsive to the particularities of subject-specific issues and avoid overly generic approaches to new curriculum or pedagogical initiatives. Of particular note is Fullan's (1993, p. 68) opinion that "people learn new patterns of behavior primarily through their interactions with others not through front-end training designs". Lieberman (1995, p. 591) also points out that professional development programs for teachers do not generally utilise "a wide array of learning opportunities ... in experiencing, creating, and solving problems, using their own experiences, and working with others". Where teachers are not encouraged to create their own solutions to complex problems, and generic programs are adopted instead, teachers become "passive consumers" (Randi & Corno, 1997, p. 1177).

In their review of recent research on teachers' professional identity, Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) acknowledge the importance of agency in the professional development process whereby teachers actively construct their own learning through individual and collaborative activity. Naylor and Bull (2000, p.61) characterise four key roles for a teacher's professional development, at both individual and organisational level, as those of "collaborative learner, creator of knowledge, designer of purposes, and participant in power sharing". A strong theme is evident in the research that teachers need to be supported in their professional growth and there can be no simple prescription for fostering teacher learning.

Bringing the field together

This review of the literature on the work of teachers, their contexts and their cultures confirms that the landscapes in which they conduct their professional activities are extraordinarily complex. The contemporary postmodern context of teachers' work, framed by its organisational structures and cultures, and the various domains of their knowledge, thoughts and beliefs, contribute to the ways in which teachers' decision making and practices are conducted. The impact of curriculum change adds further complexity to the forces challenging their professional identities. As the demands of teaching continue to intensify, there is a greater requirement for professional development to empower teachers to deal with their multiple roles within education in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: CONTESTING THE TERRITORY OF ENGLISH

Introduction

This second review chapter surveys the literature pertaining to the Discourses of the subject English to provide an overview of its constructed and contested identity. It presents what researchers say about three areas: the nature of this subject, English teachers' perceptions of the subject, and teachers' pedagogical approaches to teaching English in the secondary school. The method taken is to continue the conceptual framework introduced in the preceding chapter. The use of the geographic metaphor to shape the review material is sustained here but with a further metaphorical addition in terms of a battle or contest that occurs within the territory of English.

Defining subject English

Exploring battle metaphors

The search for ways to explain the disparate nature of school subjects and to characterise their identifying features leads scholars to appropriate various images and descriptions. The use of metaphorical language in explanations enhances our comprehension and deeper appreciation, helps us to understand uncertainties, and creates a "poetic suggestiveness" (Morgan, 1997, p. 84). Metaphors in our discourses shape reality in one particular way rather than another. They

"structure the way we think and act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way" (Fairclough, 1992, p.194). The particular metaphorical clusters of geography and battle used to conceptualise this review can also be identified in the literature. In their discussion of historical studies of secondary school subjects, Goodson and Marsh (1996) note that the curriculum "far from being a stable and dispassionately constructed unity, is in fact a highly contested, fragmented and endlessly shifting terrain" (p.31). Within this unsettled ground, specific descriptions of subject English are also located, presented through these similar metaphoric patterns of contention and geography. In Belsey's (1980, p.13) opinion, English is a "site of struggle". Medway (1990) views the "territory of English" as "ill-defined and weakly defended" (p.2). Ball, Kenny and Gardiner (1990) perceive the teaching of English to be a matter of strife and conflict, and they acknowledge there are inherent political interests in, and attempts to control, the nature of the subject. From most accounts in the literature, English is a subject that exists within a "battleground" (Goodson & Medway, 1990, p. viii) over its meanings, discourses, pedagogies, and purposes. The "complex and contradictory character" (Green & Beavis, 1996, p. 1) of English, its "ambivalent status" (Medway, 1990, p.1), and "the shifting multiplicity of subjects covered by the term" (Pope, 1998, p. 54) incite considerable debate and passion amongst its practitioners. In fact, Davies (1996) maintains that "English teachers have often preferred deep conviction to cool analysis" (p. 13). Linking the two metaphoric patterns, Evans (1993) characterises the English curriculum "as a field of opposing forces or tensions" (p.6).

Exploring disputed views

What forms the distinctive body of knowledge for English, and its accompanying pedagogy, has been disputed throughout the history of the subject. Differing theoretical and instructional

positions have been advanced to identify its character and epistemology. Dixon (1991) suggests it is difficult to analyse the history of English in terms of a dominant ideology. Ball (1985) also adopts the generally held view that there is not a unified conception of English, and he considers that there are particular versions of the subject in operation that are promoted by different interest groups and which compete across various epistemic communities. Further, Goodson and Medway (1990) note that English has been affected over time by changes to schooling and educational and literary theories, and that it has also been subject to political control. Another significant challenge to the subject's constitution is being made through the impact of the wider social and cultural changes occurring in the twenty-first century. The contemporary context of postmodernity adds to the already contentious nature of English. McLaren (1995) identifies the increasing uncertainty that is a hallmark of the postmodern context, acknowledging the unknown places that English will have to explore in the future. He describes a world where "cultural and epistemological borders are breaking down and disciplinary genres are becoming blurred" (p.10).

Exploring geographic metaphors

The geographic metaphor of a "territory" is employed in scholarly literature to convey the multiple components and domains that may be included in considerations of English (Michaels, 2001). Briefly, this metaphor assists in locating certain ideological stances or Discourses through different aspects of mapping and it is a useful means to present the contested terrain of this particular subject, (for example, see Ball, Kenny and Gardiner, 1990; Medway, 1990; O'Neill, 1992; Morgan, 1997; Michaels, 2001). Evidence that clusters of geographic metaphors figure quite prominently in material about the subject area can be found, for example, in the references to the titles of professional association conferences such

as "Reclaiming the territory" and "Elsewheres of potential" (Sommer, 2003, p. 5). Tucker (1996) observes that this metaphoric use by the professional community is a means of exploring the changing nature of the subject. Along the same lines, in his book *Writing the Future*, Kress (1995) attempts "to map out the terrain for the new debate" (p.94) about the future directions of English. Pope (1998) suggests the subject is "like a long geological fault displaying its multi-layered strata in different configurations and with differing degrees of prominence at various places" (p.27). Andrews (1993, p.44) considers "the subject is vast, like a continent" and similarly, Peel's (2000, p.17) description is of "the huge empire of English, its fragmentation and specialisation". Morgan (1997, p.1) situates her account of English and its instructional aspects within "a geography of English" and attempts to offer "ways of 'reading' the world" by providing her "map of critical literacy". Michaels (2001) contributes to this collection by arguing that English is a contoured map that allows for a view of both the elevations and depressions of the various constituents of the subject. This broad territory of English, with its competing constructions, is positioned within a wider educational domain that is also subject to contentious forces. As Symes and Preston (1997) assert "(T)he whole of education tends to be one in which rival discourses compete for sovereignty and control" (p. 5).

Locating descriptions of subject English

The term English is a "complex signifier" (Green & Beavis, 1996, p. 7) which embraces a language or mode of communication, a national identity, and a curriculum subject within its lexicon. Prior to 1900 English did not exist as a separate school subject; it now sits at the centre of most secondary curriculums and is a compulsory study for a majority of students. It is clear from the breadth of literature available that, in the efforts to describe English, scholars

propose numerous definitions that sweep across various historical and academic perspectives. A sample of these descriptions includes the view that English is "all things to all men" (Delves, 1972, p.2); that it is "a civilising and humanising practice" (Holbrook, 1967, p. 18); and that "English is not a straightforward thing, but an *idea*" (Eaglestone, 2000, p. 7). Evans (1993) captures a key question when he asks, "(I)s the subject English literature, language, society, culture, people?" (p.184). Pope's (1998) reflection on this broad field is apt when he considers that the sheer diversity of the "many 'Englishes'" that exist and interrelate – the "historical, geographical, social and media varieties" – suggest "it is perhaps best to see English language/s, literature/s, culture/s as one *and* many" (p.20).

There is a view that a plural form – "English subjects" – may be a preferable indicator of the interdisciplinary and varied nature implied in the notion of English (Green & Beavis, 1996). This plurality highlights the polysemy of English and signifies the diversity that is included within its construction. There are those, including Morgan (1997), who support this idea of multiple "Englishes" to incorporate the conflicting dimensions of both the practices and thinking embedded in the subject. Peel (2000) also praises the "pluralistic approach" that he believes has always typified English and thinks one of its strengths is "living with a certain kind of difference"(p.33). Over recent decades, the characterisation of English has continued to occupy considerable research interest (see, for instance, Ball, 1985; Ball, Kenny, & Gardiner, 1990; Goodson & Medway, 1990; 1990a; Protherough & Atkinson, 1991; Hayhoe & Parker, 1994; Davies, 1996; Green & Beavis, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Pope, 1998; Fuery & Mansfield, 2000; Marshall, 2000; Peel, Patterson & Gerlach, 2000; Michaels, 2001). The various definitions of, and views about, English and its accompanying Discourses may be described as "a series of competing traditions" (Marshall, 2000, p.18). Within this diverse and

contentious field, it is possible to distinguish some of the prevailing beliefs and dominant perspectives.

Mapping the Discourses of subject English

Defining the Discourses

Many of the Discourses within the subject of English reveal an ongoing struggle over its meaning, its content and its pedagogy, and the varying ideological positions adopted by its epistemic community. The literature indicates that within any one site of production, in this case - the English subject community - there may be a number of competing Discourses that will struggle to establish a position of power.

Identifying the Models and Discourses of English

Within the disputed territory of English, in attempts to characterise the subject, some identifying formations are reported. Both across the research field and within the subject community, perhaps surprisingly, there appears to be considerable general agreement about some of the features of the more dominant and observable constructions of subject English. In the literature explanations of, and evidence for, these differing versions of English are presented through the use of curriculum models or subject paradigms that identify the main threads of distinct pedagogical approaches as well as their various theoretical and historical antecedents. Researchers use these various models or frameworks to capture contrary interpretations of English teaching.

Identifying Models of English

In his *Growth Through English* (1967), Dixon utilises a model structure to illustrate three different views of English that he assumes evolved in a successive manner. He acknowledges a 'personal growth' model emerging as a replacement for the emphasis on the earlier skills (literacy) and cultural heritage models. Dixon's own preference for the personal growth model was influential in developments of English in Australia (see, for example, Eagleson, 1982; Watson, 1994). In Britain, *The Cox Report* (1989) identifies five different categories of English as personal growth, cross-curricular, adult needs, cultural heritage and cultural analysis (see Protherough & Atkinson, 1991; Marshall, 2000). The antecedents of these views are evident in the 1975 *Bullock Report* and now these models have been integrated into the National Curriculum in the United Kingdom (Marshall, 2004).

In Australia, Ken Watson's (1994) *English Teaching in Perspective- In the Context of the 1990s* assumes the existence of the following models: cultural heritage, skills, personal growth, and cultural studies, and a new version, the rhetorical model is also outlined. Thomson (2004) distinguishes the differing models of English teaching and incorporates older models into newer ones under the headings: cultural heritage, language skills, personal growth, cultural skills or textuality, and he too speculates on the emergence of a new model called a "rhetorical and ethical model"(p.13). This last model draws on the work of Richard Andrews (1993, p.47) who proposes a definition of rhetoric as the "arts of discourse" and who believes a rhetorical perspective allows for an examination of the function of texts within social contexts. Thomson (2004) considers his new proposal of a "Rhetorical, Ethical, Sociocultural, Political model" would unify the various aspects of previous models in order to assist students

to be responsible and informed about "linguistic, historical, and cultural constructions of reality and subjectivity" (pp. 19 –20).

Not all scholars agree with the differentiation of English into these various models. Although there is some argument for an evolutionary model of the development of English teaching (see Dixon, 1975), others acknowledge the limitations of such a view (see Medway, 1990; O'Neill, 1992; Peim, 1993; Green & Beavis, 1996; Morgan, 1997). The term 'model' itself is problematic as it tends to indicate a particular design for instruction, suggesting some sort of exemplar that teachers follow and that informs their practice. As Patterson (2000) argues, one of the problems with a 'models' approach is that it suggests a linear progression, a perspective of historical periods, which belies the fluidity and continuity of the subject. It is Patterson's belief that "a particular and unchanging pedagogy" (p. 264) has been maintained steadily throughout the differing emphases and theoretical interests of the subject and she asserts aesthetics, ethics and rhetoric are abiding preoccupations across all models or forms of English. O'Neill (1992) presents the idea of 'orientations' to English, identifying four in competition in Australia as Cultural Heritage, New Literacy, Functional English and Cultural Criticism. Morgan (1997) also critiques the use of models, claiming they are doubtful because they indicate "a normative, even exemplary schema for English education and a predetermined form of practice, both of which exist apart from the person who teaches according to that 'model'"(p.2). Morgan's (1997, p.17) own schema to characterise English acknowledges four overlapping categories which she typifies as the aesthetic, ethical, rhetorical and political and her preferred term is 'versions' or 'Discourses'. Her approach is to identify the types of practices implicit in the ideological and political positioning of each version and their associated functions.

Identifying Discourses of English

Because Morgan's (1997) term of 'Discourses' is broader in its conception of English and less evocative of any one of the particular models discussed above, it is adopted in this study. Discourse is used to evoke the linguistic, ideological and social practices that are constituted within certain characteristic ways of conceptualising English in secondary school education. Evidence suggests that the more contemporary Discourses of English retain some of the features of the older models identified in the subject and also show indications of new hybrid versions. Many of the interpretations surrounding subject English originate outside the school and these generate further tension. The influence of politicians, employers, universities, parents and community groups, for example, all contribute to the shaping of potentially vying ideologies and demands (Goodson & Medway, 1990). These various competing values about, and constructions of, the subject have a powerful impact on English teachers and their work.

Although there are a number of related Discourses in English, the acknowledged dominant ones – drawn from the research on 'models' - are outlined briefly below. Each Discourse perceives the role of literature within subject English in a distinctive manner. Even though Discourses are relative to time and place (Cherryholmes, 1988), and some identification is made below of the ascendancy of different Discourses in particular time periods, this should be viewed only as a very general indication. It is important to recognise that these Discourses are not entirely distinct, they overlap, absorb many influences and shift as different elements contribute to, and reconstruct their identities. Worth noting is Pope's (1998) advice that "whatever model or whatever theorist we invoke, the main thing is to attempt to grasp English as a process as well as a series of products" (p.21).

An aesthetic Discourse

The origins of an aesthetic Discourse can be traced back to the influence of Matthew Arnold's (1948) critical and theoretical writings, and the subsequent work of F.R Leavis (1948) and the Cambridge School of the New Critics (Medway, 1990). It promotes a cultural heritage view that great literature – usually identified as the Great Tradition or Western Canon - (see Bloom, 1994) conveys universal human values that transcend time and embody the wisdom of great civilisations and high culture. The written text is privileged over other modes and literary appreciation is fostered through the detailed close analysis of a single text and the study of the author's authoritative meaning (see, for example, Watson, 1994; Fuery & Mansfield, 2000). Literature is seen as the link between literacy and moral education. Through the transmission and examination of the Western cultural heritage, it is assumed students will be educated in formal standards of moral sensibility and aesthetic appreciation. Many English teachers currently practising in Australia were educated in this Discourse during their own academic studies.

An ethical Discourse

John Dixon's (1967/1975) report of the Anglo-American seminar on English teaching, held in Dartmouth in 1966, published in his *Growth Through English,* is widely regarded as a seminal text in English education. Sawyer (2004) considers it to be "one of the most influential books on English teaching ever written" (p.23). Dixon's advocacy of a personal growth model which promotes the development of individual students' personal responses and fosters creativity, self-expression, and engagement with the students' own experiences has had a significant impact on English teaching practice. Meaning is emphasised through flexible activities and processes with particular acknowledgement of speaking and writing and the use

of language in varying contexts. The aim is to enrich students' lives through the exploration of everyday communication, a wide range of texts and media, and the use of reader-response theories (see, for example, Rosenblatt, 1978; Watson, 1994). It was particularly influential in Australia during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Brock, 1993), and views of personal growth informed much of the teaching and learning of that period.

A rhetorical Discourse

The functional emphasis on appropriate expression, the use of a genre approach to written texts, and the notion of explicit instruction to assist the development of literacy skills are components of a rhetorical Discourse (Morgan, 1997). There are varying degrees of attention given to a skills based approach within this framework which range from a drilling in aspects of language and literacy (Watson, 1994; Green & Hodgens, 1996) through to the more recent engagement of socio linguistic and cultural perspectives. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are integrated in this model and importance is given to the student's ability to function in the public domain. Characteristic features of particular text types are emphasised, as is competency in effective language use and knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which it operates. The teaching of genre (for discussion see Corcoran, 1998) and functional grammar (see Halliday, 1985) were influential, particularly amongst academia, in Australia during the late 1980s and 1990s.

A political Discourse

An increasing range of theoretical approaches to English that have their origins in poststructuralism, including Cultural Studies and cultural literacies approaches, have led to more radical discourses which challenge established and conservative notions of texts and

society (see, for example, Apple, 1989; McLaren & Lankshear, 1993; Mellor & Patterson, 1994; Peel, 1994; Lankshear, 1997; Morgan, 1997). Paolo Freire's (1972) work in critical literacy is a strong influence on this Discourse. An emphasis on the effects of power and the ways texts embody cultural, political and social assumptions is central, as is the idea that language creates various meanings rather than communicating any absolute meaning. Typically a wide range of texts of varying media would be studied from different perspectives with these being understood as cultural products that construct particular views. Students are actively encouraged to construct their own meanings and ideologies and reconstruct different readings of a text. A critical approach is taken to the study of language and its effects, extending the study beyond the linguistic into ideological and social practices. This political Discourse, sometimes referred to as a critical literacy approach, is manifested in a number of different ways (Morgan, 1997), and is currently informing many aspects of English curriculum work in Australia (Sawyer, 2002).

An emerging Discourse

The new English Stage 6 syllabus in New South Wales represents a fresh combination of these various Discourses, and its theoretical underpinnings have not yet been analysed fully in the literature. This syllabus was written against the changing literary and theoretical climate of the late twentieth century, and reflects contemporary perspectives in its content, terminology, and text prescriptions. The thinking put forward by Sawyer (2002) is that the Stage 6 syllabus has "broadened the conception of English to include a cultural studies model with an accompanying critical literacy pedagogy, while retaining the traditional emphasis on close textual study" (p.15). Manuel and Brock (2003) maintain that the new syllabus "in many ways reflects more accurately the multifarious educational settings we inhabit, and the diversity of students for whom the curriculum must be constructed" (p.136). They describe "a

blurring of the lines of demarcation in subject English" (p.136) and believe greater possibilities - but also increased demands - have been created for teachers and students. A study by Manuel (2002) reports the significant apprehension and professional fatigue experienced by teachers as they attempt to reshape their practice to meet the challenges of implementing the new HSC Courses. In her analysis of this syllabus, Michaels (2003) identifies a "revolutionary restructure" with "a broader conception of English founded on sociolinguistic understandings of language and meaning, and semiotic and cultural studies approaches to textual study" (p.3). Drawing on the geographic metaphors discussed earlier, she characterises the changes as "a post-colonial re-appropriation of the high ground of the English territory" (p.3). Gibbs et al (2005) also acknowledge the expanded conception of English conveyed in the new syllabus. They believe it comprises an eclectic composition of various elements that allows students the opportunity to think and critique a multiplicity of textual representations. They note that students are encouraged to focus more specifically on the processes of making meaning and on understanding the importance of various contexts to communication.

It is generally recognised in the public domain that this new English Stage 6 syllabus represents a different combination of views about the subject than has previously informed a senior syllabus. However, there is some disagreement over how these inform its nature and its identity. Opinion about the constitution of the new HSC English has attracted considerable debate both within education circles and in the wider community, represented particularly through the popular media. As Sawyer (2002) reports there is criticism of the "alleged downgrading of the canon" and "the alleged influence of trendy literary theory" (p. 15) evident in the syllabus terminology. He identifies concerns expressed about the grouping of texts for study and the range of writing required from students. Because the theoretical

foundations of this syllabus are drawn from across a wide field, and these are implied rather than specified, Manuel and Brock (2003) believe "defending the syllabus in the face of a range of criticisms has been, and continues to be, a thorny enterprise" (p.136). Similarly, Michaels (2003) indicates there is a lack of explicitness in the syllabus about the momentous changes that have occurred to the conception of the subject. However, as Gibbs (1998) notes, "English syllabuses worldwide tend not to be too explicit about their academic or pedagogical bases as opinion about such matters is politically divisive" (p.192). Some teachers, trained in the Leavisite tradition or more familiar with the views of the New Critics, have also queried the validity of the syllabus' theoretical underpinnings and consider the subject content populist and anti intellectual (Gibbs et al, 2005).

This Stage 6 syllabus represents a reinvigoration of senior secondary English in New South Wales and the creation of a new landscape for study. The previous traditional curriculum model of English, with a heavy reliance on an aesthetic perspective and the privileging of canonical texts, has been challenged by the broader textual inclusions of this syllabus. Notions about the subject and its accompanying pedagogies are being shaped by new ways of thinking, acting, constructing and valuing. From the research available, it appears evident that new Discourses about English are in production as various ideologies now compete to position themselves and to mark out fresh territories.

Exploring the Discourses of English teachers

The perspectives of English teachers, their relationships with the varying Discourses of their subject, and the views they hold of their practice have also warranted close investigation by scholars (see, for example, studies by Barnes & Barnes, 1984; Goodwyn, 1992; Peel and

Hargreaves, 1995; Goodwyn & Findlay, 1999; Bousted, 2000; Marshall, 2000; Peel, Patterson & Gerlach 2000; Doecke, Homer & Nixon, 2003). The profession is characterised in various ways across the literature, with Green (1990) arguing that English teaching is "very much a hybrid phenomenon" (p.136).

The place of literature for English teachers

One distinctive feature across this field of research is the emphasis on, and debate about, the role of literature in English and teachers' perceptions of its importance. Richards (1994) criticises the status quo in the subject which is based on perceptions of growth through the centrality of engagement with literature. However, Goodwyn (2002) contends a 'love' of reading drives many English teachers. His research shows that they desire to share their own strong responses to literature with their students, and that this motivation may be embedded powerfully in their classroom discourses and practices. Green (1990) points out that the claim for the centrality of literature in English teaching has never been seriously doubted. Milner (1996) believes literature is "positively saturated in values" (p. 6) and he suggests that English teachers have tended to behave as if they adhere to some implicit aesthetic in their appreciation of literary works. Many scholars identify this attitude as being drawn from the Leavisite aesthetic (see, for example, Eagleton, 1983; Thomson, 1987; Ball, Kenny & Gardiner, 1990; Milner, 1996; Scholes, 1998).

Historically, the nature of the literature included within an English curriculum has always been subject to debate and appropriation by varying interest groups (see, for instance, The Newbolt Report, 1921; Dixon, 1975; Green, 1990; Medway, 1990; Bloom, 1994; Goodson & Marsh, 1996; Manuel & Brock, 2003). The purposes for literary study range from the

inculcation of moral values and civilising influences, the promotion of literacy, and the exploration of socio cultural practices and issues of power (for further discussion, see, for example, Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Beavis, 1996, 2000; Scholes, 1998; Teese, 2000; Gibbs et al, 2005). In acknowledging the rise of postmodernism and the impact of Cultural Studies on subject English, Milner (1996) identifies changes occurring as the focus of literary study now includes texts which are valued for their wider cultural and social constructions.

The place of texts in English teaching

The current use of the word 'texts' instead of literature in English studies reflects a significant and recent shift in conceptions of the subject and its terminology. Texts are "the subject's central signifier" (Beavis, 1996, p.15) and play a key part in the redefining of the English borders. Increasingly non - literary material in different media is incorporated into the subject and the texts being studied represent the greater diversity of the student population and allow for broader, more inclusive teaching practices. The privileging of print literacy is being rethought as the multi literacies of the twenty-first century increasingly blur the boundaries of conventional notions of text (O'Brien, Moje, & Stewart, 2001).

The texts that teachers select for study in their classrooms also provide insight into their constructions of the subject, their values and their pedagogical practices (see, for example, Milner, 1996; Beavis, 2000; Gibbs et al, 2005). Syllabus prescribed text lists reflect and maintain what society determines to be valid knowledge and are inscribed with social, cultural and personal values (McNeil, 1995). Apple (2000) asserts that "texts ... are part of a complex story of cultural politics" (p. 59). English teachers are being encouraged, through the contribution of poststructuralist theory, to open up the potential meanings that may be derived

from a text (Eagleton, 1985). Texts are viewed as "tools for learning and constructing new knowledge" (Wade & Moje, 2001, p.6) and can be studied for what they reveal about their cultural, social, historical and political contexts. There are significant implications for English teachers, therefore, in their selection of texts and how these are subsequently explored in the classroom. As Eaglestone (2000) points out, the ways we read are as important as what we read. Even with the shift to the more expansive term 'text', Green (2003) questions whether teachers' enduring and dominant understanding of English as residing within a text -based paradigm will, in fact, ever alter. He speculates whether, even with the inclusion of new technologies and media, the English community is "still caught up in re-assessing the role and significance of 'literature'" (p. 146).

The place of literacy for English teachers

The research about English teachers' views of their subject reveals an area of disputation over the competing claims of English versus literacy. Some researchers (see, for example, Goodwyn & Findlay, 1999; Goodwyn, 2003) consider there is tension between the two terms, with the more experienced teachers in England, in particular, rejecting descriptions of themselves as English literacy educators. At the same time, literacy itself – especially critical literacy- has become a powerful force in the contemporary Discourses of the subject in Australia (Lankshear, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Doecke, 2002). Green (1999) argues that the relationship between English and literacy may involve "a move away from English, in short, into what may prove to be entirely new curriculum and cultural formation" (p.401). Literacy itself is viewed as a "site of struggle" (Apple, 1987, p. ix), and this component further influences and challenges the already contested boundaries of subject English. This debate reflects some of the wider shifts occurring within the constitution and identity of English, and

there is evidence found of the increasing institutionalisation of language and literacy approaches in Australia (see, for example, Coomber, 1994; Muspratt, Luke & Freebody, 1997; Green, 1999).

However, on balance, it would appear that for many teachers, irrespective of their various Discourses and differing perspectives about English, reading and textual practices remain central to their conception of their subject (Beavis, 1994). To recall what Goodwyn (2002) so appositely says, they 'love' reading. What continues to be contentious and open are the purposes, values and perceptions that motivate and shape English teachers' views and practices of their subject, as are the nature of the texts they select, and the approaches they take to teach these.

Bringing the field together

Over time, the territory of English has been colonised by different settlers who transform the ground and establish new ideas. This has resulted in disputed interests and uncertain claims about ownership. The review of the literature in Chapters 2 and 3 makes it clear that teachers work in complex and changeable contexts and that they experience significant demands upon them in their professional lives. Varied, and frequently conflicting, pedagogical traditions and ideologies shape their professional knowledge landscapes and classroom practices, and the contemporary postmodern environment requires their constant attention to numerous educational, curriculum, and socio - cultural and political issues. For English teachers, in particular, special challenges emerge because of the contentious nature of their subject, its competing traditions, and the emerging influences of new and somewhat unstable epistemologies. Cherryholmes (1988) provides a relevant battle metaphor, not only for the

changing positions and ideologies that shape the Discourses within subject English, but applicable also to some of the wider issues of educational change shaping the field under study.

Cherryholmes (1988) provides a relevant battle metaphor, not only for the changing positions and ideologies that shape the Discourses within subject English, but applicable also to some of the wider issues of educational change shaping the field under study.

> *The history of curriculum theory and practice can be read as a series of repeated invasions of organising ideas that command attention for a while before they are turned out by the next invasion* (p.141).

Goodwyn (2003) argues that the proliferation of change in contemporary education, especially in terms of policy, means, "English teachers feel threatened at the core of their professional identity, their values and knowledge" (p. 124). On the other hand, Green (2003) believes new possibilities are emerging for a transformation of the subject and its practices as a result of the various shifts in operation. This review confirms the rapidly evolving nature of the subject and the complex dimensions of the landscapes in which English teachers complete their work. Particularly since the later stages of the twentieth century, this huge territory of English is beset by 'repeated invasions'. As a result, its boundaries are continually expanding, its Discourses and pedagogical approaches are shifting, and new challenges and conflicts are emerging for the teachers of this subject.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter presents the method that was used to conduct the research and the ways in which the data were gathered, managed, analysed and reported. The limitations of the study are identified and the conclusion suggests the potential for the transferability of this research to other contexts.

This study posed the following research questions:

- What is the nature of the discourses and practices of teachers when a new syllabus is introduced?

  and

- What are the implications of this analysis for theories of curriculum change?

The central concern of the research was to investigate the responses of New South Wales' teachers of 2001 Higher School Certificate English to a new syllabus and to analyse their actions in its implementation. It sought to examine the ways in which the teachers' discourses and their teaching practices about change were related to each other. As Fullan (1991, p.117) suggests "educational change depends on what teachers do and think". This research was designed to explore what the teachers said, thought, and did about the new English Stage 6 syllabus and how they represented their views and actions about the processes of change. The

intention was to hear the voices of teachers as they embarked on a new voyage to an unknown world as they delivered significant curriculum changes to their students within their own English classrooms.

Development of the Research method

The qualitative research paradigm

In order to answer the research questions, this study was developed predominantly within a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative researchers are "concerned with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of reference" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2). Qualitative research seeks to understand and explain human behaviour and the ways in which people make and construct meanings. It attempts to describe what these meanings are and their significance within specific social settings. Although there is no one unified or agreed upon conception of qualitative research, and it draws on multiple methodologies and epistemological theories (Denzin, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994), it does afford a way to explore people's responses and behaviours - the subject matter of the social sciences. Because the aim of this research was to investigate individuals' perceptions of a particular phenomenon and to explore how they behaved in response to that event, the qualitative approach therefore, provided an appropriate lens for the study. The essential concern here was to examine how the participants made meaning of their lived experiences of a particular event of change within their own school settings.

Qualitative research is also an appropriate frame for research that investigates what teachers are saying and how this translates into what they do in the classroom because it provides

researchers with a method to explore words and the meanings people ascribe to them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participants' discourses about the new syllabus and subject English and their own representations of their classroom practices provided a rich source of data for analysis.

The frame of discourse

According to Lee (1996) there are two distinct histories of the term 'discourse'. One draws on the work of Foucault and other European social theorists. It recognises the particular connections in language between social structures, power and the production of knowledge, and defines discourse as a body of knowledge or a discipline. The second view derives from the field of linguistics and social practice where discourse is synonymous with language or text. In recent systemic functional linguistics, discourse is used to mean "a coherent treatise" (Lee, 1996, p. 15). Lee asserts there is a need for further examination of the relations between these two accounts of discourse.

The role of discourse in this study has already been discussed in both Chapters 1 and 3 so it is only briefly restated now. Gee (1999; 2000) distinguishes between discourses (lower case d) as language in use or stretches of language, and Discourses (capital D) as encompassing a larger field - language integrated with many other elements to construct specific identities, positions and activities. An understanding of both uses of the term frames this research. The theory of language underpinning the study is that "language has meaning only in and through practices" (Gee, 1999, p. 8). As indicated previously, Discourse (with a capital D) is used here to explore not only ways of using language but the "thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group" (Gee,

1996, p.31). O'Brien, Moje and Stewart (2001, p.41) suggest, Discourses "shape and are shaped by the way people think about knowledge in social and material relations." Antsey and Bull (2000) recognise both the ideological and individualistic aspects of Discourse, warning that meaning may often be implied rather than stated directly. The view of McLaren and Lankshear (1993) that ways of thinking are organised into ways of doing through discourses also has relevance to the investigation.

Luke (1995, p. 15) refers to Foucault's definition, that "discourse ... consists of recurrent statements and wordings across texts." These texts may be written or spoken, and subsequently, can be explored for the meanings that are shaped and produced within them. This has direct application to the collection and analysis of the data. Spoken discourses were gathered in interview and transcribed into written texts that were then analysed for their distinctive contexts and systems of meaning and knowledge. It was understood, therefore, that the discursive texts the participants constructed represented a variety of ways of being and knowing and of using language. They conveyed a selective interpretation of the past produced within a particular context and then reproduced and reconstructed within a new situation. These understandings were central to the development of the research method.

The perspective of constructivism

Within the qualitative research field, constructivism is an approach which acknowledges that reality is a social construction and that the role of the researcher is to interpret the multiple realities and meanings that are created through people's interactions within society (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Robson, 2002). This approach to research is also known as 'interpretive' or 'naturalistic' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1994; Robson, 2002). In this way, the

researcher can gain multiple viewpoints on a subject because the research participants assist in the creation of a reality that is very much a product of their own perspectives and social contexts. The naturalistic line of enquiry is concerned with contextual factors and assumes that "human behavior is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p.5). Such an approach has clear application to the present study in that it was assumed that there was no one fixed meaning of the curriculum change process that could be applied for the teachers involved because they had quite distinctive and individual realities, knowledge and understandings, and their work occurred in very different and personally specific contexts. Their discourses, therefore, would be produced from their own unique social and cultural contexts and diverse life experiences.

The quantitative research paradigm

While this study drew mainly from the qualitative field, some quantitative investigation was used initially to inform the research. It provided both a basis for a general view of teachers' initial responses to the changes in the new syllabus and a springboard for the interviews that formed the research's central focus. However, the limitation of using a quantitative approach only in this study- specifically, a survey instrument - was that some of the issues under investigation could not be measured quantitatively and as Burton (2000, p. 304) suggests it is "incapable of getting at meaningful aspects of social action". Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p. 37) assert "qualitative data can be used to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same subjects or site". The combination of both methods, therefore, was used in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the linking of both qualitative and

quantitative data also provides for ideas to be turned around, developed in a new, more detailed way, and makes possible "confirmation or corroboration of each other" (p.41).

The quantitative data obtained from a large-scale survey identified some of the key factors affecting teachers' implementation of the new English Stage 6 Syllabus and also provided a base for the semi-structured interviews which then investigated these issues qualitatively. The participants for these interviews were obtained from the sample generated through this initial survey.

Design of the Research Method

The Survey

The research method

In order to gain a preliminary understanding of what teachers were thinking about the new English Stage 6 Syllabus, and to obtain some information from a broad sample, the first stage in the research was to survey those who were involved in the implementation of this curriculum change. The survey, which is considered a valid method of large scale sampling (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), was selected as a suitable instrument to explore the initial attitudes and views of teachers as they planned their English programs for the first Year 12 classes of the new HSC. As Verma and Mallick (1999) suggest, surveys are useful to gather limited data at a specific point and can indicate certain trends that may be prevalent in the sample population. Because the timing of the questionnaire was scheduled to coincide with a key curriculum decision making phase for teachers about their 2001 HSC classes, a very deliberate focus was given to its content. As many English teachers were currently feeling

overwhelmed by the significant degree of curriculum change that had occurred, the intention of the survey was not to add to their already increased workloads. The researcher's expectation, supported by advice provided by various members of the profession, was that if the questionnaire addressed some very specific issues the teachers were dealing with when they received it, then the likelihood of a returned response would be increased. For these reasons, the focus of the survey was essentially on teachers' planned selection of texts for study in the 2001 HSC.

The decision to narrow the focus of the survey to text selection was further guided by the assumption that the starting point for English teachers in their planning of units of HSC work was their choice of prescribed texts. It has been argued that the adoption of a text within a school context is "the single most important curriculum decision" and that a textbook becomes "a validated local curriculum" (English, 2000, pp.103-4). A more detailed discussion of the place of texts in English teachers' practice was provided in Chapter 3. As Shulman (1999) proposes, "most teaching is initiated by some form of 'text'" (p.70), and the 'text' that was of particular interest in this stage of the research was that which the teachers were determining would form the basis of their students' study for the new HSC in 2001.

The survey was regarded as exploratory, in the sense of identifying what factors emerged regarding teachers' views about text selection, and in perceiving what issues teachers said were important to them as they worked through a fairly early stage in their process of implementing a new syllabus for the first time. The descriptive and generalized information obtained from the questionnaire was then used to inform the next stage of the research. It identified a potential sample group for the qualitative research and it provided a basis for information from which the more in-depth interview questions were drawn.

The Sample

Krathwohl (1998) defines a sample in a research study as the group, selected from a population, from which information is being collected. This sample is assumed to be representative of that population and the data produced can be used for generalizations (Verma & Mallick, 1999). Systematic random sampling was used to create the sample for this questionnaire whereby every second case was selected from an alphabetical list, obtained from the NSW Board of Studies, of the addresses of all secondary schools in New South Wales. From the sample generated in this way, the Head Teacher of English and two other senior English teachers from each of the schools chosen were invited to participate in the survey. The response rate to the written survey was 30%, with data received from 154 schools and in total, from 280 respondents. Responses were obtained in all categories. A detailed description of the demographic information of the respondents and their schools from this sample is provided in Chapter 5.

Construction of the questionnaire

Advice obtained from Robson (1993), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Thomas (1999), Burton (2000), and Gillham (2000) informed the construction of the 12 number item questionnaire (Appendix A). It was designed for self-completion and postal return. Initial socio-demographic information was sought from all respondents and, for Head Teachers only, items relevant to obtaining data on their specific schools were included.

The questionnaire was then divided into two parts: A and B. The ordering principle adopted was to group material relevant to all respondents first, and then to specifically address teachers of the Standard English Course for the 2001 HSC in Part B. Because this was the

Course designed for the largest candidature it seemed the appropriate group to sample. The final page asked all respondents interested in participating in further research by interview to provide their contact details. The construction of the questionnaire took into consideration the specific nature of the information sought as well as the type and structure of the questions and the choice of words needed to ensure clarity and specificity. The survey items were designed to provide specific responses to the subsidiary research question related to text choice and to be consistent with the overall research intentions. The questions were kept short, used terminology familiar to English teachers expressed in simple unambiguous language, and where the respondents' own perceptions were sought they were addressed through personal wording.

Part A (items 1 – 4) was for completion by all respondents and addressed "factors influencing choice of English texts". This was designed to explore the influences on the respondents in their general selection of texts and the factors affecting their decision making. The intention was to identify some of the wider personal and contextual influences before investigating the more specific text choices for the 2001 HSC in Part B. 'Closed' questions, a commonly used and specific form likely to be familiar to the respondents, were developed for this part of the questionnaire. As Robson (1993) recommends, these specific questions afford more standardization in measurement by a survey instrument. They were also included for ease of coding in the subsequent analysis. The closed questions were carefully framed to ensure respondents could select an answer that represented their perceptions as accurately as possible. To investigate their opinions, a Likert scale - a scale used for measuring attitudes (Thomas, 1999; Burton, 2000) – was constructed. For the first question in Part A, the five point scale was selected as appropriate because the summated rating allowed for a pool of twenty six items related to the specific factors influencing text choice to be gathered together. This also

reduced the need for a number of smaller questions. Robson (1993) also considers that the items in a Likert scale can look interesting and people often enjoy completing them. The items were constructed by grouping together a bank of factors associated with: the teacher (such as personal preferences, knowledge); students (interest, relevance); resources (cost, availability); new syllabus influences (technology, specimen examination papers); and literary aspects (canon, content). This table was then also used as a subsequent reference point for question 2, Part A, and question 3 in Part B.

The other two items in Part A required further exploration of aspects about text selection. In a brief open question, respondents were asked to identify constraints in their choice of texts, and the final item addressed text decision making responsibility within their school. Again, a table using a Likert scale was presented for completion with the opportunity for additional comment if respondents felt it necessary.

Part B was designed for those teachers who were planning to teach the Standard English Course for the 2001 HSC with the questions specifically addressing this Course. Item one required the respondents to tick their own choices for study from a list of all the texts prescribed for the Standard Course in the 2001 HSC. This was placed first with the purpose of gathering very specific information and to allow respondents to consolidate their thoughts about this particular area of content before moving onto the next series of broader syllabus questions. Three of the eight items in Part B required the selection of yes or no responses with provision for further comment if necessary. The other items were open-ended questions. These were intended to give the respondents an opportunity to expand their views about some of the earlier items as well as commenting on other key aspects of the HSC Standard Course, for example, assessment components and the types of texts to be studied. This also allowed

the researcher to tap into possible variables and other influences that may have been omitted from the structured questions. Gillham (2000) recommends finishing with an open question that allows respondents to feel they do not have to give a prescribed answer. The final item was designed as a personal reflection upon any changes to their text selection processes from previous years and was intended to be summative in focus.

The use of open ended questions was guided by the assumption that English teachers like to write extended text expressing their own views instead of only responding to a more limited numerical scale. Although detail was encouraged in these open response questions, lines were provided on the questionnaire so that the respondents would not be daunted by the demands of the task. In some cases, the questions were shaped by an instruction such as "six main factors" which assisted the data recording and structured the response patterns of the sample without restricting their individuality. The imposition of these limits was included to reduce the time taken to complete the questionnaire and as a strategy to keep respondents moving through the survey. Since this was a preliminary study it was also necessary to make the analysis of the data more manageable.

Robson (1993) and Verma and Mallick (1999) identify a number of features of presentation to guide the preparation of a questionnaire and to optimise the response rate. Elements of design that were incorporated into this questionnaire included an attractive cover page, coloured paper copies, headings to group content items, clear instructions in bold type, accessible questions for the initial pages, an accompanying letter and return post envelope, and a statement of thanks at the end of the survey.

Pilot study of the survey

The questionnaire was piloted by a 'mock up' given to tertiary colleagues and a small sample teacher group drawn from the population to be surveyed. Respondents were also asked to evaluate the questionnaire with reference to the following questions adapted from Bell (1993, p.85):

- *How long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?*
- *Were the instructions clear?*
- *Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, which one(s)/why?*
- *In your opinion, has any major topic been omitted?*
- *Was the layout of the questionnaire attractive?*
- *Any other comment you would like to make?*

The pilot study confirmed the questionnaire was an appropriate tool to be administered. The questions were found to be clear and unambiguous, the length of time for completion acceptable, and the layout pleasing. No additional clarification was required for the wording of questions or instructions. A small adjustment was made to the demographic information from "Will you be..." to "Do you expect to be teaching English for the 2001 HSC?" because it was suggested that the staff allocations for the next teaching year may not have been finalised. Advice was given to make minor amendments to the expansion of two of the questions in Part B through the use of sub parts to provide some more structure to the open responses. A few cosmetic additions were made such as the use of bold headings and the sequencing of two questions altered. The data obtained in the pilot study suggested the

potential for useful information to be collected by this instrument when it was applied to a wider sample.

Implementation of the survey

The mailout to schools was addressed to Principals and contained a covering letter for them to consent to the study (Appendix B1), attached was a copy of the formal ethics approval from the relevant education sector to permit research to be conducted within the school. There was also an enclosed package to be forwarded to the Head of English. Inside this enclosure was a letter to the Head Teacher (Appendix B2) with three copies of the questionnaire, one for the Head Teacher and a copy for two other members of staff; each questionnaire had a covering letter and return envelope attached. This correspondence was considered to be very important in establishing communication with the potential respondent and was designed to enhance the likelihood of postal return (Bell, 1993; Verma & Mallick, 1999). The covering letter attempted to ensure the value of the research to the respondent. It briefly explained the purpose and significance of the study to which the questionnaire related; how the sample was selected; the time needed to complete it and an invitation to participate in further research; the ethics approvals and considerations including an assurance of confidentiality and that identification was only by a numbered code; the date by which the return was anticipated; and contact details of the researcher.

A potential limitation to the study was the absence of follow-up procedures. While Bell (1993), Thomas (1999) and Robson (2002), advise that the return rate can be considerably enhanced through the use of further requests, it was decided that, unless very few responses were received, no strategies would be used to pursue the return of questionnaires. This

decision was made as a result of the difficulty of identifying accurately where the non-responses were located because names were not required on the completed questionnaires. This study was also preliminary to more in-depth research and the data were essentially for descriptive and informative purposes. Other factors that were also influential included the considerable time and cost that would be involved in pursuing follow up strategies.

Interpreting the survey data

As each completed questionnaire was returned it was allocated, in sequence, an identifying numerical code comprising firstly a number for the school, then either a 1 for Head Teacher or 2 for Teacher of English, and finally an individual code for each respondent. Additionally, the cover page of the questionnaires of those respondents who were willing to be interviewed was labeled with a coloured dot: yellow for Head Teacher, red for English Teacher. Those who were from a non metropolitan location were also marked: blue for Head Teacher, green for English Teacher.

Each question was coded alphabetically and the closed responses given a numerical code. An Excel 5.0 spreadsheet was used to record the data with the demographic information entered separately. Each column used in the spreadsheet was given both the alphabetical question code and an abbreviated identifying heading. Where "yes" or "no" responses were given, these were consistently coded: 1 for yes, 2 for no. A "No response" or missing data was recorded as 99.

After reading a substantial number of the responses to the open-ended questions, ten categories were developed and these were awarded a numerical code. These broad

classifications described the factors and constraints that respondents identified as influencing their text selections. These same ten categories were then used consistently to record responses given across 4 open items. The categories and a brief description of each is provided below:

1. Resources : book room, money
2. Student issues: gender, literacy, suitability to group
3. Teacher issues: knowledge, support materials
4. Technology: use of films, computers, skills
5. Types of texts : prescribed grid, balance in choice
6. Issues and values: morality, parental influence, school context
7. Text quality: length, interest, specific content
8. New study: a change, challenge
9. Syllabus issues: assessment/ exams, prescribed texts, rubrics
10. Other: time, class structure, staff consensus, previous study, and geographical location of school.

An analysis of the recorded data was made by using SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences which allows the researcher "to score and to analyse quantitative data very quickly and in many different ways" (Bryman & Cramer, 1994, p. 17). A discussion of the findings of the survey, with appropriate tables, and reporting the factors affecting teachers' decision making for text selection and the actual texts chosen for H.S.C. study is included in Chapter 7.

It was considered that English teachers would move in their planning from the initial policy text: the new Syllabus, to the accompanying one: the Prescribed Texts document. The assumption made prior to the conduct of the survey was that the teachers' focus for the commencement of their HSC English teaching was on the selection of the particular texts for study. This transition was one of the ways in which they were able to construct meaning from the syllabus and also to interpret some of the changes taking place within their subject. Previous practice demonstrated the considerable significance placed on the prescribed text list. Based on the data from the survey, it appeared that many of the respondents viewed the selection of specific English texts for inclusion in the syllabus gave concrete expression of its intentions and theoretical perspectives. It seemed that this was a suitable focus to have given this stage of the research.

Both the quantifiable results and the written discourses provided in the open-ended questions yielded a rich source of information and description that built a base for the subsequent qualitative investigation.

The Interviews

The research method

Because this study sought to investigate what teachers had to say about the curriculum changes in HSC English, the interview was selected as an appropriate instrument for the main data-gathering. Through this qualitative method participants were able to express their attitudes towards the new syllabus and communicate their perceptions about their pedagogical practices and implementation strategies. The intention of the research was for the teachers to tell their own stories and in doing so, they constructed a response that represented their unique

experiences, meanings, and contexts. This extended text was produced in interview and contained the individual language uses, perspectives, and social practices that shape particular discourses. As Antsey and Bull (2000) point out, all discourses are ideological "since they are a selection made by an individual in order to convey meaning in a particular way" (p.7). Kvale (1996) considers the research interview to be "a conversation about the human life world, with the oral discourse transformed into texts to be interpreted" (p. 46). These particular textual constructions could then be analysed for their interplay and contestation of meaning and the diversity and richness of their values and ideologies.

The interview is used to "gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret the same piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 94). In this study the desire was to hear what the participants had to say about the English syllabus changes and to gain understanding of how they perceived this particular phenomena. A semi-structured interview was selected as the most suitable type because, even though there was a set of prepared questions to be asked, the researcher was able to modify this structure where necessary to allow the participants to respond in a way that was most appropriate for them. This facilitated the flow of the interview and assisted the clarification of particular points and the seeking of further information as required. Kvale (1996) considers the semi-structured interview allows the participants to tell their stories and that it provides "an open phenomenological approach to learning from the interviewee" (p.125).

In order to respond to the research question about changes in teaching practices that may have occurred as a result of the implementation of the new syllabus, it was decided to include an interview question involving the closer study of one particular text within one Elective in the

Standard English Course. This had a number of purposes. Firstly, it provided a common selection criteria for the sample, and it was a way of focusing the part of the study that considered teaching practice. Secondly, the text chosen – the poetry of Bruce Dawe - was a long standing and familiar text of the previous HSC English syllabus. Many teachers have taught Dawe's poetry but were now being asked to reconceptualise it under a very different Modular and Elective structure. Potentially, this could provide a point of comparison between the old and the new syllabus. Finally, based on the survey data, the selection of Bruce Dawe's poetry for the Elective: *Consumerism* in Module C: *Texts and Society*, was overwhelmingly the most popular text chosen in the Standard English Course for the 2001 HSC. In interview, the participants were specifically asked about their teaching of the *Consumerism* Elective and were also asked to provide documents detailing their programs of work and resources for perusal by the researcher. The findings from this examination are reported in Chapter 7.

The conduct and content of the interviews were informed by the work of Patton (1990), Robson (1993), Kvale (1996) and Bogdan and Biklen (1998). Advice offered by Kvale (1996) about providing a context for the interview through an introductory briefing was followed as well as ensuring that the participants had an opportunity to add anything else they wished to say at the conclusion of the interview. Most welcomed this chance to restate their overall responses to the syllabus and to clarify any point of specific importance to them. It is interesting to observe that the interviews concluded on a positive note with the participants frequently commenting that they had gained some further insight into their own views through their extended talk with an attentive listener.

Selection of Participants for Interview

Eight Head Teachers of English and eight Teachers of English were selected to participate in the study. These teachers taught in sixteen different secondary schools from both the government and non government systems in metropolitan and non metropolitan locations in New South Wales. The participants were identified using a purposive sampling technique and were chosen from self-selecting respondents to the initial survey. Detailed demographic information pertaining to these participants and their schools is presented in Chapter 5.

In order to identify and select the potential interviewees from the large pool of interested respondents to the survey, several criteria were developed. These specific criteria consisted of the following: a) the teachers would be teaching the Standard English Course for the 2001 H.S.C, and b) they would also be teaching the poetry of Bruce Dawe for the *Consumerism* Elective in Module C, Standard. When these two criteria were applied, forty-four respondents were eligible. Also determined was c) that there should be a sample of both Head Teachers and Teachers - with consideration of factors such as gender, age and teaching experience, and d) a cross section of school sectors, locations and sizes should also be included. The final interview sample of sixteen was then generated through the application of these other two criteria in order to delimit the study. It was anticipated that because of the amount of qualitative data likely to be generated through the interviews, a sample group any larger would be unwieldy for both the data management and analysis.

Preparation for the interviews

Initial contact was made with the participants in the sample group by mail and this was then followed up by a telephone call. A prompt sheet was developed for the telephone calls that

were used to check on the participants' availability for interview and to arrange a meeting time with them. This phone contact sheet was designed to assist uniformity in the explanation about the study and comprised the following points:

1. ascertaining whether the teacher was still interested in participating in an interview;
2. confirming they were teaching the Standard Course and Dawe's poetry in the *Consumerism* Elective;
3. advising that the focus of the study was on teachers' responses to, and implementation of, a new syllabus in a time of curriculum change and as such , they would be asked about:
    - their views on the Stage 6 English syllabus,
    - their approaches to the implementation of the syllabus,
    - their selection of texts for the Standard Course, and
    - their program for teaching the *Consumerism* Elective;
4. requesting their availability and suitable times for a recorded meeting of about an hour;
5. noting any suggestions they had for the researcher's travel to their location; and
6. establishing the best ways to make contact with them.

This initial contact also provided the researcher with some informal material about the study and, in a significant number of cases, the participants were quite forthcoming about their views on the new syllabus. These conversations were recorded in note form. These data were helpful in preparing any additional probes that may have been necessary during the interviews

and also gave another insight into the issues to be explored. Participants were also asked to bring a copy of their teaching materials for the *Consumerism* Elective to the interview.

A practice interview was conducted with a colleague familiar with the area under investigation to ensure the clarity of questions, to refine the use of probes, and to prepare the researcher for the actual interview situation. This also provided practice for the interviewer with the planned schedule of interview questions and with note-making techniques during an interview.

Data-Gathering Techniques

Interview schedules

Because some data from the questionnaire had already been gathered, there was no need to include questions again on socio-demographic information. Instead, the interview commenced with a focus on the participants' perceptions of themselves as English teachers. This fulfilled two purposes; the first was to establish a context for the interviewer to consider the subsequent responses, and secondly, gave an insight into the participants' views of the subject English. It also assisted in creating a receptive environment for the interview.

The general purpose of the interview was stated and some indication given of the topics to be covered. Summary statements were included when a new area was then to be investigated. At the conclusion, the interviewees were invited to proffer any comments or issues that had not been addressed that were considered important to them.

The interview schedule (Appendix C) concentrated upon exploring in-depth five key areas directly related to the two research questions listed earlier in this chapter. The five aspects identified for investigation were:

1. View of subject and pedagogy, perceptions of self as an English teacher;
2. Responses to new syllabus;
3. Curriculum change and implementation factors;
4. Text selection and decision making; and
5. Change in practice: a) strategies in the classroom
   b) study of *Consumerism* Elective

The interview questions, addressing these areas, were constructed from the research questions; from the emergent data of the survey and an analysis of the open-ended responses to the questionnaire; from the notes made during the telephone contact; and from the researcher's knowledge and reading of English curriculum issues and previous research. Kvale (1996) recommends translating these questions into "an easy-going, colloquial form to generate spontaneous and rich descriptions" (p.130). This was the approach taken and the questions were framed in direct and clear language. They were in a descriptive form with the focus on the aspects of "what" and "how" to elicit open, dynamic responses from the interviewees and to gather data on their feelings and perceptions. The intention was not to force explanations – through "why" questions - but to draw on the multiple meanings they constructed through their own discourses about an event of change.

Probes were included on the interview schedule as a device to assist the expansion of an interviewee's response when the researcher perceived there was more to be heard. They were

used, when necessary, as key words to prompt further investigation and elaboration. Patton (1990, pp. 324 - 332) provides a range of useful strategies, in both verbal and non-verbal forms, to probe and follow up questions. There was no rigid structure adhered to because the interest was in discovering what the participants themselves deemed to be important. The advice offered by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) is acknowledged:

> *Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview* (p.94).

The interviews were audio taped and were about forty-five minutes in duration. Materials related to the teaching of the *Consumerism* Elective and the poetry of Bruce Dawe were collected from the participants. The researcher made notes during the interview about points of discussion and other aspects observed such as tone and non-verbal elements. These were particularly important to capture, as some of the linguistic complexity is inevitably lost when the spoken word is rendered into written text.

Trustworthiness

In a constructivist paradigm where the focus of the inquiry is directed towards "the production of reconstructed understandings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.100), a key criteria in judging the findings is trustworthiness. This term is used to refer to "the extent to which one can have trust or confidence in a study and its findings" (Robson, 2002, p. 553). The following methods were adopted to assist the trustworthiness of the findings in this study.

Participants checking for accuracy

After transcription, a print copy of the interview was forwarded to each participant for checking and verification. Some minor corrections were made to a couple of the transcripts as a result of the feedback provided. These concerned titles of texts, details that clarified assessment information and the rare misuse of a word caused by the immediacy of the spoken mode.

Veto rights over transcripts

Participants were also given the authority to exercise veto rights over the data. The reasons for this were, firstly to comply with an ethical approach by allowing them to remove any of their comments that in hindsight they may deem harmful to themselves, and secondly, to permit them to edit any material that may misrepresent their views. One participant exercised her right to withdraw from the study after reading her transcript. Although she had shown initial interest, she appeared to be anxious during the interview process. She was slow to return calls requesting the authorisation of the transcript and eventually, asked to be withdrawn. It was difficult to ascertain her reason but she believed the interview had not represented her point of view in the way she had anticipated. The tape was returned to her. By this stage, it was clear that the data gathered provided a rich diversity of perspectives from a broad enough sample. The other fifteen participants accepted their transcripts and did not request further alterations or deletions. One acknowledged that, although his own words did not always portray him in a flattering light, he did not want any changes as he believed he would be dealt with fairly and anonymously.

Different Data-collecting Techniques

In order to support the judgements made in this study, complementary evidence was drawn from more than one source: the use of the survey, the telephone communication, the interviews, a fieldbook for recording observational data, and the insights gained through the perusal of the participants' programs and resources for the teaching of the *Consumerism* Elective in the Standard English Course. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that when the researcher is "seeing or hearing multiple instances ... from different sources by using different methods" (p.267), this is the process of triangulation. Delamont (1995) describes it as "having two or more... 'sightings' of a finding from different angles" (p. 159). Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.104) express a preference for the use of "different data-collecting techniques" to explain this process. The term adopted here is 'different data- collecting techniques' as it is a more explicit description of the multimethod enquiry used in the study. The various data sources gathered were compared for their corroboration and their contrasts, and in this way, the perspectives gained on the phenomenon under study were expanded and enriched.

Ethical Considerations

Formal approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) at Macquarie University. Permission to conduct research in NSW Government secondary schools was requested and received from the Strategic Research Directorate, Department of Education and Training. Additionally, permission was also granted from the Catholic Education Offices, Sydney and Parramatta, and the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay. An application for approval to carry out research was made directly to each principal of the Independent School System.

Bell (1993) provided a useful checklist for negotiating access to research subjects and sites and for maintaining ethical conduct during research. The following are the particular strategies put in place to ensure the ethics and protocols of this study.

Letters of consent

Written information was provided to all participants in the various stages of the research. This detailed the requirements of their involvement as well as the purpose of the particular method and the ways in which the data would be used. For both the questionnaire and the interviews, it was made clear that participants had the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.

It was noted in the covering letter for the survey that the completion of the questionnaire and its subsequent return indicated consent to participate in the study. A statement of consent for the conduct of the study within the school was included for the principal's authorisation.

The participants in the interviews signed an individual consent form, which explained that all identifying information would be removed from the transcripts and that identification of them and their schools would be by pseudonym only (Appendix D). A copy was also given to them for their own records.

Confidentiality

Ethical standards were maintained at all times to keep the data confidential. Pseudonyms were used to preserve the identity of the participants and their schools. For ease of reference, the first letter of the teacher's pseudonym was selected to match the beginning of the pseudonym

given to their school. Kvale (1996 p. 89) also points out that the ethics in relation to the "transcription of interview research are barely treated" in the literature. Accordingly, the assistant employed to transcribe the interview tapes was informed of the importance of strict confidentiality in regards to both the participants and the material on tape.

Protocols

Bell (1993, p.59) reminds the researcher that those who participate in a research study are "doing you a favour" and she advises that it is important to acknowledge this with a letter of thanks. This appreciation of the teachers' generosity with their time and insights was shown by the researcher's personal correspondence with them through letters, cards and e-mail, acknowledging their contributions. As well, other protocols were followed to maintain courteous relations such as the correct spelling and pronunciation of names, messages followed up promptly, and the keeping of accurate records of communication.

Data management

Miles and Huberman (1994b, p.428) provide a pragmatic definition of data management as "the operations needed for a systematic, coherent process of data collection, storage, and retrieval". Kvale (1996), Riordan (1996), and Bogdan and Biklen (1998) highlight the importance of an effective and efficient data management when conducting a large data producing study. The information that was collected needed some processing before analysis and the following describes the strategies adopted in this study to facilitate its management:

1. A contact summary sheet (Miles & Huberman, 1994a) was kept in an individual folder for each participant. After each interview, notes were made summarising the main points and issues, specific observations, and details relevant to the research questions. Within each folder, notes from the phone conversations and any documents obtained from the participants, for example, in relation to Standard Module C, the Elective on *Consumerism*, were also stored with a brief summary sheet identifying the contents with annotations about the key items.

2. As recommended by Robson (1993) and Miles and Huberman (1994a), the researcher kept a fieldbook where reflections, observer comments, and additional notes were stored. This also included data about the schools visited, which provided the basis for the demographic information, presented in Chapter 5.

3. Memos were also made as a way of conceptualising the ongoing investigation and recording ideas as they were developing. They were useful in helping to understand the emergent data. This was a way too of guarding against bias in the researcher's views by documenting the thinking process as the study moved from data collection into analysis. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest, the researcher is attempting "to objectively study the subjective states of subjects" (p.33). Because there was a need, therefore, to confront any prior opinions and viewpoints brought to the study and to engage actively with the present data, the memos were a useful tool. They were stored on the researcher's computer after being transferred from written notes; hard copies were also kept for reference.

4. Data gathered from the survey was entered into an Excel 5.0 workbook and later, analysed using SPSS, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. All raw data were kept in a secure place and back up copies were made of the material on computer. A print out of the spreadsheets was kept in a folder for reference and further analysis.

5. Clearly labelled copies of the interview audio-tapes were given to an assistant who transcribed them, printed copies for checking, and returned the tapes with an accompanying computer disk. Back up copies were also made. After the return of the authorised transcripts from the participants, these were corrected on the computer, printed and then stored in a folder for analysis.

6. Riordan's (1996) data management model developed for his study of high school teacher collaboration was adapted to manage the analysis of the interview transcripts, field notes and memos. He utilised a matrix to record "the various observations, direct quotes, paraphrasings and summaries of participant's comments, and notes" (p. 56). Adapted from this model, a 1.2 x 1.7m chart was constructed in the form of a matrix comprising 12 columns and 16 rows. Each of the fifteen participants was given a row across the chart with a final row used for summative notes and key points from the material under each of the column headings. Across the top of the chart, the 12 columns were identified and grouped into 3 broad areas according to what the teachers had to say about: 1. The factors affecting their implementation of the new syllabus; 2. Their perceptions about their subject, and their implementation of, the new syllabus; and 3. The changes to their teaching practices. Identifying sub categories, drawn from the interview questions and the participants' responses, were established for each of these three areas. A final column was included for "other comments" where any

additional information was recorded that did not directly relate to the specific categories. Robson (1993; 2002) recommends the use of a matrix as a tool for both data reduction and analysis. As Miles and Huberman (1994b, p. 432) state "valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing of a full data set in one location and are systematically arranged to answer the research questions at hand". All the data collected from the interviews were concentrated into one visual display, interrogated, and then used to prepare and guide the chapters that present this study's findings. The analysis and coding procedures employed in the construction of the matrix and its application are addressed below.

Data Analysis

Patton (1990) describes the challenge of data analysis as clarifying and reducing the magnitude of the gathered material to "identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (p. 372). The analysis of the collected data was guided by Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) advice about developing coding categories, Merriam's (1988) discussion of the components of data analysis, Miles and Huberman's (1994a) and Robson's (1993) descriptions of data display and matrices, and Patton's (1990) suggestions for the analytical process. The theoretical perspectives that informed the data analysis are presented below.

Grounded theory

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) view that theory emerges from the data collected, known as the grounded theory approach, was also instructive for this study. Denzin (1994) states that the grounded theory perspective is the most popular interpretive framework used in qualitative research. Theory is generated which is fully grounded in the data, the result of a dynamic interplay between the collection and analysis process. The interpretation of what was seen and heard in the field lends itself to the development of new theoretical perspectives. Burton (2000) refers to the grounded approach to analysis, whereby, "codes are allowed to emerge from the data, rather than being established before the research is conducted" (p.210). This was the strategy adopted here.

Analysis of discourse

The purpose of interpreting the interview transcripts was to see how the teachers' discourses and views were constituted and therefore, this involved a form of discourse analysis. Luke (1995) draws on the work of Michel Foucault to describe "the *constructing* character of discourse, that is, how both in broader social formations (i.e. *epistemes)* and in local sites and uses discourse actually defines, constructs, and positions human subjects" (p.8). The qualitative researcher is interested in the ways in which people in particular contexts perceive, shape and create meaning for themselves and how they represent this meaning to others. In this study, the local site (the school) was of particular significance and the accompanying discourses that emerged from the subject (the teacher) located there and the ways in which meaning was produced were the focus of interest. From a critical discourse perspective, the

examination of these created texts highlighted their constructed nature, their social and individual contexts, and their problematic nature as sources of knowledge and truth.

The work of Weedon (1987), Fairclough (1992), Gee (1996; 1999), Luke (1995), and Lee (1996; 2000) informed the techniques of analysis adopted. Discourse analysis is a

> *reciprocal and cyclical process in which we shuttle back and forth between the structure (form, design) of a piece of language and the situated meanings it is attempting to build about the world, identities, and relationships* (Gee, 1999, p. 99).

The advice of Fairclough (1992, p. 191) that "different perspectives on domains of experience entail different ways of wording them" guided the analysis of the specific lexical items used by the participants. Gee (1999) suggests that each small spurt of speech usually has one salient piece of new information. Analysis of the texts was made for aspects which included the choice of verbs and aspects of modality and transitivity, the clusters of word and meanings, the presence of features of metadiscourse, and in particular, the teachers' use of metaphors and images to structure their realities and to represent their thoughts and beliefs. Lee's (1996, p. xiii) approach of looking for "motifs" of statements within discourses was a useful guide for exploring different rhetorical and linguistic aspects. The analysis was set within an overall perspective that asked what situated meanings key words and phrases appeared to have within the data. The analytical focus was to discern what meanings were being constructed and enacted within the teachers' discourses.

The lens used to read the interview texts was framed by an understanding that "all texts are normative, shaping, and constructing rather than simply reflecting and describing" (Luke,

1995, p. 19). In this way, the multiple views and voices produced within the discourses and the various positions adopted by the speakers were analysed. The teachers' discourses were seen as representations of their experiences and as such, were an interpretative resource and a product of cultural contexts (Kamler, 2001). The function of discourse analysis in this study was to highlight the sorts of judgments we make daily about the worth, value and efficacy of any text – be it oral or written, informal or formal. Here, it served to identify both the critical and constructed elements of the act of reading. These interview texts positioned the individuals in distinctive ways and revealed their various ideas, versions and meanings about themselves as English teachers, their local worlds, and the event of change.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) acknowledge the importance of the hermeneutic tradition in qualitative analysis through their advice to see collected texts as part of the wider social practice that includes values, ideologies, and aspects of power embedded in them. They suggest "appreciation of the social and cultural contexts through which the various concepts are related to a particular discourse" (p.227). In other words, the data are socially constructed texts that can be interpreted for their various meanings.

Further, the analysis of the transcripts was framed by some of the contemporary critical and theoretical principles about reading which also inform the new English Stage 6 syllabus. Weedon (1987) identifies a key belief of poststructuralism that, "meaning is produced within language, rather than reflected by language" (p. 23), and therefore, she maintains that "every act of reading is a new production of meaning" (p.139). Poststructuralist theory has a clear influence on the new English syllabus in the perspective that texts are to be understood as social constructions and readings of these can be multiple and based in varying ideologies. A curriculum directive is to view and value texts as productions of both contextual and cultural

factors. This, then, was also the reading position applied directly to the study and analysis of the transcripts.

The analysis process

Miles and Huberman's (1994a, pp.245-246) thirteen tactics for generating meaning provided a useful guide for moving the data analysis from the concrete to the abstract and from the descriptive to the explanatory. Their suggested process was broadly applied whereby what was present in the data was recorded in the single case analysis, then during the cross-case analysis, the differentiation of data occurred with the relationships between variables defined more abstractly, and finally, a coherent understanding of the data was assembled during the thematic and conceptual analysis. Kvale (1996, p.255) reminds the researcher that "information on the methodic steps of an investigation is mandatory." Therefore, the steps taken to "read" the texts, to analyse their multidiscursive qualities, and to build theoretical perspectives are detailed below.

Stages of Analysis

Transcription

The first stage in the data analysis was the transcription of the interview tapes. The transcriber, as accurately as possible, translated the participants' oral style into a written form. As Kvale (1996, p.163) warns these become "artificial constructions", reduced from the living meaning, and lacking some of the linguistic complexities conveyed by vocal, gestural and physical cues. However, where possible in the written text, emotional aspects were included such as laughter,

emphasis conveyed through punctuation, and pauses signified. A view of the teachers' general modes of oral expression was gained through re-listening to the tapes. Delamont (1995) stresses the importance of both the social context and the role of the audience in the creation of oral data, even when they have been generated only for the interviewer. Dey (1993, p.15) suggests that data is "produced" by the researcher, in a sense, because of the ways a text has its meanings mediated through language and action. Given her role in the conversation, the researcher was aware of the joint construction of the produced text and that there was, inevitably, a discursive interplay between the participant and the researcher, and between what was said and not said.

Single Case Analyses

In qualitative research, the traditional mode of analysis has been the single case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994b). Each participant is identified as a case - a unit of analysis. According to grounded theory the researcher is an interpreter of the "perspectives and voices" of those being studied and the interpretations may be of individuals and groups (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 274). To commence this process, the data collected on each individual participant were examined first as a single case analysis.

Riordan's (1996) matrix was adapted for this study and its construction has been described in the previous section on Data Management. The data were dealt with case by case, and entered on the matrix in the manner that Riordan describes:

> *Direct quotes, paraphrases of quotes, descriptions of large pieces of text, and researcher observations, were all recorded on the matrix. Each entry was referenced to the specific page and document from which it was taken. The*

> *researcher then marked the section in the transcripts to which the reference had been made. In this manner it became possible to check that all of the data, in either direct or aggregated form, were reported in the matrix.* (p.58)

For each unit of data, decisions were made as to its content, its relevance to the research questions and the three broad headings, and the categories it addressed.

As Patton (1990) points out "the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data" through an inductive process (p.390). The emphasis in this stage of the analysis was to illuminate understandings of each case and to interpret the significance of what was found. Looking for recurrent congruities in the data and applying the aspects of discourse analysis already outlined developed the various categories. This was an iterative and interactive process. Strauss and Corbin (1998, pp. 89 – 95) provided useful questions to ask to facilitate the coding process when analysing the data.

The purpose of coding is "to break down data, to identify meanings, discover relationships and to begin initial analysis" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.300). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest that when coding, one unit of data may have multiple codes or can overlap with another unit. On the other hand, Merriam (1988) believes that categories for coding are discrete and one data piece belongs in one category. In this analysis, it was judged that some data fulfilled multiple purposes and applied to a number of the columns in the matrix. They were, therefore, recorded in more than one category.

Interrogating the data and findings for each participant completed the single case analysis. A summary of the key points was made in the final column of the matrix before moving to the analysis across cases.

Cross-case Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994b) recommend the easiest method for cross-case analyses is a data display, for example, a matrix, because the researcher is able to analyse "in a condensed form, the full data set, in order to see literally what is there" (p. 437). Patton (1990) suggests that cross-case analysis allows the grouping together of answers "to common questions or analysing different perspectives on central issues" (p. 376). By working down the columns of the matrix and reading across the cases, comparisons were made to highlight the discursive connections and the general principles and influences at work on the participants during the curriculum change process. Points of connection and departure were also in evidence when the data and findings were examined across each case. Key features, issues and links were identified in the analysis of the discourses and these formed the basis for the reports and discussions contained in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

It is important to acknowledge the potential for tension when "reconciling the particular and the universal: reconciling an individual's case uniqueness with the need to understand generic processes at work across cases" (Miles & Huberman, 1994b, p.435). This consideration was taken into account so that in some sections of Chapters 6 and 7 the findings are reported as individual cases.

Thematic analysis

After the analysis by single then cross-case, the thematic analysis emerged from the conceptualisation of the central ideas in data. The focus shifted now to generalising and theorising, developing the descriptive categories into conceptual ones that allowed for the

evolvement of the themes. Strauss and Corbin (1998,) identify the development of theory as "the act of constructing ... from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship"(p.25). The theoretical explanations for the processes of curriculum change investigated and the teachers' discourses and practices about this event are presented in the subsequent Chapters, which report the constructs, comparisons, and patterns found in the data analysis.

Reliability and Validity

Merriam (1988) discusses the important concerns of validity and reliability in research. She believes these can be addressed "through careful attention to a study's conceptualisation and the way in which the data were collected, analysed, and interpreted" (p. 165). Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 100) argue for the use of *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* instead of the traditional positivist criteria of internal and external validity. They describe the constructivist approach as directed towards a study of the world from the interaction of an individual's perspective within it and this view was adopted here. For this study, the methods used to ensure trustworthiness and a description of the steps taken to develop appropriate tools to measure the research's intention have been presented earlier in this chapter. The selection of a heterogeneous group for the sample was another strategy designed to assist the internal validity and trustworthiness. The intention was to hear a number of teachers' voices and to provide a variety of beliefs and accounts of what seemed to be true for a range of participants. This sought to "uncover the complexity of human behaviour in a contextual framework" (Merriam, 1988, p.168).

Researcher objectivity

Robson (1993) warns of the potential for researcher bias in the collection and analysis of the qualitative data process. It is necessary to acknowledge the partiality and interests that formed the core of this research. The questions posed were central to the researcher's work both as a teacher educator and as the Chief Examiner of the new HSC English syllabus, and emanate from her long involvement in the profession of English teaching. Professional experience and interest guided this study. For these reasons, it was very important not to influence the responses obtained during the data collection and thus, to open the questions as far as possible to allow for a diversity of views. As described previously, procedures were employed in the data gathering, management and analysis to ensure trustworthiness. On the other hand, Kvale (1996, p.96) acknowledges that "familiarity with the content of an investigation is not obtained only through literature and theoretical studies." He suggests that being in the environment of the study, having an association with the context, knowing the language and the routines can be valuable. There was a conscious attempt on the researcher's part to be open to the emergent discourses, to avoid privileging her own, and to acknowledge as significant to the study the view that all texts are constructed and partial. The key question is finally, as Miles and Huberman (1994a, p. 278) ask, "do the conclusions depend on the subjects and conditions of the inquiry, rather than on the inquirer?"

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study was the deliberate restriction to focus on participants who were teaching the Standard English Course for the 2001 HSC, and in particular, who had selected Bruce Dawe's poetry in the *Consumerism* Elective. As a purposive sampling

technique it also gave a specific context for the research. Although this may appear to limit the generalisablity of the findings in so far as it could be speculated that teachers of the Advanced or Extension English Courses may hold different views, this was not perceived as a significant concern because some of the participants were also teaching these higher level Courses.

The processes of curriculum change involve a number of different stakeholders apart from teachers: syllabus developers and writers, parental and community representatives, students, educational leaders and administrative organisations, and those in government. In this study the views of these other stakeholders were not canvassed. Instead close attention was given to the individuals who represent the group charged with the implementation of a new syllabus in order to investigate their responses to, and enactment of, mandated policy in specific sites.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the multimethodological approach employed to address the research questions and has discussed in detail the methods of data gathering, management and analysis. The exploration of teachers' discourses and practices related to curriculum change has been framed within the critical perspective of discourse analysis and a poststructuralist lens on the act of reading. The contested nature of textual construction and its social, cultural and political positioning has been considered. The specific focus on individuals and their particular contexts and the ways in which their discourses produce a range of situated meanings has also been indicated.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p.34) state the worth of a study "is the degree to which it generates theory, description, or understanding." The researcher's primary goal is to highlight complexity and knowledge, not to provide simplification. The issue of generalisability is frequently mentioned in the literature, whereby the findings are able to hold up beyond the specific study. In this research generalisability is difficult because of the unique content under investigation: that is, the particular discourses of particular individuals about a particular event, and the variety of temporal elements that contributed to the production of these discourses. Here the interest was in the multiple meanings people constructed and used to represent their understandings of their own experiences of change. These unique aspects are significant. Schofield (1990, p.208) usefully distinguishes generalising to "'what is' (other actual contexts), to 'what may be' (sites in the forefront of some similar process) and to 'what could be' (outstanding or ideal cases)". Although there was a particular context of change investigated here, the provision of a "thick description" specifying the theoretical framework used in this study means it could be used to inform and develop further studies in other settings (Robson, 1993, p.405). It may be possible to transfer some of the generalisations made in the concluding chapter to other teachers, in other schools, who experience other instances of the processes of curriculum change.

Chapter 5 provides a description of the respondents to the survey and the unique contextual details of each of the interview participants and their schools as a way of illuminating the micro-scale level of this investigation into the change process. After drawing together these micro-political and micro-cultural "realities", the research findings are then presented in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 5

PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

This Chapter provides detailed demographic information about the teachers who participated in this research study through the instruments described in the previous chapter. The material presented here contextualises the subsequent chapters that discuss the findings of the teachers' responses, discourses and practices in relation to curriculum changes in HSC English.

Data on the respondents to the initial survey, with relevant demographic material about them and their schools, is conveyed in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. A profile of both the research sample groups (survey and interviews) is presented in summary form, and information pertaining to the interview participants' age, educational background, teaching experience, length of service at the current school, and the HSC English Courses taught provided in Table 5.4. In order to locate these teachers within their specific work contexts, data about each of their schools are displayed in Table 5.5.

Then, a brief profile of each of the fifteen interview participants is given, and in some cases, with additional material about their extra curricular duties, professional interests and involvement, and career development, where this was provided. A short description of each of their schools is also recorded.

As explained, pseudonyms have been used to preserve the identity of the participants and their schools. For ease of reference, the first letter of the teacher's pseudonym was selected to match the beginning of the name given to their school.

Profile of the respondents to the survey

Survey Respondents

As discussed in Chapter 4, a random selection of subjects for the initial survey was made from Secondary schools across New South Wales educational sectors and locations. Respondents were drawn from those who were the Head Teacher of English and also two other members of staff who taught Senior English. A summary of the demographic information on the respondents surveyed, obtained from the first page of the questionnaire, is depicted below in Table 5.1. Raw numbers are given.

Table 5.1 Demographic Information on Survey Respondents

Personal Details:	**Possible Responses:**	**Number of Responses: 273**
Sex	Female Male	182 91
Age	20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+	27 59 132 58 1
Years of teaching experience	0-5 6-10 11-15 15-20 20-25 more than 25	16 80 128 34 19 1
Academic background in English	Major Minor None	231 36 0
Educational Qualifications Institution	Macquarie Uni Sydney Uni Uni of NSW Uni of New England Australian Catholic Uni Other NSW uni Uni in other Australian state Uni in England Uni in USA Other overseas institution	23 78 34 34 5 41 10 2 1 10
Teaching responsibilities	Head Teacher: English Teacher of English Other	103 138 3
Currently teaching Preliminary English	Yes No	252 24
Expect to teach 2001 HSC English	Yes No	243 32

Survey Schools

The demographic data on the schools surveyed were obtained from the second page of the Head Teacher's questionnaire. In some cases, when a Teacher of English returned a questionnaire that was not accompanied by the Head Teacher's response, it was not possible then to gather data on that school. Therefore, although there were responses to the survey from 154 schools, demographic information on only 129 is presented below in Table 5.2. Responses are reported as percentages.

Table 5.2 Demographic Information on Survey Respondents' Schools

School Details:	**Possible Responses:**	**Percentage of Responses:**	
Educational Sector	DET (Govt.) Catholic Systemic Catholic Independent Other Independent TAFE Other	62.5 8.6 8.6 19.5 0.8	
Location of School	Urban Rural	55.8 44.2	
Type of School		Selective (5.6)	Compreh (94.4)
	Co-educational Single sex boys Single sex girls	1.6 4 0	67.5 9.5 17.5
Size of Secondary School	0-400 401-700 701-1000 1000+	21.6 20.7 33.3 23.4	
% of school N.E.S.B	0% 0-10% 11-20% 21-30% 30+%	30.7 34.6 10.9 3.6 18.2	

Head Teachers of English were also asked to record the number of Senior English classes in their schools including the Courses of English proposed for study in the 2001 HSC. Table 5.3 shows the percentage of schools with at least one class in a specific English Course. A significant number of schools does not offer classes in ESL or Fundamentals of English and fewer than half anticipate classes in Extension 2 English for the 2001 HSC. Responses are reported as percentages.

Table 5.3 Survey Respondents' Schools and Percentage with at least one Senior English class offered in a Course

	ESL	Standard	Advanced	Extension 1/2		Fundamentals
2000 Prelim HSC	18.2	96.4	92.7	72.7		37.3
Anticipated 2001 HSC	18.2	90.9	94.5	Ext1 6 3.6	Ext2 42.2	42.2

Summary of the research sample groups

The Survey

The respondents to the survey range across educational sectors and locations in New South Wales. They present a typical picture of the current teaching profession with the significant majority having approximately fifteen years' experience and being aged in their forties. Most have academic majors in their subject, gained from a diverse range of institutions although Sydney University is represented twice as often as any other university. Almost all of the respondents (91%) are currently teaching the new English Stage 6 Syllabus. Although their schools reflect the different educational systems available in New South Wales, the

overwhelming majority of respondents teach in comprehensive, co-educational government schools with 10% or fewer students of Non English speaking backgrounds.

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in an interview. 53% provided their details for further participation in the research and as explained in Chapter 4, criteria were applied for the final selection of the participants. Details about the fifteen teachers chosen for interview are provided below.

The Interviews

The fifteen teachers interviewed in the study are representatives of fifteen different schools from a diversity of educational sectors and locations throughout New South Wales, which have student enrolments ranging from fewer than four hundred to well over a thousand in five cases. Some of these schools have very high multi-cultural populations whilst at least four have very few students from a Non English speaking background. Two of the schools, in particular, are equipped with impressive facilities and abundant resources; some of the others are comfortably provisioned, but the majority of the schools, especially those of the government sector in less affluent locations are lacking in property maintenance, technical equipment, and available funds for resources.

The participants have a huge accumulation of teaching experience between them and, with the exception of two teachers, they have all taught in a number of schools during their careers, including some who have moved around through continued country service. One of the exceptions is only in the second year of her first teaching appointment. The participants' number of years in their current schools range from one to twenty two, with the average at

seven years. Eight of the fifteen teachers have been in their current schools for less than five years. Of the Head Teachers, four of the eight have been appointed to the promotion position within the last three years.

The participants' initial teacher education occurred in a cross section of State universities: four studied at Sydney University, three at Newcastle, two each at Macquarie, University of New England, and Wollongong respectively, one at University of New South Wales, and one completed both his undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the United States. Only one participant, the graduate from Uni of NSW, does not have an academic major in English. Three of the fifteen participants have Masters degrees that have been completed at the same institution as their undergraduate studies.

The age range of the participants reflects the wider teaching community where the average age is now well into the forty to forty-nine years group. Only four were below this age group. Although a mix of gender was sought, the selection of six males and nine females was also determined by the criteria established for selection, as outlined in Chapter 4. There was an intention, as far as possible, to sample a range across school sectors and locations, and to include a mix of Head Teachers and Teachers of English.

All of the participants are involved in other responsibilities and duties beyond their regular classroom teaching and Head Teacher administrative work. Many coordinate drama activities and debating teams, some assist with the production of the school magazine, and some have special positions of responsibility within their school. Most engage in some professional activity outside the school. This includes seven who are markers of the Higher School Certificate examinations, some of these at a senior level; four are published authors of English

texts for students; four regularly conduct workshop presentations for other teachers and HSC students; and two have been appointed as facilitators of the professional development program (LIG) for the Department of Education and Training.

The range of English classes taught by the participants covers all the groups from Years 7 to Years 12; however, most of their teaching is focused in the senior school. All are teaching the Standard Course for the 2001 HSC, and additionally, three of the Head Teachers are taking students for the Extension English Courses. Teachers in this study also teach in the following subject areas: Drama, History, and Society and Culture. Only one of the teachers indicated that he has been considering whether he would remain in the profession. With this one exception, the other participants expressed a moderate to high degree of satisfaction with their chosen work.

Profile of the participants in the interviews

More detailed material describing the fifteen participants in the interviews is presented in this section. The initial demographic information on the teachers and their schools was obtained from the questionnaire.

Table 5.4 summarises specific information about each teacher's gender, age, position on staff, highest educational qualification and the institution where it was gained, teaching experience, length of service at current school, and the HSC English Courses taught.

Table 5.4 Interview Participants:

Names	G	Age	HT/T	Educ Qual Instit	Exp teach	Yrs at School	HSC Course
Alexa	f	20-25	t	Bach Macq	0-5	2	Stand
Cara	f	40-49	ht	Bach Syd	20-25	2	Stand
Denise	f	30-39	t	Bach Syd	6-10	2	Stand
Dorothy	f	40-49	ht	Bach Syd	11-15	12	Stand
Jonathon	m	30-39	t	Bach Syd	11-15	9	Stand
Joseph	m	40-49	t	Bach NSW	20-25	6	Stand
Katrina	f	40-49	ht	Bach UNE	15-20	3	Stand
Keith	m	40-49	ht	Mast Macq	25+	1	Stand Ext 1, 2
Louise	f	40-49	t	Bach UNE	20-25	13	Stand
Maree	f	40-49	ht	Bach Newc	20-25	3	Stand
Neville	m	30-39	ht	Bach Newc	11-15	3	Stand
Tom	m	40-49	ht	Mast USA	25+	6	Stand Ext 1, 2
Vera	f	50-59	ht	M. Hn Woll	20-25	21	Stand Adv Ext 2
Virginia	f	40-49	t	Bach Newc	20-25	22	Stand
Warren	m	40-49	t	Bach Woll	6-10	3	Stand

Notes: For both age and experience, a standardised range is used;

- **Academic qualifications:** the highest degree obtained and the institution where it was gained are indicated; all participants except Joseph had an academic major in English.
- **Universities:** Macq: Macquarie; Syd: Sydney; NSW: New South Wales; UNE: University of New England; Newc: Newcastle; Woll: Wollongong; Obtained in USA: United States of America.

The following Table 5.5 provides an overview of the participants' schools. It indicates the educational sector and type, the school's location, and its student population in terms of size and Non English speaking background.

Table 5.5 Participants' Schools

Name	School	Sector	Locn	Type	Size	% NESB
Alexa	Austen Girls' High	DET	M	Girls Comp	1000+	19%
Cara	Camiano H.S	DET	M	Co-ed Comp	701-1000	< 10%
Denise	Donwell Girls' High	DET	M	Girls Comp	1000+	81%
Dorothy	Darkling Central	DET	N M	Co-ed Comp	0-400	0%
Jonathon	Jupiter College	IND	M	Boys Comp	1000+	25%
Joseph	St. Jerome's	CSO	M	Boys Comp	701-1000	< 10%
Katrina	Knightsbridge H.S	DET	M	Co-ed Comp	701-1000	5%
Keith	St. Kevin's	C IND	M	Boys Comp	1000+	25%
Louise	Lighthouse H.S	DET	N M	Co-ed Comp	701-1000	< 10%
Maree	Museville College	IND	M	Girls Comp	701-1000	< 5%
Neville	Nashberry Central	DET	N M	Co-ed Comp	0-400	1%
Tom	St. Theresa's	CSO	M	Girls Comp	1000+	60%
Vera	St. Veronica's	C IND	N M	Girls Comp	1000+	15%
Virginia	Vineyard H.S	DET	N M	Co-ed Comp	1000+	< 5%
Warren	Wideplains H.S	DET	M	Co-ed Comp	701-1000	< 10%

Notes:

- **Sector:** DET: Department of Education & Training; IND: Independent; CSO: Catholic Schools System; C IND: Catholic Independent
- **Location:** M: Metropolitan Sydney; N M: Non Metropolitan Sydney
- **Type:** Comp: Comprehensive
- **Size:** approximate ranges are given with the average metropolitan high school being of 701 – 1000 students.
- **NESB:** approximate percentages are given of the students identified as being of a Non English speaking background.

Descriptions of the teachers and their schools

The following profiles are constructed from material obtained from discussions with the participants, from notes made by the researcher through her observations, and from visits to the sites. The descriptions of the participants are grouped according to their sector of employment: Government or Non Government; their school location: Metropolitan Sydney or Non Metropolitan; and their position on staff: either as Head Teacher or Teacher of English.

Participants from Government Schools

Head Teachers, Metropolitan Sydney

CARA, HEAD TEACHER, CAMIANO HIGH SCHOOL

CAMIANO HIGH

Camiano High is located in the Metropolitan South - West district of Sydney, and is a co-educational comprehensive high school. Cara describes her students as fairly middle class and says that about ten percent come from Non English speaking backgrounds.

CARA

As a relatively newly appointed Head Teacher, Cara is relishing the opportunity of having achieved her career goal, and is very happy in her leadership position. She believes she works hard and is committed to exploring new teaching approaches. She is a keen contributor to commercially available study guides for students and teachers, as well as an author of articles for the English Teachers' Association Newsletter, and says she particularly enjoys communicating her ideas through publication. Cara has a strong interest in the study of film and the integration of technology into the English curriculum; she sees these as her areas of particular expertise that she is keen to share.

KATRINA, HEAD TEACHER, KNIGHTSBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

KNIGHTSBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

There are a number of schools, non government as well as a government selective school, surrounding Knightsbridge High. It is a comprehensive co-educational school situated in the Metropolitan North – West district of Sydney, an area of increasing affluence and significant parental expectations. Katrina believes the school is affected by the local competition in terms of its enrolments and because of the pressure that is placed on it by the community. She thinks there is a strong focus on results and student performance in the HSC while at the same time, many high ability students are drawn to other schools.

KATRINA

Katrina is an experienced Head Teacher of English in a previous school and has recently been Acting Deputy at Knightsbridge High. She is actively involved in her local district as a facilitator of professional development courses for the Department of Education and Training. Katrina says she is believes strongly in the power and intrinsic value of literature, and she likes to convey this to her students. She describes herself as a very organised person, who is particular about ensuring the provision of notes to the senior classes that she teaches. She draws on her background in Drama when teaching English. As a Head Teacher, she says she enjoys her relationships with her English colleagues and appreciates working with them as part of a supportive team.

Head Teachers, Non Metropolitan Sydney

DOROTHY, HEAD TEACHER, DARKLING CENTRAL SCHOOL

DARKLING CENTRAL SCHOOL

Darkling Central School is nestled in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. It is a small place that draws fewer than four hundred students for K to 12 classes from across a wide geographical area. A significant number of students leave at the end of Year 10 to continue their senior studies at larger high schools or to join the non government system. It is situated in a very stable community, many of the students have parents who have themselves attended the school. In Dorothy's view, there are not particularly high aspirations evident in the school culture.

DOROTHY

Dorothy is committed to teaching in country high schools and finds the relaxed lifestyle of a smaller community very appealing. She describes herself as a vociferous reader and as well, says she loves to talk about all sorts of issues. One of her passions is writing letters, especially if it gives her an opportunity to challenge some political interest. As a consequence of working in such a small school, and as only one of two full time English teachers, she has been Acting Head Teacher for quite a while. She believes she is at ease in her approach to her students and knows most of their families well. One of her current interests is in boys' literacy in their middle years of schooling.

Neville, Head Teacher, Nashberry Central School

Nashberry Central School

This K- 12 government school is situated in a country town some distance from a larger regional centre in the Northern Tablelands. It is fairly isolated and has a very small student population. Neville explained that there is considerable pressure currently being exerted on the staff by the principal and the parent body for the students' HSC results to improve.

Neville

A teacher in rural districts for his entire career, Neville is confident about his abilities and he believes he makes a strong contribution to his school. He is happy to share his philosophies and he enjoys discussing educational matters. He has been a marker of the HSC for many years, has contributed occasionally to the teacher education program at a local regional university, and is currently mentoring a beginning teacher on his staff. Neville places great significance in his perception of literature as works of art and says he likes to teach familiar texts from a literary critical perspective. He said some of his students call him "Senza" – the wise one.

Teachers of English, Metropolitan Sydney

ALEXA, ENGLISH TEACHER, AUSTEN GIRLS' HIGH

AUSTEN GIRLS' HIGH

Austen Girls is a very popular large DET school with a waiting list. Its enrolments are increasing in a district where local co-educational government schools are suffering from a decline in student numbers and a significant restructuring of existing schools is occurring. Its popularity is heightened through successful examination results and a high profile gained from a variety of activities within the local area. It is situated in one of the well-regarded educational districts and more favoured residential locations in Metropolitan North – East Sydney.

ALEXA

In her first appointment as a target graduate, Alexa is clearly passionate about her profession. She is deeply committed to her school, teaching subjects, and students. As a drama teacher she is actively involved in many extra curricular activities, and says she thoroughly enjoys the long hours required to produce a school play. Alexa is particularly interested in developing strategies to engage the diversity of learning needs and styles in her classes. In her first year of HSC teaching, she has been accepted as a marker for the external examination.

DENISE, ENGLISH TEACHER, DONWELL GIRLS' HIGH

DONWELL GIRLS' HIGH

This large government school has a strong multi-cultural population, with over eighty percent of its students from a Non English speaking background. It is situated in a bustling commercial centre in the Metropolitan South – West district, and shares some common space with the adjacent boys' school. Many of the students do not proceed to tertiary study and a significant number complete a vocationally oriented course in the senior years.

DENISE

Denise is committed to assisting those students who experience difficulties with English and she has a very positive attitude to her work. She says she enjoys teaching, is aware of her strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, and finds she frequently looks for new things to do in her classrooms. She likes working with her colleagues and particularly appreciates the time she spends as an HSC marker for the opportunities it provides for her to engage with other English teachers. Although her views appear to be quite realistic about the challenges of teaching, she also commented on how much she valued her relationships with her students which she saw as the most important feature of her work.

WARREN, ENGLISH TEACHER, WIDEPLAINS HIGH SCHOOL

WIDEPLAINS HIGH SCHOOL

The physical setting of Wideplains High is not particularly attractive, empty grounds surround it, there are few trees, and the buildings are grey and fortress like. It was established in 1988 to meet the growing population demands of the outskirts of the Metropolitan South – West district. The school enrolment - already over 900 students - is expected to increase by a third within the next three years. Students at this coeducational government school frequently miss lessons when absent teachers can not be replaced by casual teachers. There are significant factors of disadvantage in the local region: public housing estates of growing poverty, high unemployment rates, and limited social and community services.

WARREN

For a time during his teaching career, Warren taught a variety of subjects. He left the teaching profession for about ten years to pursue work in industry – one that was a very strong contrast to the field of education – and he said he had been motivated by financial gain. When he was retrenched, he returned to teaching and has been on the English staff at Wideplains High for three years. Because of his own experiences, Warren has a very pragmatic view about the future economic opportunities for his students, and believes many will have periods of unemployment ahead of them. He sees it as his responsibility to assist them to develop some skills that may help them to deal with this. Because of his own employment history, he professes an ability to cope with change and sees himself as an adaptable person. He has firm negative views about the bureaucracy for which he works and feels the teaching profession is not given the regard and financial remuneration that it deserves.

Teachers of English, Non Metropolitan Sydney

LOUISE, ENGLISH TEACHER, LIGHTHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL

LIGHTHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL

The Manning Valley district which surrounds Lighthouse High is a popular tourist destination, on the coast, north of Sydney. The area is known for its timber, dairying, and fishing. This school is one of a number of government high schools in the city, and until recently was classified for funding as part of the Disadvantaged School Program. There is a high attrition rate amongst the senior students who leave school early because they are able to find employment in the local area.

LOUISE

Louise is a well-established teacher and resident in her local area. She says she enjoys good relations with her colleagues and with other teachers at nearby schools and participates actively in community events. History is her preferred teaching subject but Louise also likes to work with both English and Drama classes. She has presented a workshop to other teachers on an aspect of the new syllabus, and has also spent considerable personal time and expense to attend in-service courses in Sydney. Louise speaks with enthusiasm about teaching and the satisfaction she gains from working with her students.

VIRGINIA, ENGLISH TEACHER, VINEYARD HIGH SCHOOL

VINEYARD HIGH SCHOOL

Vineyard High is situated in a prosperous city in the rolling hills of the Central West amidst fertile farming land of New South Wales. Fruit, crops, and livestock are characteristic produce of the area, and it attracts many visitors. This centrally located school is well supported by its local community, surrounded by a number of other high schools - both government and non government - and has quite a stable student population.

VIRGINIA

Virginia perceives herself as a veteran of the school, and is very comfortable in her position within both the English and History departments. She says she thoroughly enjoys working with her colleagues and is an active member of the local branch of the English Teachers' Association. Her approach to her students is relaxed and she feels that having fun is an important element of learning. She believes she has a penchant for doing "weird" things and thinks she is a "people person." She says she always knows a lot about her school community. Virginia is very happy in the classroom but also takes on a lot of extra curricular activities, and is the debating coordinator.

Participants from Non Government Schools

Head Teachers, Metropolitan Sydney

KEITH, HEAD TEACHER, ST. KEVIN'S SCHOOL

ST. KEVIN'S SCHOOL

A large, independent Catholic school for boys, St.Kevin's, has growing enrolments and is now presenting its second HSC cohort. The school has been recently refurbished and extended. It is situated near a number of government schools in Metropolitan Western Sydney. Keith said there is a strong commitment in the school to the pastoral care and welfare of the boys and to particularly addressing those who have specific learning needs.

KEITH

Although he is the most experienced teacher in the study, Keith is a recent appointment to the non government education system. After more than twenty-five years working in state schools, mostly in the metropolitan west, Keith has moved to the Catholic Independent system because he feels he needs a change. He is committed to improving the literacy abilities of boys, to getting them enthused about reading, and to boys' education in general. This motivation guides his desire to continue as a Head of English rather than to apply for other promotional positions. Keith describes himself as well read, and has pursued further academic studies in English literature. He has published study guides on literary texts and is also a keen musician who plays regularly in a band.

MAREE, HEAD TEACHER, MUSEVILLE GIRLS' COLLEGE

MUSEVILLE GIRLS' COLLEGE

The sprawling grounds, well-equipped facilities, and the established academic reputation of Museville College means that it is a favoured choice for the daughters of reasonably affluent parents. It is located in a garden suburb in the successful, comfortable area north of Sydney Harbour. This K to 12 independent girls' college has a strong academic focus and also encourages its students in their cultural and sporting achievements. Many opportunities are provided for the girls to pursue their interests in a number of fields.

MAREE

Maree is an established member of the English teaching profession, who makes a contribution through her involvement in a variety of professional activities. She is a published author, experienced workshop presenter, and enjoys a very strong professional network. Maree is a passionate advocate for her subject and takes on many responsibilities and commitments to promote it. When she became Head Teacher of English she says she found the English staff divided and lacking leadership, but this was a challenge she embraced enthusiastically. Maree is full of praise for her teachers whom she describes as hard working, collaborative, and resourceful.

Tom, Head Teacher, St. Theresa's School

St. Theresa's School

St. Theresa's is situated in a heavily populated suburban area in the Metropolitan West district of Sydney. It is already a large Catholic Systemic school for girls and its enrolments are continuing to expand. It has a significant multi-cultural identity with more than sixty percent of its students from Non English speaking backgrounds.

Tom

Tom's passion is his work in the classroom and he says he is determined not to pursue further promotion so that he can continue to teach English. He is actively involved in many ventures related to his subject: publishing, lecturing, and consultancy. He frequently assists teachers in rural areas and is committed to pursuing a system of education based on social justice. Tom is confident in his views about his teaching and his subject, and he says he often expresses these even when they are not popular opinions. He has a breadth of experience, and has taught overseas and in the NSW Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system.

Teachers of English, Metropolitan Sydney

Jonathon, English Teacher, Jupiter College

Jupiter College

The grounds and facilities of Jupiter College are impressive. The school has a long and established tradition of both day students and boarders, and enjoys an enviable reputation of

success in many fields. It is in the heart of Sydney's inner West and many of the students travel quite a distance to attend this large prestigious college. Recently the school had suffered adverse publicity and excessive media attention after a disturbing incident became public. This has had a significant impact on the morale of the students and staff, and there is a conscious attempt by all of the school community to rebuild their image and to support the members of the college.

JONATHON

Jonathon is very involved in the cultural life of his school; he directs a number of the musical and drama productions, and is a curator for the art gallery. He believes very strongly in the value of artistic and aesthetic principles and tries to convey these in his teaching of English. He is sensitive to the needs of his students, very positive about his colleagues, and committed to the school. Jonathon says he wants to share his own pleasure of literature and art with his students and it is his hope that this will assist their lives in the future. He also identifies himself as a very keen subscriber to the theatre.

Head Teacher, Non Metropolitan Sydney

VERA, HEAD TEACHER, ST. VERONICA'S COLLEGE

ST. VERONICA'S COLLEGE

This large and independent Catholic girls' college is distinguished by its use of a former convent as part of the main school administration area and the various religious icons in prominent display. It is well maintained and has a welcoming air. It is situated on the South

Coast in an industrial centre, the third largest city in NSW. The student population is about fifteen per cent from Non English speaking backgrounds, and Vera believes one of the school's strengths is its pastoral care and that this assists girls to achieve greater success in their studies than they might do otherwise.

VERA

Vera's enthusiastic and intellectual engagement with the new syllabus is very evident. She has recently completed a Masters Honours thesis in Cultural Studies and feels well equipped for the changes. She describes herself as someone who came into teaching later as a mature aged student, having previously been a librarian. Vera is a passionate feminist, declaring this ideology to be her "religion", and also thinks she could be considered a sociologist. Her interests are eclectic but a particular area of her expertise she identifies is filmmaking and film study. Vera describes herself humorously as "disorganised" and even proffered her astrological star sign as a way of presenting an image of herself. She appears as quite a reflective person, very aware of her own development as a teacher during the many years she has been at St. Veronica's. She says her workplace is a very supportive environment and she feels happy teaching there.

Teacher of English, Non Metropolitan Sydney

JOSEPH, ENGLISH TEACHER, ST. JEROME'S SCHOOL

ST. JEROME'S SCHOOL

St. Jerome's caters for boys in a coastal area, north of Sydney. It is a medium sized school in the Catholic Schools' System and draws from the population around the coastal region. Whilst there is increasing commercial development in the area, there is also some local unemployment, particularly for young people.

JOSEPH

After a number of years as a Head of English, Joseph decided to relocate out of Sydney and to not apply for a promotion position. He is now teaching English at a boys' school – after most of his previous experience in girls' education. Joseph worries that he is becoming tired and frustrated with his work, that he is thinking about what else he could teach or even pursue out of school, mainly because of the imposition of changes in English. He has a long-standing involvement with the Catholic Schools' System through his extra curricular work, and he is an experienced senior marker of the HSC examination. Joseph says he cares about his students and is critical of the pressure he thinks is placed on them because of the external examinations. It is his view that the educational needs of boys are not given enough consideration in English curriculum development and text prescriptions.

Summary

This chapter has presented detailed demographic information and description of the sample groups in the research in order to provide a contextual frame for the following chapters. Chapter 6 reports the findings about teachers' discourses in relation to their subject English, the new syllabus and their views about its implementation. Chapter 7 reports the findings about teachers' practices in a time of curriculum change and the nature of their decision making and actions when implementing the new syllabus. Chapters 8 and 9 draw together the investigation and complete this analysis of the teachers' voices and practices during major curriculum change in the subject of English.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS: ENGLISH TEACHERS' DISCOURSES ABOUT SELF, SUBJECT, AND PEDAGOGY, AND A NEW SYLLABUS

Introduction

This chapter is the first of two chapters that present the findings to the research questions. It specifically addresses the question: What is the nature of the discourses of teachers when a new syllabus is introduced? The kinds of things that English teachers say in a time of significant curriculum change, what their voices reveal as they deal with the challenges of the unfamiliar, and how they talk about their responses to a new world of practice are reported here. The focus is on the teachers' own perceptions as they speak about themselves and their subject and pedagogy, and about the new English Stage 6 syllabus and the factors affecting its implementation.

These findings are compiled from an analysis of the fifteen teachers' responses across the interview questions. They have been grouped according to the main themes that emerge from what they say and the key categories that can be identified in their discourses. Clusters of ideas and images are used here to convey the particular features and details that have been drawn from the research data. Three dominant strands of the teachers' discursive constructions are presented below and communicate their descriptions of their identities as English teachers; their responses to the new Stage 6 English syllabus; and the various factors they indicate as affecting their implementation of this new curriculum.

Teachers' discourses about their identities, subject, and pedagogies

Discourses about identity as an English teacher

When asked to describe themselves as English teachers, the participants reveal a strong sense of belief in their own abilities, irrespective of their age or teaching experience. In their responses to this first interview question, the teachers' discourses seem to present the established and confident views that they hold of themselves – related to, and derived from, - their past behaviours and thoughts. Their use of personally assertive expressions such as "I am…", "I have …", and "I've…" convey the sense that what they are talking about is firmly incorporated into their identity and is a secure part of how they behave and think. The directness and individual assurance of their responses heightens the personal and professional confidence that they communicate about themselves.

The teachers approached their answers in different ways, for example, through the use of narrative to tell some of their own life story; through personal statements to assert things abut themselves; and through an unusual choice of images to describe themselves. Keith and Vera, experienced Head Teachers, adopted a narrative approach to highlight past events and to speak of the various stages of their professional backgrounds. Warren, who had recently returned to teaching after ten years' absence, also gave a brief recount of his career changes. Most teachers use personalised statements and images to emphasise what they perceive as their distinctive, defining qualities as English teachers. They speak of the things they enjoy doing in English and some accentuate the specific skills and approaches they attribute as characteristic of their practice. Although a few teachers admit they are feeling less certain about their chosen profession because of the significant upheavals created by the current

curriculum changes, they generally display passion for their role as teachers of English and speak confidently about themselves.

In other words, when these teachers are talking about their identities as English teachers at the time of a new syllabus, they tend to define their identity in terms of personal statements that convey their self-appraisals and beliefs; and through a choice of rather surprising images to describe the ways they see themselves.

Personal statements

Some of the teachers volunteered, without embarrassment, a frank evaluation of their teaching abilities and asserted a number of things that generally cast them in a positive light. Their personal statements reveal various aspects of themselves that they seem to have internalised as a part of their teaching identity and which are also part of their own belief and value systems.

Quite a range of perceptions is covered in their self evaluations with some teachers asserting very confident assessments: "a bloody good teacher"; "I'm an English teacher down to my bootstraps"; "I'm capable"; "I find teaching English very easy"; "I am confident"; "I know what I'm talking about"; and "you have to believe in what you are doing ... and I do!". Others moderate their judgments through their use of qualifiers or hedging, mitigating devices seen in: "I think I'm reasonably well respected by colleagues and students"; "I'm quite good"; "I'm a bit of a rambling teacher"; "some days - damn good...other days - absolutely hopeless" and my view is "in flux".

Many of the participants appraised their various skills and their particular interests connected to English. The consistent use of first person in their statements creates a strong sense of their socially situated identity - how they position and perceive themselves as teachers of English. Their assessments acknowledge their practical skills, identify their strengths, and classify their state of action. In highlighting aspects of their own practice that they value they point out: "my strength is student motivation"; "I'm a very competent website user"; "I'm very tied to the text"; "I've always been a collector of resources"; "I just love the text"; "I enjoy creating new resources"; and "I'm known for doing weird and wonderful things in English". In contrast, Dorothy and Virginia identify their weaknesses as "I'm hopeless" (visual texts); and "I find poetry difficult".

Quite a few acknowledge their capacity to deal with change and to engage with new ideas. Perhaps this is not surprising as these qualities link directly to the interview context where the focus of the discussion was about changes to the English syllabus. Some of the teachers describe themselves as "very", "quite", "fairly" or "reasonably innovative"; while others profess: "I'm one of the rarities – I do enjoy change"; I like "doing new things"; "I like to synthesise new approaches to things"; and "I like to try new things all the time".

The teachers named aspects of their personality that they view as an integral part of their teaching disposition. These qualities seem to define them both as teachers and as people and are intrinsically connected. They appear to be incorporated into their philosophy for teaching and in the following examples, there is little separation between the personal and professional: "I don't like to be bored"; "I like kids"; "I'm fairly flexible"; "I like to be able to go with the flow"; "I'm still anti assessment basically"; "I like variety"; "I'm interested in issues"; and "I like to have success".

The teachers' discourses also provide insights about what motivates them in their teaching and again, there is a strong sense of personal ownership and individual assertion. These reasons occur in two main clusters. The first cluster centres on what the teachers say they particularly value for themselves in their subject and their teaching. They espouse aesthetic, moral, practical, and even somewhat selfish reasons. Their use of words such as "love" and "moral" in the following examples represent the deeply felt personal intensity that the subject inspires in some teachers to an extent where it has become a part of their being. This enthusiasm appears as an animating spirit for their professional life: "I love English"; "I see myself as someone creating critical awareness"; "I have a cultural passion"; "setting a moral tone"; "I really enjoy the media side of things"; "the classroom is my 'solace' and where I want to be".

The second cluster centres on their ambitions for their students. There is some evidence of altruism, of a zeal for outcomes beyond academic achievement, and a distinct focus on the wider panorama of life rather than on the more limited canvas of school. What they say lacks specificity in terms of how they actually achieve these expressed goals. There is a desire for something almost intangible in their claims that: "I like them (students) to get the same sorts of things out of literature as I do"; to "add value to students' lives"; "in partnership"; "teaching for life rather than just the HSC"; "to open doors"; and "I'm someone who is able to inspire kids in the classroom".

Their focus is largely on their own passion for their subject – whatever aspect particularly appeals to them - and their ambitions for improving the lives of their students through the sharing of their personal enjoyment and values derived from English.

Personally chosen images

The images the teachers use about their identity contain interesting and unusual comparisons; some are rather unexpected. Their discourses reveal that they chose metaphorical ways of describing themselves that draw on particular characteristics which define the ways individuals act. Their analogies include one collection that is related to the skills of creating, classifying and putting things together: "a facilitator"; "we're masters of creation"; "a bit of a bower bird"; "queen of the magazines"; "a sociologist"; "a collector" and "a mechanic". The other collection involves the skills of persuasion and dramatising: "a salesman"; and someone who "put(s) on a performance". These metaphors represent distinctive styles of behaviour and practice and compare an identity as an English teacher to that of other people or occupations and ways of behaving. In each case, there is a sense of a commodity – material or relational - either being produced or sold. The metaphors position the teachers as perceiving themselves to possess some sort of skill that involves the making or selling of goods. The notion of a 'product' may imply their awareness of some commodification of their role within the educational process. In using these wider comparisons the teachers construct their very personally held concepts into more familiar terms. They seem to move out from an individual frame of reference as a teacher into describing the broader arena of peoples' behaviours and actions within contemporary capitalist society.

As they described their view of their teaching identities, the teachers singled out particular qualities drawn primarily from the affective domain. These emotional states range from "enthusiastic"; "very dynamic"; "very patient"; "a bit radical"; "off-beat"; "fun"; "busy!"; "passionate"; through to Keith's description of himself as "increasingly aging". They express their emotional rather than intellectual conditions and therefore, present themselves as

emotional beings. Their perceptions of their work seem to be shaped by their feelings and are directly connected to their inner beings. Most of the words selected appear to convey the teachers' positive feelings of competence and enthusiasm, although for Warren and Neville, their choices indicate that a shift is occurring in their emotional state. Their lexicon reveals less security and stability, seen in "I'm somewhat stressed"; "I was very content"; and "any change is difficult".

The teachers' discourses reveal a very individual way of seeing their role. The emphasis on metaphors related to creation, skill and dramatising, on producing something and on associating feelings with their identities rather than other aspects are somewhat paradoxical when considered together. There appears to be an implied contradiction between their descriptions of their modes of behaving and their expressions of such deep feelings.

Discourses about subject English

In describing their identities as English teachers, the participants also convey their views about their subject. There is no unified definition offered and a number of versions of English are constructed within their discourses. Cara's opinion that "it just seems to be one of those terribly nebulous subjects" is borne out by the many different ways of seeing the subject that are communicated by these teachers. What they value about this "really broad subject" is its personal meanings for them and what it offers students in terms of life skills and experiences. They see English as far more than a subject, it appears as an extension of themselves and as a gift they can give their students. They evoke an almost religious fervour through their emotive language and some blur the boundaries between a sense of self and of the subject. There is a

fusion of beliefs, values, and identity, and an emphasis on subjective and rather abstract dimensions.

What subject English means to teachers

A complex mix of features characterises the teachers' shapings of their particular Discourses of English. No one dominant Discourse defines the subject; rather these are personal constructions containing a variety of beliefs and elements. The nature of what they say in their versions of subject English is identifiable primarily through reference to their naming of its philosophical qualities, and in relation to what individuals see as its more significant textual features. Paradoxically, although English is perceived as an intrinsic part of each individual self, it is not the same interpretation for each teacher. Previously there was a cluster of words in the affective domain to describe their identities, here English is presented as a highly individualised creation with many different attributes and accounts to mark out its complex territory.

Some of the teachers value aspects of the subject that are explicitly connected to their personal beliefs, sense of aesthetics and feelings. They value it as being an integral part of their own convictions and life - it is an animating spirit and a powerful force. There is a lack of concrete or objective terms or facts used in their depictions. For some, "English is exciting" and "a humanities subject". It is also "your control over life" and "language is power!" The various emotive responses it generates for them include: "I love English"; "I think it's fun!"; and I have "a very philosophical view".

Quite a few of the teachers indicate specific textual features of English that they regard highly and these generally relate to the subject's literary aspects and a particular type of textual study.

What a number of them say privileges English as a literature-based subject, for example: "I like teaching English as a literature course"; literature as "works of art"; "I love poetry"; "I prefer more modern literature"; "I love Shakespeare"; "a certain canon, a certain body of knowledge about literature"; and "academic literary rigour".

Other teachers identify aspects that have special significance for them and include these in their very personal definitions of English: "language in its written, spoken, oral, visual forms"; "a variety of texts"; a subject not "not heavily classical literature and language based"; and being interested in "issues and different readings".

What subject English provides for students

Embedded in their descriptions of English, many of the teachers include their opinions about the ways that the subject assists students. They perceive the subject in active and generally useful terms – as having some impact or consequence for those studying it. These perceptions can be classified according to the various effects the teachers see English creating for their students: either as the development of specific skills or as a preparation for life.

In the first classification, the teachers believe students can acquire particular competencies that range from "basic literacy skills"; the functional use of language; skills and genres used to enhance boys' literacy; critical literacy; to enhanced communication; and improved examination results. Tom, Keith, Denise and Warren particularly, speak of English as a subject that should address social inequities through meeting the needs and abilities of a wide range of students.

Another dimension that English is perceived to provide for students is being a preparation of, and for, life. Here, the teachers value the subject in terms that are beyond the acquisition of skills and which resonate with more personal and intangible aspirations. Jonathon thinks, "it stretches far deeper than the classroom"; and in Alexa's opinion, "English is not just about the HSC exam". Some teachers believe it has relevance and accessibility for students; it challenges their thinking; it allows rich cultural explorations; and it is "the one subject in which you can speak freely".

Discourses about pedagogical approaches

The teachers also described their particular classroom practices, conveying these as an integral component of their teaching identity. Their discourses about their pedagogies continue to focus on their personal characteristics and it is obvious for most participants that they perceive themselves to as having a central, directing role in the classroom. While their approaches appear to range across a broad spectrum and can be characterised as "very teacher centred"; "a bit old fashioned"; through to the use of "a variety of methods"; and "eclectic"; there is a strong reliance on strategies that they can control and direct. The ways the teachers characterise their pedagogical practices are reported according to their strategies – either teacher or student centred.

The use of teacher centred strategies

Most of the teachers' examples of their pedagogical approaches fall into a fairly narrow range characterised as teacher centred strategies. These teacher centred approaches are mainly related to modes of direct instruction and include explanations, practice and modelling approaches, explicit teaching methods, and structured examination preparation. There is an

emphasis on transmission and input particularly in Katrina's image of "hand feed" the students, and in Neville's promotion of "my own agenda"; and "teaching them ... what I know". Other examples within this group consist of explicit literacy practices such as "I model the work that I expect"; "modelling and repetition"; "mastery teaching approach"; "what works"; a "strong belief in structure"; "build the "field of knowledge" and "provide a framework" for students. There are echoes of a production line or an input/output model in the strategy of "skilling up" the students; and the view that "in the end I've got to teach them (students) to get marks".

Some of the participants convey a perception of their centrality and importance in terms of classroom activities. They imply their desire for control by indicating that "you can maintain a certain direction"; I like "to mould a group"; "I don't particularly support letting kids discover things for themselves"; and "I demand a response". One says he uses "whatever means I can"; while others suggest that they try various approaches to engage their students such as, "I'm always trying to find new angles to get things across"; "I like to make the classroom a bit of fun"; and "I try and expose the students to as many experiences as I can".

In order to exemplify and substantiate some of their pedagogical practices, the teachers made specific mention of their use of resources and materials within the classroom. Such examples generally support their teacher centred approaches and include "lots of notes", texts, visual materials and handouts. Katrina provides her own resources to the students in the form of notes saying, "we photocopy heaps". In terms of specifically named approaches to the study of texts, models identified include detailed textual and literary analysis, critical literacy practices, a "formula" for discussing literary techniques (Dorothy and Virginia), and an expressed preference for using familiar content and resources (Warren).

The use of student centred strategies

The teachers offer fewer examples of more experiential or interactive learning - approaches that can be classified as student centred. The only strategies of this type mentioned incorporate methods such as discussions, workshops, Drama activities, and the students' engagement in all language modes. The other methods appeared to be fairly vague and are quite general statements of an intended approach without the specificity of examples and no real indication of how these intentions are achieved. These broader approaches include "I try to encourage kids to learn however they can"; "learning together"; "practical learning"; "challenging students to think for themselves"; a "gamut of experiences"; and a focus on the students' "intellectual development". There is no explanation of how these various strategies are utilised in the classroom. Some of the more generalised views include Dorothy's belief that it is important to empower students as language users while both Tom and Virginia indicate they try to make links that are relevant to the students' lives. Two teachers pointed out they try to encourage students "to think outside the square" and "open their eyes and minds to new things" but do not offer any specific techniques as to how they actually do this.

Summary of findings about self, subject and pedagogy

The introduction of a new senior English syllabus does not appear to have affected the teachers' images of themselves or to have particularly shaken their self-confidence. Their views of themselves, their subject and their pedagogical approaches are expressed confidently and without hesitation. All the teachers highlight their own centrality within their subject definition and in their teaching and learning cycle. In speaking about their identity it seems they hold secure ideas of themselves and their subject that are well established and derived, in many cases, from longstanding judgments. Because they appear to draw on their past

knowledge and experiences, they convey confident images of themselves in their current professional roles.

What is surprising here is the assurance with which most of the teachers speak. Although the subject of English may be characterised as a contested territory with shifting borders, the teachers' own conceptions of its identity are firm even though they mostly hold different views of what it is. It would also appear that, for most of the teachers there is a fusion of their personal values with their particular paradigm of English, and that to a large extent, each has created a unique definition and ownership of the subject. Their representations of English seem to have been internalised and therefore, incorporated into their distinctive ways of being. The teachers seem to be unwaivering in their convictions about their teaching of English and their adoption of new English Stage 6 syllabus does not appear to have fundamentally challenged their core beliefs.

Teachers' discourses about their responses to the new English Stage 6 syllabus

When the teachers were asked what they thought about the new English Stage 6 syllabus, they expressed a clear desire to share their views. In many cases, this was their first real opportunity to present an opinion and to make a judgment about the curriculum changes. Their responses represent a considerable diversity of perspective. The range of their opinions includes some expressing delight with the introduction of the new syllabus, the majority who express varying degrees of qualified support and focus on particular aspects for comment, and three teachers who are very negative about most of the changes. Although the texts they produce in their discourses are individual personal responses there is a similarity in the structural pattern of aspects the teachers choose to talk about. Collectively, their discursive

texts are structured in a way that corresponds to the teachers making an initial personal evaluation, then providing a particular identification of and commentary on specific components of the syllabus, and then applying these elements to their own context and students. When given the opportunity for any further comment at the end of the interview, most teachers restated their personal responses and made some sort of summative assessment about the syllabus.

Across the participants' views, some key categories emerge and these are reported below. The teachers convey their perceptions about the new syllabus by expressing their feelings through personalised language and by voicing their particular constructions of meanings through individually selected images. The findings are grouped, initially, according to these images which can be characterised as personal statements of judgment and metaphors of a loss of control.

In addition to these images, the teachers also highlight a number of specific things as a way of focusing and structuring their responses about the breadth and scope of changes. Three main groupings can be made from the clusters of these particular points. One grouping presents the teachers' discourses about the syllabus in relation to what they identify about students' needs and abilities, and the reporting of their achievement. The next grouping reports their perceptions of its textual components, specifically in terms of text choices and approaches to the study of prescribed texts. The final group identifies some of the structural components of the syllabus that they single out for comment and includes the organisation and specific inclusions of Course content, and assessment details.

Personally chosen images

Personal statements of judgment

The teachers express their judgments in both positive and negative terms. While some participants initially made favourable comments about the syllabus they later modified these opinions by identifying their specific concerns and their objections. Maree, Alexa, Vera, Cara and Jonathon are the most enthusiastic in their judgments. About half of the responses would fall into a category of qualified acceptance. On the other hand, Warren, Neville and Joseph are firm in their opposition to the new syllabus.

The language used by the teachers is drawn largely from the affective domain and represents very personalised and fairly emotive judgments. There are more expressions found within their discourses that convey a sign of approval or which indicate that the teachers are appearing to give positive judgments. These affirmative statements are produced in the initial stages of their evaluation of the changes. They seem to position themselves as being responsive and receptive to the new curriculum. A sample of the positive and generally emotive expressions they use includes: "I absolutely love it!"; "when it first came out I've got to say I was tremendously excited"; "something that is enlightening"; "the best thing!"; "it's innovative"; "I'm very happy"; "I've got no gripes... I am open to it"; "I feel quite secure"; "I do like a lot of the directions"; "good... exciting... really enjoy teaching it because it's different"; "I quite like this"; and "nothing in it fazed me".

There are fewer who voice their criticisms directly and who, initially, present their judgments in negative terms. Their critical opinions suggest their own lack of confidence and their preference for the familiarity of the previous syllabus. They describe their personal responses

in the following ways: "80% unhappy, 20% happy!"; I was "vocal in terms of criticisms of it"; "the approach is so different to what we are used to"; "very limited in what I can do"; I "can't guarantee my success"; it is "highly political"; it "sounds great in theory"; and I am feeling "stressed".

Metaphors of a loss of control

Even though quite a few teachers claim to be positive about the curriculum changes, there is also evidence of confusion and disorientation. The teachers use words and images in their discourses that reveal their personal feelings of disempowerment and a loss of control, and which suggest their uncertainty about their professional practice as a result of the introduction of the new syllabus.

The following examples highlight the powerful effects of change that are exposed in the teachers' feelings about the new English Stage 6 syllabus. The images that they select convey a distinctive personal resonance of their anxieties and the repeated use of the personal pronouns emphasises not only the individuality of their voices but also the personal engagement and emotional energy they are investing. There is a strong sense they are speaking from their own contexts and that their views represent a particular time within the implementation process. It is obviously early days and the unknown elements loom quite large. The presence of words associated with the affective domain and verbs emphasising mental processes reinforce this subjective perspective and indicate the emotional experience occurring within the professional environment.

Warren's forceful and disturbing self image - "butcher of brilliance" - with its plosive bs and ironic juxtaposition of two disparate words, resounds with his deeply felt frustration about the

sorts of constraints he thinks he is required to put in place in his teaching. He identifies his lack of professional control in his image: "I was a puppet on the end of a string really". Joseph says, "I just think we've been thrown in at the deep end". Neville repeatedly uses the word "fear" to describe his feelings and explains, "I'm in fear, without ever having taught the Course before and nobody has." He believes "we're all rushing to interpret, we're all rushing to decide what we're going to … or how we're going to do this."

Tom expresses his criticism and confusion in colourful terms: "I think, to use an Australianism, it's 'a dog's breakfast'!" He considers the syllabus tries to include disparate elements and that "so many things are still up for grabs". As a result, he does not know what its intentions really are and what meaning and order he is supposed to make out of this messy assortment. Virginia suggests a number of teachers felt disconcerted about the syllabus and the HSC because "we don't know what's going to happen at the end of the year".

By implication they appear unable to order their practice – in the ways in which they have done in the past. Not being in charge or controlling the process is a significant factor here. The images suggest they are at the power of some other force- struggling "on a string", "in the deep end", in "fear", and "rushing" around without the comfort of the certainty of their established knowledge. Many of the expressions are couched as negative constructions and the nature of the actions conveyed through the verbs like "rushing" further suggests an absence of control. There is a strong cumulative effect created of disempowerment and negativity. Their discourses reveal that the teachers feel they lack the authority and purpose that typically shapes their work as a result of the new syllabus. These metaphors present a stark contrast to their expressed professions of positive judgments and apparent liking of the syllabus.

Students' needs

There is considerable reference made to students in the teachers' discussions about the new syllabus. The majority of the participants speak about the specific students in their classrooms or schools but they also extrapolate from their own contexts to comment more broadly about young people in other learning environments. Although the teachers' discourses appear to be dominated by what they say about the syllabus in relation to students, it seems that beneath this point lie other issues of concern that are related more directly to their own teaching. This is not to dispute their obvious concern for their students but rather to suggest that there are also other meanings being constructed through what they express.

The findings below are presented according to what the teachers highlight about the needs and abilities of senior students; the ways students' final achievement in an English Course is reported; and their views about the impact of some main aspects of the English syllabus on particular students.

The needs and abilities of senior students

A consensus of opinion emerges with at least thirteen of the fifteen participants stating their beliefs that students of lower ability will be disadvantaged or unable to cope with the demands of the new English Courses. Some of the teachers are passionate in their concerns for their own students whom they say are "just totally out of their depth". Echoing the consumer metaphor found in the teachers' discourses, Dorothy thinks there has been "the disempowering of a large percentage of the client base". Neville is sure that "these new Courses do not address lower level ability students"; and as Denise explains, "we just need another course". These teachers are all teaching the Standard English Course and most feel

that it is "a struggle" for some students. Reflected here is their previous teaching experience of the old 2 Unit Contemporary English and possibly, their desire to teach a Course that is more like it. They appeared to be drawing on their established practices and their comfortable familiarity with an old Course when making these judgments. This suggests the difficulties they may be having currently in teaching the new syllabus. In other words, the "struggle" is actually as much for the teachers themselves in their classrooms as it is for their students.

Reporting of students' achievement

The nature of the reporting of the students' achievement in their English Courses after the final HSC examinations draws criticism about inequities from some of the teachers. All students in the Standard and Advanced Courses will be reported on a common scale. Katrina and Neville express their apprehension about this credentialling saying: it is "fairly demoralising for those students right down the bottom"; and for the weaker students who "know they're up against the best kids in the state, they know they're going to be cannon fodder in the statistical game". Tom also considers the common material to be examined in both Courses will not be treated fairly: "no question in the world allows access to the number one kid and the number sixty thousand kid".

What is revealed here is the obvious pressure many of the teachers feel for ensuring the success of their students through good HSC results. The intense personal accountability for results that is placed on many of them by their schools – and by themselves - adds to their anxieties about the new syllabus. The graphic image of "cannon fodder" evokes the futility the teachers feel about their students' chances of success and perhaps, by implication, about their own teaching endeavours. The teachers' own measure of their effective implementation

of the changes is linked directly to the performance of their students in the final external examination.

Impact on particular groups of students

A pattern emerges in some of the teachers' discourses specifically linked to notions of privilege and disadvantage. Again, connections can be suggested between these views about the students and the teachers' own self-perceptions of their relative social positioning. When the teachers identify implications they draw from the new syllabus for particular groups of students, they are inevitably including themselves in their assessments of social advantage or more frequently, disadvantage. They express concerns about the potential privilege for students from wealthier backgrounds or for those who attend well-resourced schools. They cite advantages for bright students at the expense of those who are less able or belong to disadvantaged groups. There are perceptions, for example, that girls are favoured in the new syllabus and that creativity is being destroyed as a result of the content requirements.

These views reflect how the teachers situate themselves in relation to colleagues in other schools, and how they position themselves in terms of the social and educational standing of their school community. In some cases, the comparisons are a clear expression of their own frustrations and feelings of disadvantage. These teachers are from government and Catholic systemic schools that do not have significant levels of funding or abundant resources, and most are situated in lower socio-economic areas. When Dorothy is convinced that the syllabus "has been developed to placate or to somehow further empower the old private school type", it is obvious that she is speaking from a very different context. Keith also thinks, "you'd have a wonderful time" if you taught at "a very strong selective private or state school" with bright students and plentiful resources. Tom says the new syllabus privileges "keen, and

enthusiastic, clever students" and that "the scope for a brilliant student is amazing". For both men, their own experiences are a distinct contrast to these descriptions; they teach in Catholic schools with limited resources that cater to a wide range of students of all abilities.

Joseph is certain that "the new Course disadvantages boys" because of its conceptual and synthesising demands and that "girls are better at those kinds of skills than boys". Of course, he is struggling with many of the disenfranchised boys he teaches in a fairly low socio-economic area and in this view, he conveys his own difficulties in teaching these students.

Dorothy also mentions her concerns about Indigenous students, believing the syllabus is "absolutely cruel - a sure way to ensure they fail". Warren is firm in his view that "we're going to wreck the poets, we're going to wreck the fantasy and fiction writer because they're not able to gain marks from what they're doing". Here, both reflect their own personal values in terms of what they see as significant for issues of social justice and for the future of creative talent in society.

Textual components

Another area to figure strongly in the teachers' responses concerns the particular textual components of the new syllabus. Their discussion about texts represents a way for them to specifically address the syllabus content and also to make direct comparisons between old and new teaching materials. Their discourses reveal the preference that a number have for teaching a literature centred model of English and the particular paradigm they prefer to use in their approach to textual study. Their views about the prescribed HSC texts set for study, and the particular ways that the syllabus indicates these texts may be approached in the classroom

are reported below. A further report of the survey findings specifically in relation to HSC text selection is presented in Chapter 7.

Choices of texts

Most of the teachers praise the list of prescribed texts set for the 2001 HSC, indicating that it includes a "range of texts which are worthy of consideration", and that the variety of types of texts for study allows for greater relevance to students' lives. Overall, their views are positive about the texts that have been selected to accompany the new syllabus but less favourable opinions are encountered once the text selections are actually made. Concerns are expressed by some that the grid determining the types of texts to be chosen to meet the syllabus requirements is "irritating" and only gives an appearance of choice. As Jonathon says, there is "in a practical sense... some disappointment in that you think you have this wonderful shopping list and you can't really access it all".

Approaches to the study of texts

Far more criticism is generated about the ways in which the new syllabus addresses the study of texts. This aspect drew a strong and mixed response from the teachers because it impacts directly on their teaching practices and it affects the particular paradigms of textual study that they value and prefer to use. There are those, such as Vera, who enjoy the new approaches, believing "kids can have their reading of texts validated and no longer is there a right or wrong answer" and that teaching is "no longer tied to critical views of what the text might mean".

However, many more felt an absence of the previous syllabus' dominant literary and analytical model. Their opinions suggest that, in particular, they do not welcome any shift in the way they teach literature. Their own values about literature and its study are clearly evident in the comparisons they make. Embedded in their responses are their personal constructions of English and their elevation of literature to a powerful centre. Katrina asks, "what was wrong with teaching a piece of literature for the sake of teaching a piece of literature?" Keith thinks, "we are moving away from the integrity of the text but we're also taking away, robbing literature's power to enrich and enliven their minds and spirits". With a strong resonance of previous practice and a privileging of the old, Joseph says, "I am concerned that students are not getting the rigour in literature that they formerly did". In a similar echo, Neville regrets the loss of "the way I taught literature and the way I was taught literature".

Structural components of the syllabus

This final grouping conveys some of the structural components of the syllabus that the teachers particularly emphasise and isolate for comment. Apart from one positive aspect – the inclusion of film – much of what is said here focuses on the ways the syllabus is structured and how the weightings for assessment are mandated, and as a result, the implications of these for teachers' workloads and administrative duties. It is clear that some teachers perceive these things to be contributing to the confusion and stress they feel. Their concerns cluster around the Course content and how this is organised; and the school-based assessment details and marking practices.

Organisation and inclusions of content

All of the participants sound a very positive note about the inclusion of film as a new component for HSC study. It is overwhelmingly the most popular aspect of the new syllabus material, described by one teacher as "the greatest thing about this Course". The reason for this appears to be that because this material has strong appeal with the students, it wins approval from the teachers too. Also acknowledged as positive features are the exploration of visual language and the perceived increased emphasis on language study found in the syllabus.

However, there is less enthusiasm expressed for the structural framework and organisation of content in the syllabus. Some responses are strongly critical, describing the modular and elective structure of the Courses as "ad hoc" and "ridiculous and offensive". Others think there is an "artificial overlay" of concepts and "a little bit of ambiguity in the wording" of some components, and because "there's so much information", it is confusing. Alexa is more confident, suggesting, "they aren't all new concepts, it's just a new way of grouping it together". Neville, on the other hand, states, "if you want me to take the course seriously... simplify it and make it clearer". Keith describes some of the syllabus outcomes as "risible in the extreme and masterpieces of obscurity"; and Warren says, "I don't like forcing a direction on an outcomes based work". It would seem that these aspects highlight some of the teachers' uncertainty and confusion, and therefore, are part of a wider problem of a lack of clarity stemming from the syllabus itself.

School-based assessment and marking practices

Most of the teachers spoke about the syllabus requirements for school-based assessment and the use of criteria for marking. Because this is a mandated area and it contributes directly to

the students' HSC examination results, the teachers feel pressured in terms of their ongoing workloads and the extra demands placed upon them by continuous assessment. They recognise the serious implications for their students – and themselves - if they don't "get it right". Many feel that setting and marking assessment tasks dominates their professional and personal lives.

Only a few teachers believe the syllabus requirement of 70% non examination type tasks for internal assessment is "empowering" for students; that it provides for "different types of learners" and is "fairer", and as Louise suggests, it allows for "different questions not just the standard structured type essay questions". Most, however, highlight the difficulties they perceive in implementing this policy. They describe it as "really, really difficult", "problematic", and "far too limited"; that the necessary paperwork is "a nightmare"; and that the requirement "needs to be revisited in the very near future". Vera acknowledges that in order to meet the mandated weightings "tasks are multi-dimensional and that's a bit hard". These descriptions reveal the strain the teachers are feeling and the exacerbation of their workloads as a result of having to create and establish new assessment practices.

On a positive note, the use of criteria based marking principles is generally agreed to be a welcome change. The teachers feel that identifying explicit criteria for assigned work is much fairer and that students now know what is expected of them. A couple commented on their own marking practices, saying "it makes marking easier", and that "teachers have a better comfort zone in terms of marking". It would seem that once the work is done in generating the tasks and marking guidelines, then the actual completion of the assessment process appears to be more efficient.

Summary of findings about responses to new English Stage 6 syllabus

Shared and collective understandings about the new syllabus are generally not a strong feature of these findings. In these early stages of the curriculum changes, each teacher's own identity and context is strongly reflected in the very individualised nature of the responses. There is a sense that the teachers' discourses about the new syllabus are emerging ones and that the things they say are not particularly fixed. As the boundaries of the territory of subject English reshape through the processes of change, so too are the teachers' own firm positions and confident understandings, which were revealed in their discussions about themselves, starting to slip a little. There are now some resonances heard in their voices that suggest disquiet and uncertainty. Many of the aspects that they speak about which are related to the new syllabus appear to be a reflection of their anxieties and the doubts they are feeling in their professional duties.

Although many of the views presented are critical in contrast to an uncritical acceptance of the mandated changes, the opinions are not always informed ones. The confusion some ascribe to the way the new Courses are structured reflects their own confusion and turmoil as they try to find a path through the mandated requirements and syllabus components. The teachers' personal responses to the new syllabus range from passionate enthusiasm to pragmatic acceptance to antipathy and strong resistance. Some express a degree of ambivalence about a number of syllabus aspects in contrast to their earlier forthright and assured views about the subject and their pedagogy.

A number of common themes emerge from what they say. The teachers express their concerns about assumptions in the syllabus of privilege and advantage for students in

wealthier schools and of higher academic ability, issues that represent their perceptions of their own relative social standing and their school's socio-economic status. These also highlight the strong accountability and pressure they feel for their students' success and appear to invite comparisons amongst the educational standing of various schools and teachers. Many reveal their preference for a literary centred pedagogy through what they say about the new syllabus and its textual selections and approaches to study. This echoes their continued attachment to the literary and analytical model at the centre of the previous syllabus.

Most revealing of all the findings are the images the teachers use to express their personal views about the new syllabus. In contrast to the previous confident assertions about their identity as English teachers and their convictions about their subject and pedagogical approaches, quite a few of the participants' discourses now display a degree of unease and ambivalence. Although there are numerous professions of approval made for the new syllabus, there appears to be more negative features actually being identified. A variety of issues create concern for the teachers. Even though they express their judgments – positive and negative ones - quite firmly, the metaphors they use that are related to a loss of control suggest that their reactions to the changes may be less assured than they attempt to convey.

Teachers' discourses about their implementation of the new English Stage 6 syllabus

When the teachers speak about their implementation of the new syllabus and the factors affecting it, there is clear evidence of anxiety in their discourses. What they say here focuses increasingly on the negative and they now reveal less assurance in their discourses and show themselves to possess decreased agency. They identify aspects of the changes that cause them unease and which appear to diminish the professional control they have over their work. They

talk particularly about how they feel as they try to implement the new syllabus, and generally they seem to have lost some of the confidence that marked their earlier discourses about themselves as English teachers. What is actually conveyed about their actions and practices appears limited because much of their attention is given to expressing their own anxieties about the changes, describing their lack of time and specific resources, and criticising the wider educational authorities.

Factors associated with the teachers

Personally chosen images

What is striking is that when the teachers talk about the implementation of the syllabus, these individuals, who had no contact with each other and are from a selection of locations and school systems from across NSW, shape their responses in similar ways. There are familiar echoes in the ways they describe their anxieties even though their particular contexts for implementation are markedly different. Two dominant metaphorical patterns emerge from their discourses. These are presented below, grouped and characterised as metaphors of blindness; and metaphors of direction.

METAPHORS OF BLINDNESS

The teachers choose metaphors that are associated with darkness and blindness and which suggest an absence of clarity about what they are doing. These images imply the disoriented feelings and the personal and professional inadequacy they are experiencing. The loss of sight – in a metaphorical way – reflects their lack of insight into the new syllabus and the cumulative effect of the teachers' lexical choice of "dark" serves to heighten their

apprehension about the implementation process. Words so obviously related to a loss of perception convey the impression that the teachers' own perspectives about the new syllabus are uncertain and tentative.

Neville indicates, "we're feeling our way" and he believes, "you are in a blind alley". Louise's perception is that "we're floundering in the dark", while Alexa, a new graduate, echoes the same metaphor: "I think a lot of people feel that ... they're going into the dark, they don't really know what's expected". Keith, the most experienced Head Teacher in the study, considers, "there's been a lot of feeling your way in the dark." He observes that the same uncertainty is present in his students, "the bulk of students are going, hang on – what's happening here?" Louise's sense of confusion is revealed in, "I don't think that we have come to grips with everything because it's so vast and we don't know totally where to focus."

Hedging and mitigating devices such as "I think' and the use of the negative constructions, "don't really know", and "don't think" further qualify their views and add to the effect of hesitancy. The ways in which the teachers express their views signals their irresolution and uncertainty as they speak about implementing the new syllabus and even though most are experienced practitioners, the change process has brought about a loss of confidence for them. In spite of their considerable teaching experience, they seem to lack certainty and vision about achieving the desired outcomes, particularly for their students.

METAPHORS OF DIRECTION

The second group of metaphors identified in the teachers' discourses relate to directional imagery – the teachers' need for direction and to know where they are heading in their implementation of the changes. This is presented through their words specifically connected

to paths and roads, or implied through the suggested absence of ways to follow. The destination they are groping for through these directional clusters is obviously the HSC examination; what is much less certain is the path to take to get there. These metaphors and images relate directly to the first group, implying that not only is there an absence of seeing the way to go but also of knowing how to get there.

Virginia tries to reassure herself during the interview saying, "I think we're on the right track." She reflects, "I'm starting to worry ... because if we haven't got it right, if we go down the gurgler ...it's me." Neville sees implementation as "a hard road to hoe." Dorothy hopes, "we're on the right track." Although she is an experienced teacher, Louise also uses an image that evokes her uncertainty about the direction to take. She describes herself as "a little bit swimming upstream at different times trying to find out just where to go..." She asks, having collected all her resources for the new Course, "where do I go?"

Similarly, Alexa expresses her concern for direction when she acknowledges, "you don't have this structure and age old process that's been followed..." From his perspective, Warren believes, "there's no real guideline for me." As an experienced teacher he is unhappy with the way he is working. "I feel it is not going the direction that my teaching, that my enjoyment from teaching, has come from." Maree, a Head Teacher, critiqued her choice of one of the electives she has selected for study. "None of us really understood what was involved until we were set on a course that we couldn't change." Her description of the response from officers at the Board of Studies when she asked for assistance suggests their uncertainty as well: "we don't actually get an answer, you get a journey around an answer."

The defining feature here is the repeated need for a path or a way to progress through the new syllabus. There is a strong sense that the teachers want a sequence to follow in their implementation and perhaps even a linear course to direct them to where there is a clear endpoint. Analysis of their responses reveals a cluster of words and meanings related to their desire for guidance, such as "road, back, forward, upstream, getting there, right track, course, where, direction, to go, and guideline." It appears that there is also a longing for signposts or signals to indicate the way that the journey may be taken and accompanying this, an implied need for more confidence about undertaking the expedition.

Subjective Realities of Teachers' Work

A number of factors emerge related to the new syllabus implementation which appear to have considerable significance for the teachers with implications for both their professional and personal lives. How they construct themselves in their discourses reveals that they perceive a blurring of the boundaries between work time and private life and that the subjective reality of their professional world is being increasingly shaped by pressures which seem unrelenting to them.

The teachers are in strong agreement about the encroachment of their work time into their personal time. The theme of intensification fills much of their discourses. Most feel very burdened by the amount of additional work that they say is required of them in order for them to implement the new syllabus. Some appear extremely anxious and frustrated by their workloads. They express their concerns about the absence of support materials, the personal time they have to spend finding and preparing resources, and the need to use their home computers because of the lack of satisfactory technology facilities at school.

Their discourses are dominated, therefore, by their practical difficulties and they focus strongly on the absence of things to support and help them. Many appear overwhelmed by the increased workload and the lack of sufficient time to adequately prepare their teaching. They construct themselves as people without the means to complete their work, as if they need to be provided with materials – or even to be filled up like vessels - in order to implement the new syllabus. Their voices reveal a negative definition of implementation – what they cannot do rather than what they are doing- and many of them situate themselves as being dependent on other people and other resources. This lack of confidence and low morale that some of the teachers appear to be experiencing may also have a direct connection to their teaching performance, which can then have implications for student learning.

PERCEPTIONS OF TIME

Many of the participants feel that there is simply not enough time available in their day to complete the new work required of them to effect significant changes in their teaching of Stage 6 English. They perceive the reality of their work as never ending and the word "time" is continuously repeated. They say they have to spend large amounts of time outside their formal hours of employment in an attempt to "keep up". This appears then to constrain the degree to which they can engage sufficiently with different ideas, prepare teaching resources and new programs, read and view unfamiliar texts, and complete the demands of assessment schedules. Significantly, it also impacts directly on their emotional and physical well being and is a further reflection of their increasing tension and stress.

Neville's view that "I've been writing the Course as I've been going," is a perception shared by others. They also mention that they have other classes apart from Year 12 to prepare for, and to teach. Keith blames the haste of the change process, and by implication, the

educational authorities, for creating unrealistic pressures. "The time frame was ridiculously brief given something so complex. Given the changes in critical method that's underpinning the views..." there is "a monstrous increase in workload." When Katrina protests, "it just takes up so much time because the approach is so different to what we are normally used to, what we normally do", there is an implied recognition that a change in practice is actually required in order to meet the demands of the new syllabus. A recognition of this kind, however, was rarely acknowledged in their discourses.

Cara describes the extension of her working hours and its detrimental impact on her family life:

> *I can work through to midnight or one o'clock or something and end up doing this forty-five minute drive to work and work all day to the despair of my husband...I think all our family members are complaining ...and then I'll go and I'll have three weekends in a row where I have conferences.*

In reporting that there has been an enormous increase in the pressure placed upon them and their colleagues, the teachers reflect their feelings of strain and emotional and physical tiredness. Tom expresses his concern for his staff who are "flat to the board", and he says "they worked harder ... than I've ever seen anybody in any year I've taught." Joseph is very anxious about the Occupational Health and Safety implications and feels that "the level of low morale in English particularly, is very high." He adds, "I know a lot of people who are very stressed out." In fact, this is true of Joseph himself who is considering leaving teaching:

> *even though I have taught English for the last twenty three years, what else can I do? Whether it's teaching another subject, getting out of English or*

getting out of teaching altogether, because it's just the continued stress of it all has been enormous.

There is clear evidence in what they say of a deep sense of personal anguish. Denise describes an experience common amongst the other teachers: "to implement the new syllabus we have spent nights and nights...staying back for many, many nights trying to get it together." They all claim that the reality of their working life is totally consuming. In Keith's assessment that "in real practical terms what teachers need is time", lies the strong message being communicated by the teachers about their requirements. This perceived absence of sufficient time to complete their work has significantly increased their unease and tension about the changes and consequently directly affected their physical and emotional well being.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT MATERIALS

At least two thirds of the participants identify the provision of adequate resources for their students and for their own teaching purposes as an overwhelming issue. Their discourses are filled with references about the need for various forms of support materials; their absence is talked about as another major source of stress for the teachers. They see this problem as compounded by the lack of readily accessible information such as teaching guides, support documents, and technology. Their pedagogical model appears to be strongly content driven. Echoing the metaphorical cluster about direction, Denise believes that, "the lack of resources is holding us back from going forward." This repeated concern for resources may mask the lack of confidence that the teachers feel; in other words, they feel the need for a guide to direct them so they know what to do. In their search for direction, they suggest specific resources would provide signposts for them to proceed.

THE TEACHERS' NEED FOR RESOURCES

Warren's concern is that "there are no resources available so you become your own resource. Resources particularly are my bugbear – I've always been a collector of them." He complains, "all our resources are self built." In Warren's case, his frequent and repeated use of the word "resources" and the acknowledged absence of the type that he wants, highlights the lack of confidence he feels about implementing the new syllabus. Although by developing his own resources, he could have greater ownership of his teaching process and tailor his resource construction directly to the needs of his students, it is clear he prefers a more prescribed source of information and assistance.

Cara considers that part of the implementation process is teachers having to find resources themselves, by "talking to people about it – who's doing this now? Who's got something on it? And I think everybody's playing trades." While Cara offers this remark as a negative example, her observation actually suggests there is improved cooperation and sharing amongst teachers and that they are in fact working closely with each other.

Although she says it in a light-hearted way, Denise's words capture the teachers' desires:

> *resources are always useful ... I think we're developing a mentality like the kids too, we want the information... feed it to me! Feed it to me! Just give me the sheet – give me the answer on the sheet... I'll be happy!*

Her images convey what is a governing attitude in many of the teachers' discourses and what characterises their views about implementation. They do want to be 'fed' and they do want to be given 'the answer'. The repeated concerns they express about the absence of resources and materials draws a picture of many of the teachers as dependent on content provided by

external sources for them to include in, and validate, their teaching of the new syllabus. This links directly to their desires for a direction, for "the sheet" of information to guide them.

Much of the teachers' discussion focuses on the absence of physical resources - they desire specific materials to guide their practice, to assist their understandings of the complex changes, and to define the ways in which they should implement the new syllabus. In blaming the absence of these particular resources to support their implementation, they may actually be reflecting their feelings about the lack of a range of supportive measures that they would like provided during the change process. Rather than the availability of specific physical materials, of greater concern is that their own personal and professional well being is so affected by stress and a lack of time and control.

TEACHERS AND PERCEPTIONS OF RESOURCE DIFFERENTIATION

As reported earlier in terms of the teachers' responses to the new syllabus, embedded in some of their discourses is a strong concern with equity and social justice issues. They assume that students are privileged in certain schools, and that the syllabus reinforces inequity in regards to access to resources. The teachers see this manifested through their perceived differentiation in the opportunities that students have, depending on their socio-economic status, to work with newer texts and technology. Some schools can not afford to purchase new texts for study. Although film is welcomed as a valuable new addition to the HSC curriculum, Tom thinks some students are advantaged by the excellent facilities available in their schools while his own suffer:

> *it's an unfair system... those people with DVDs ... they've got a set screen frame by frame. I'm sitting there with a wobbly video, sitting there telling the*

kids... try and bob your head in time with it so you can see what the video's doing.

What Tom also does here is construct a socially situated identity of disadvantage for himself and his students. This is in direct contrast to both Maree and Jonathon who are happy with the materials they have and whose wealthy private schools provide abundant resources for their staff and students. Vera also identifies St. Veronica's as "resource rich". A wide contrast emerges between the teachers over notions of socio-economic privilege and the material support that can be provided by their particular school.

Many of the teachers from government and Catholic systemic schools address their concerns about the reduction in the funds that they have available to purchase resources. At Camiano High, Cara says, "we've had our budget slashed by 50% which doesn't help." Louise shares the same experience at Lighthouse High, "we've been cutback. We were a DSP (Disadvantaged Schools Program) school and that's been cut this year so our resources are cut." Joseph focuses on the economic disadvantages that some of the St. Jerome's students experience, asking "the practical implementation of doing a film study – does every child have a text? "I've got kids living in refuges and things like that. It disadvantages, it does disadvantage in a socio-economic way."

The apprehension that a number seem to feel about issues of access and equity for their students and their view that some other schools experience privilege in relation to aspects of the syllabus may in fact also reflect their perceptions about their own situations. There is a blaming of the "other" – those who are seen to be more advantaged and therefore, are perceived to have an easier task with the implementation of the syllabus. The systemic problems within the speakers' own contexts such as under funding, socio-economic

disadvantage, and limited facilities, and which obviously cause them frustration and impediment, are actually revealed through the criticism they direct towards others.

THE DEMANDS OF TECHNOLOGY

Additional burdens on the work time of the teachers arise particularly in their utilisation of information technology. A number of the essential support documents for the new syllabus are only available online from the website of the Office of the Board of Studies. To access these is seen as an impossible task to complete in the school day. As Virginia explains, "I could spend forty minutes on the website, only just get there without getting what I want, so it's much better to be able to do it at home." Warren identifies typical technical problems at school, which therefore exacerbate the amount of work the majority of the teachers have to perform at home:

> *Our system is too slow here – so I use my own system at home which because of time – I like to be as efficient as I can- and if there's something I need to do on the Internet, rather than wait five minutes for a site to load up here, I'll go home and load it in half a minute and I've got an ability to print there and I know my system is up and working and won't crash.*

Most teachers use their own computers at home to download the necessary documents and to research any other relevant information. The computer networks in schools are generally considered unable to deal with this demand, the time taken to access sites unfeasible in a school day, and in some cases, the absence of readily available computer facilities at a school make it impossible. These factors further contribute to the intensification of work and the frustrations being felt by the teachers. It is also remarkable than none of the teachers mentions the defrayment of cost to their own personal expenses when they have to use their home

equipment and private internet providers. Their obvious dedication, and the value they perceive in saving time for their students by downloading materials themselves at home, is clearly evident in the way they do not even acknowledge the increased personal financial costs.

Factors associated with schools

The frames of teacher cultures

Moving out from considering the factors directly associated with the individual teachers, other aspects also appear to be of significance in the process of implementation. These are related to the roles teachers have in their subject department, and the connections they establish with their colleagues and with the school executive. Within the cultures of teachers' work these patterns of relationships frame their professional world and impact on the ways in which they act and interact. In a time of major change, these frames seem to have a direct bearing on how they respond to the demands of the new.

The School Executive

Because of their subject leadership the Head Teachers make more frequent mention of the influence of the school executive on the implementation of the new syllabus than the other participants. The executive's influence is seen in a number of ways, including the allocation of funding to the subject department, and the support for professional development.

Maree's view of her school executive, shared by most of the other Head Teachers, is that they are "very supportive of in servicing and paying for it, very supportive of teachers doing HSC

marking as a means of professional development." At some schools, for example, Jupiter College, Lighthouse High, Knightsbridge High, Vineyard High, release time was provided for subject departments to work together on programming. This allowed the English staff to do some collaborative planning and discussion, for units and assessment tasks to be written, and for time to be spent becoming familiar with the new syllabus. Virginia praised her Principal for her financial planning and her awareness of the need to fund the syllabus changes, "she's very good … she set aside, oh, probably $28,000, last year for the new HSC."

Jonathon, at Jupiter College, is particularly fortunate in the school executive's support for change and what he says reveals the wealthier context in which he works. He acknowledges the Headmaster's generous provision of funding for professional development, the Director of Studies' support for "all staff in all departments", and the sharing of the change process across other subjects. Time is also made available during the week for each subject department to meet regularly. Vera is also complimentary about the support she has received from her school executive where some practical strategies, such as being taken off playground duty, were put in place to assist her management of change. For other schools, systemic constraints did not make this possible. At St. Jerome's, Joseph is positive about the in-service funding that has been provided but acknowledges, "in terms of time off for program development and things like that it's been very limited."

The role of the Head Teacher

Eight of the participants are Head Teachers of English Departments and for each one, this is a major influence on their experience of implementing change. Their discourses reveal that they perceive themselves as significant role models for their colleagues and that they are the ones who are accountable for initiating the change process within their subject departments. Maree

says her role as a change agent is "very strong." Keith imposed specific directions on his staff whereby "I made sure things happened, so free will didn't happen – determinism was the case." He describes himself as "a model" and says that because he saw himself as "ultimately...responsible" he had to "know what was going on". Because Cara thought her teachers needed time to become familiar with the syllabus demands, she decided, "to do an awful lot of taking it on board myself, doing it myself." Vera balanced her own desires and enthusiasm for change with her understanding of her English staff and said her main aim in the first year was that "I don't want them to be uncomfortable." This was a common attitude amongst the Head Teachers who all seemed to regard the support of their staff as a high priority and who perceived themselves as the leaders of the curriculum change.

A number mention particular strategies for facilitating change, including the establishment of operating structures for their departments such as teachers teaching the same texts and working together in pairs, arranging meetings – sometimes out of hours -, promoting cooperation and establishing a comfortable working environment and particularly, providing resources. At the same time, they list their other responsibilities which include the complex requirements of organising classes, making text selections, managing budgets and resources, developing new programs, and attending to their own professional development needs and those of their staff. It is clear from what they identify that their perceptions of the demands and the centrality of their leadership positions adds to their feelings of stress and their anxieties about time and being in control.

For Dorothy and Neville the situation is somewhat different. As Head Teachers in small central schools they work with only one other English teacher and have colleagues from other subject departments who teach an English class or two. Their anxieties are exacerbated

because they are isolated and reliant on their own personal resources and professional experience. Neville believes he has to appear to be confident and knowledgeable because "if I can't seem to be even remotely an expert, then who can? There's no other Head Teacher around of English that I can speak to."

The Subject Department

Each teacher's implementation of the syllabus change appears affected in some way by the size and culture of their English department, its organisational structures and work practices, its provision of resources and funding, and the ways its members view the new syllabus. The introduction of new programs appears to be acting as a catalyst for improved collaboration within most English departments. Partnerships have been formed in response to the demand for new units of work, assessment tasks and resources. In some cases, a spirit of co-operation has emerged, forced somewhat by the circumstances. Most of the participants recognise and acknowledge a culture within their department that assists them in some practical way and eases their isolation. One Head Teacher mentioned previous tensions amongst her staff had been reduced as they all attempted to work together to prepare for the new syllabus.

Various identifications of improved cooperation amongst English staff were noted including: "they've had to do a lot more collaboration than they've ever been used to before;" "they're coming back more now into the staff room and talking about what they're doing more than they've ever done before"; the staff are now "huddled together" talking; "nobody was working alone, everybody had someone's brain to bounce off...that was good"; "everybody stayed behind and I think we had two or three sessions of about four hours each time and then we'd go out to dinner afterwards"; and "everyone's helping each other the whole time." Because of the positive terms in which they were described, in some ways these aspects

appear to help alleviate some of the personal isolation and strain being felt. The teachers do not seem to recognise the stark contrast being conveyed in their discourses between the guidance and closeness that is being obtained within their departments and their expressions about the absence of professional support and their feelings of isolation in the change process.

On the other hand, Joseph thinks the practices established in his English department are driven by "a spirit of desperation" and are basically "survival stuff." They are mainly operational measures such as all teachers teaching the same texts and all classes having the same assessment tasks. There are no regular meetings for the English staff at St. Jerome's and unlike most other participants, Joseph does not seem to have many interactions with his colleagues.

Factors associated with the wider educational community

The other sectors of influence identified as impacting on the curriculum change process are various educational and professional authorities, external to the immediate school community. Criticisms about the changes are directed at the centralised authorities, sometimes as a way of masking the real issues for the teachers which are closer to their own professional activities. In ascribing blame and suggesting political manipulation of educational process, a few of the teachers attempt to assuage their confused emotions about the new syllabus.

It is clear that many participants are uncertain about the role played by The Office of the Board of Studies in relation to curriculum development and implementation. There is frequent confusion in what they say about the designated roles of the Board and that of the Department

of Education and Training (DET). Most of the teachers are critical of both organisations, particularly in relation to the provision of professional development.

On a more positive note, initiatives set up in local areas and both the NSW English Teachers' Association and the Association of Independent Schools are identified for their helpful contributions to the teachers' need for inservice materials and professional guidance.

N.S.W. Office of the Board of Studies

Generally the most experienced participants, especially the Head Teachers, were strong in their criticisms of the Office of the Board of Studies. They believe that more support materials and direct assistance should have accompanied the new English syllabus issued by the Board so as to facilitate its implementation in schools. Katrina's opinion is one shared by a number of the teachers, "the Board of Studies gives off the vibes that we write the material, we don't implement it – that's your job." The processes of syllabus development and curriculum implementation are complex and it is not widely understood as to which stakeholder has the responsibility for particular aspects. It is obvious in the study that the majority of the teachers hold firm views about the role of the Board, some of which are inaccurate, and do not necessarily reflect its mandated responsibilities. Although there have been many shifts over time and the boundaries have blurred between the designated roles for the Board and the DET, technically the Board of Studies is not responsible for the implementation of new syllabuses. The confusion shown by these teachers reflects the general confusion in understanding within the wider community about these two educational authorities.

The Office of the Board of Studies is perceived as disconnected from the classroom reality of teachers. The teachers believe enhanced support materials and direct assistance from Board

officers is required. Related to the earlier metaphorical cluster about direction, more specific guidance and easier access to important documents is also requested. The participants' criticisms of the Board range from the lack of provision of support documents, its use of the official website, inadequate responses from Board officers to teachers' questions, to views about the unrealistic demands of some aspects of the syllabus itself. Joseph's perception is that the syllabus, "looks pretty on paper but to implement it I think there's been many, many difficulties." He believes the syllabus writers were "not practising in the kinds of classrooms that many teachers in the State are working in."

Warren thinks "the Board of Studies is putting their head in the sand really as far as resources go." He is also worried about the lack of details he has about the new Courses, especially in regards to criterion based assessment. "Nobody's lectured me from the Board or told me specifics and my interpretation might be different to somebody else's." In his choice of the word "lectured" Warren reveals himself as passive, as someone who wants to be instructed explicitly about what to do and "specifics" confirms his desire to be given precise information. Ironically, when he expresses concern about interpreting the syllabus in a "different' way, he unconsciously identifies the reading theory that underpins the syllabus itself. In other words, a personal construction of meaning - with many possible readings acceptable - is exactly what is expected of any reader and student working with the new Courses.

Joseph asks, "what's come from the Board in terms of guidelines or real assistance in terms of practical teaching strategies or methods or in-servicing?" Katrina says, "the Board of Studies won't give anybody any feedback." Tom echoes the teachers' concerns saying, "we're getting mis-information and this kind of generic idea of, 'well, it'll turn out alright in the end', is not good enough for the kids." What Tom implies is that he actually wants authoritative

"information", Katrina needs assurance and personal confirmation, and Joseph values specific and practical methods to assist him. Warren thinks that "apart from propaganda, at the moment I'm not getting anything material" from the Board and again, he reveals his desire for concrete and tangible assistance. There is a strong sense that the teachers' blame for any difficulty in implementation is being directed towards an external source, in this case, the Board, and away from the teachers themselves. In their discourses the teachers personalise this inanimate statutory body through their continual references to "they" as their way of constructing an oppositional identity for the educational authority that has brought about the curriculum change. It seems that they need a focus for their frustrations and somewhere to deflect their feelings - this official body appears to be a suitable target.

One example that demonstrates the difficulties some of the teachers had in obtaining information from the Board's website is that one quarter of this sample group was unaware of the existence of a support document *Workplace and Community Texts* (Board of Studies, 2000), for their teaching of Module C in the Standard English Course. This forty page document has to be downloaded from the Board's website. It was only in their interviews that four of the fifteen participants became aware of it. Denise said she did not realise its inclusion partly because "there's so much information!"

N.S.W. Department of Education and Training

The topic of professional development generated animated responses from the teachers, and specifically, about the large-scale program conducted by the NSW Department of Education and Training to implement the New HSC. A major initiative was the Local Interest Group (LIG) events, which occurred for a range of subjects on a cross-sectoral basis across districts throughout the state. Each meeting had a specific focus (for example, assessment practices),

and resource materials were provided to the attendees. Developed on the "train-the-trainer" model, schools could send a maximum of two participants per subject with the understanding that these participants would then return to their departments and in-service their colleagues.

With the exception of two participants in the study, all the teachers had access to some of the LIG events. At least two thirds attended more than one session. Two had direct involvement as facilitators, and most had seen the resource materials that were available from the workshops. Although the teachers' discourses reveal their strong desires for guidance and support materials, these initiatives do not appear to have been perceived as providing these. More negative comments were heard than might be expected. Across the group some of the participants are highly critical, and generally, the responses are not enthusiastic.

Keith believes "the Department was niggardly in the extreme" in its limitation of the number of teachers who could attend the courses. Virginia points out the problems for those who attended the LIG events and then attempted to train their colleagues. She said that when she and the Head Teacher came back "the rest of the staff didn't want to know." Cara had a similar perception about the efficacy of the LIG events for some of her staff. "Even if they'd gone to the LIG meeting, they didn't really understand. They'd come back from the LIG meetings, photocopy everything – drop it on to everyone's desk … and never discuss it." It is interesting to observe here that even though there is a constant request expressed for resources and support materials, when this appears to be made available, it seems to be rejected by some teachers.

The actual content and the conduct of the LIG events were also critiqued. Neville said, "to a lot of people they were basically a whinge session." Warren considers the facilitator "was full

of Department policy and didn't really have any solutions to any of the problems that were there." In Denise's view:

> *the ones I went to were not particularly effective. It was just generally a 'how you're going' type thing, and we were expected to take units of work and pass around resources but none of that sort of (sic) happened. It wasn't a particularly useful sort of day, I didn't feel. It should have happened at the beginning of the course not halfway through. I want more information rather than chatting and discussing.*

Tom also thinks that the LIG events were not specific enough for his needs:

> *the first one was a waste of time because with that one we had a lot of bad examples and that was a horrific way to start. We just sat down with those things that people just threw together ... and the kind of line was 'well, you can use these as a negative example.' People were saying, 'we don't have time for a negative example, this thing needs to be implemented.'*

In Keith's assessment "it provided people with the chance to have a go at the unfortunate LIG person." Again, there is an implication made of teachers needing to express their oppositions and direct their frustrations towards some representative "person". He identifies some of the difficulties he saw in the particular model of professional development:

> *both the LIG presenters ... were having to espouse or articulate practices and policies and ideas and beliefs that were in some cases ultimately unsupportable. Obviously there were major problems in terms of the communication of ideas and that comes back to the whole thing being implemented in such haste. For the people charged with transmitting those ideas, at a grass roots level, at different stages of different levels – they didn't know fully themselves because there was no time.*

Katrina, who was a LIG facilitator in her local area, echoed Keith's perception. She found it stressful and felt unsupported, "fielding all those questions ... I just got the feeling it is you ...– although it's a very hard thing to do ... some of the material you had to make decisions about whether or not you'd run with it ... at the time, people were very critical, and rightly so." Vera, also a facilitator, believes that being involved and being trained in Sydney helped her own department's implementation but that it was also a lot of extra work. She concluded, "once is enough."

A video made for one LIG session presents teachers demonstrating a lesson with their classes. A number of the participants referred to this as a "completely unrealistic" portrayal. Cara said she put the video on for her English staff as "light comedy at the end of a faculty meeting." She explained their reactions, "I think we were just horrified when we saw the video (laughter) – unbelievable – they looked like no students we'd ever seen and no classes we'd ever seen either (laughter)!" Tom was angered by the video presentation because of the implicit criticism of teachers whose classrooms are not like the ones portrayed. He said, "it was a political decision ... making it look good. Making it look like if it doesn't work this way in your own classroom, it's you that's the problem!"

Louise's contrasting response perhaps highlights the difficulty of creating one model to suit all needs. It may also imply that some of the materials presented did not match the participants' individual subject paradigms, values, and pedagogies. Her view differed because she said she was fortunate enough to have a local facilitator whom she describes as "absolutely fantastic". She believes her own attitude to the LIG events helped her to learn as she said, "I just went in boots and all – and I learnt a lot that day. I learnt a lot about the syllabus and the next one was even better."

The Professional Association

The majority of participants nominate the NSW English Teachers' Association as supplying the most relevant and valuable professional development assistance and specific resources for the new English syllabus. Although they make only brief mention of it, the guidance provided was praised as "great" and it was identified as the most supportive offering available. It would seem that the teachers prefer the specificity of the curriculum support in terms of the detail of content, teaching strategies and theoretical explanations offered by the subject association. This links strongly with their expressed desires for clear directions and authoritative information about implementation.

The NSW ETA has a longstanding reputation and is a credible presence for English teachers in its engagement with the profession. Most teachers are very familiar with its regular and practical newsletter, mETAphor, and its affiliated journal, English in Australia. Apart from individuals, many subject departments have institutional memberships, as Virginia acknowledges, "we're a member of ETA so we get those magazines". Under the direction of the professional development committee of the ETA, a number of conferences and seminars have been held to provide English teachers with specific information, reasonably customised resources for particular units, and suggested teaching strategies for all the new HSC Courses. Louise pointed out one specific offering, "I went to a couple of things at the ETA on film so I could find out about that". There has been a mix of lectures on the theoretical bases of the syllabus and practical workshop activities. These professional development courses are supported by the Association's mETAphor, the ETA website, and other specific publications produced by the ETA. Almost all of the teachers in the study mention they have attended at least one of the ETA conferences and found it to be a worthwhile and helpful experience.

Association of Independent Schools

A few of the participants nominate the Association of Independent Schools for providing worthwhile courses on the new topics and skills. Again, the subject specific details and the direct classroom application of the topics covered attracted praise. Jonathon found them very helpful, especially "going there to be able to discuss ideas through...(and) ... teaching strategies as well as the actual format itself." Joseph, Maree and Vera also commented positively on the AIS in service courses. The material available on visual representation and film was particularly well received. Vera said that almost all her staff had attended the in service on film and is now very enthusiastic about this type of text. However, not all teachers have access to, or can afford the cost of, these more specialised courses. As Joseph indicated, the courses were "quite expensive".

Local District Initiatives

The support structures created in local areas either through the initiatives of employing organisations such as the Catholic Schools Office, or by individuals, also appear to offer a strong source of support to teachers. This is particularly the case for the Head Teachers. For Tom, his district Catholic Schools' Office created a Diocese Network for Head Teachers in each subject. He said, "just getting together and talking to a lot of people ... that's probably been the best." Some of the teachers identified other groups that had been set up in their local areas to support them in their implementation of the new syllabus. In a couple of cases, it was the initiative of an individual or a couple of local schools, or for others, it was an extension of some of the networks set up through the LIG events. For example, the English department at Austen Girls' High was meeting with the English staff at a nearby high school in a joint initiative to provide mutual support. Alexa explained, " I think just being able to swap

preliminary units of work is good and talking with other people and seeing who else is doing the sorts of texts that you're doing so you can swap or be sounding boards."

Dorothy said that there was good networking in her large country region even though the geographical area to cover was "huge". She was pleased that "our district inspector is giving us allocated days to go see other people, have other peoples' input." She also had the support of a collegial group recently established by Head Teachers but she initially found it "daunting" because "it really made it seem more difficult than it probably was."

Summary of findings about implementation of the new English Stage 6 syllabus

Louise provides a metaphor that appears to be very apt. Her assessment of what teachers are doing is "we're just skating along the surface." Much of what is identified by the teachers in their discourses about implementation seems to be at a surface level. There are indications that they are acknowledging the mandated components of the syllabus but their extended discourses generally do not reveal any deeper engagement with the complex processes of change or that the teachers are making a significant pedagogical shift. They appear to lack ownership of the new curriculum developments as well as a specific focus about the direction of the changes.

Their images evoke confusion and disorientation. The clarity of purpose and certainty that marked their earlier responses about their own identities, their subject and their pedagogy appears diminished. Their discourses are now characterised by negatives and absences. The implied signs of unease evident when they described their responses to the new syllabus are even more fully revealed. What resonates powerfully is how the teachers' interior landscapes

influence their responses to various aspects of the changes. While they demonstrate strong personal and emotional commitment to their work, they appear to be overwhelmed by its intensification. Time becomes a recurrent pressure in both objective and subjective terms. They highlight their need for more published resources - a material indicator of their desires for signposts to guide their instruction. Practical difficulties and perceived disadvantages emerge as key considerations and impact upon the ways that they respond to the changes. The various school-based relationships that frame their identities as teachers and the wider educational and professional associations that they are exposed to also shape their reactions to the new syllabus.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS: ENGLISH TEACHERS' PRACTICES IN A TIME OF SYLLABUS CHANGE

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings to the question: What are the perceptions and nature of teachers' practices when a new syllabus is introduced? Reported here are the kinds of things that the teachers say about their decision making for HSC texts and about their own teaching practices, how they view their actions in the classroom as a result of implementing a new syllabus, and the ways that they plan their work for senior students. The attention is on what the teachers themselves say they are doing as they enact the changes to their teaching of the HSC English curriculum.

These findings are compiled from the different data-collecting techniques that have been described in detail in Chapter 4. They include an analysis of the survey instrument and the interviews, and an examination of the participants' programs and resources for their teaching of a unit in the *Consumerism* Elective in the 2001 HSC Standard English Course.

The chapter is organised into three sections representing the dominant strands of the findings about the nature of the teachers' practices. These three strands convey the teachers' decision making about their selection of HSC texts for study; their observations about the changes they say they have made to their classroom practices for senior English students; and an analysis of

the teachers' plans and resources for a unit of work to implement the requirements of the new syllabus.

Teachers' decision making about texts

The results from the broad survey of 273 NSW teachers, particularly about their text selection processes and text choices for the new syllabus, are reported first to establish a base for the later examination of the particular changes the teachers say they have made in their teaching of HSC English. The conduct of the survey was described earlier in Chapter 4, and a profile of the respondents to this questionnaire was presented in Chapter 5. The reasons for the deliberate focus on text selection have been addressed previously, but it is important to note that English text choices provide teachers with a specific way of making the designs of the syllabus more precise for their own teaching and students. The selection of texts is one of the first decisions teachers make in planning the instructional process and represents the particular core content and material that will be covered during the course of study.

The survey data are a quantifiable way to gain a general overview of the decisions NSW English teachers make about the textual content their HSC students study. This section considers the factors teachers identified for choosing texts for study in general, and specifically, for their selections in the 2001 HSC; and the nature of the selections they made. Data from both the survey and from the interviews are incorporated into this report and a comparison is also presented of the findings with the actual candidate entries in the 2001 HSC examination. A number of tables (Tables 7.1 – 7.10) are used to represent the findings.

Factors affecting text selection

In Part A of the survey teachers were asked to indicate the relative influence of twenty six factors that could affect their choice of English texts for study in general. Three clusters emerge from the factor analysis: related to self; students; and resources. Table 7.1 is presented below with the original 26 factors reordered and grouped together according to these identified clusters. For the items presented, based on a five-point scale, the means and standard deviations are indicated.

Table 7.1: To what extent do the following factors influence your choice of English texts?

SCALE: 5. To a great extent 4. To a considerable extent 3. To some extent 2. Not at all 1. Not applicable

FACTORS:	Mean	Std dev
Self:		
A. My passion: what I like to teach	**4.04**	.87
B. I know the text	3.58	.85
C. I have taught the text before	3.16	.82
E. Being able to collaborate with others teaching the same text	3.09	.91
F. It is a new challenge	3.59	.82
G. Specimen 2001 HSC Examination Papers	2.70	.96
H. Others have recommended the text	3.05	.70
J. The text is part of the 'canon' of Western Literature	2.60	.76
Students:		
K. The texts students have studied previously	2.75	.85
L. The enjoyment that the students are likely to receive from the text	**4.23**	.67
M. The broadening of the students' experience of literature	**4.19**	.71
N. The text lends itself to a variety of student responses	**4.05**	.80
O. The text lends itself to a variety of teaching & learning strategies	**4.09**	.81
P. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' interests	**4.22**	.74
Q. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' maturity	**4.11**	.77
R. The text will link with another text being studied	3.43	.85
S. The students themselves have chosen the text	2.47	.94
Resources:		
D. The IT skills required for the text	2.61	.99
T. The text is easily available from suppliers	2.87	.93
U. The text is available via technology	2.33	.78
V. The cost of the text	2.69	.97
W. The text is in the Book Room	2.98	1.24
X. There are support materials available on the text	3.16	.84
Y. The print text is available as a film	2.58	.74
Z. The technology is accessible (eg: videos, computers)	2.81	.91
I. The content will be acceptable to the school/parent community	2.95	.86

The data reveal a clear consensus about the most significant factors for the selection of texts in general and these cluster in relation to the students (factors P, L, M, N, O, and Q) and

specifically to the teacher (factor A). No difference appeared between the respondents by age, experience, or academic background. They strongly identified student enjoyment and the relevance of the issues in a text to students' interests as being of considerable influence in their selection of English texts. They indicated they are also particularly concerned about broadening students' experience of literature, issues of student maturity, and the variety of teaching and learning strategies that a text could provide, and that a text would allow for a variety of student responses.

After the factors connected to the students, there follows a second cluster related to the teachers themselves. There is a high score for the teacher's own preferences - 'my passion: what I like to teach' (factor A), and in the medium range are items connected to the teacher's textual knowledge (factor B) and an indication of text selection for a 'new challenge' (factor F).

The third cluster of issues to do with resourcing and the purchase of texts rated in the medium to low range of significance. Factors such as students' involvement in the text selection process (factor S) and the availability of a text via technology are seen as relatively unimportant influences (factor U).

When the respondents were asked to rank the three most significant factors affecting their text choices from the table of items (from factors A to Z), again there was strong consensus in the data.

Table 7.2: Three most significant factors (A-Z) for choice of English texts:

Factors (from Table 7.1)	**Rank**
L. The enjoyment that the students are likely to receive from the text	1
A. My passion: what I like to teach	2
P. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' interests	3
M. The broadening of the students' experience of literature	4
O. The text lends itself to a variety of teaching and learning strategies	5

There is substantial concurrence with the previous Table 7.1 and again, student enjoyment is ranked first. The teacher's own enjoyment scored even more highly here at second whereas in the open ranking of all the factors it was sixth. The combined score of the identified top three items: L, A, and P, is 40.2%. Apart from the enjoyment of a text for both student and teacher, the relevance of its issues to the students remains a significant factor.

Factors affecting choice of 2001 HSC Standard English texts

Respondents were then asked to consider specifically the texts they had chosen to teach for the first examination of the Standard English Course in the 2001 HSC, and to select the six most important factors (from A to Z) that had influenced these particular text choices.

Table 7.3: The six most important factors for the selection of texts for the 2001 HSC Standard English Course.

FACTORS: (from Table 7.1)	**%**	**Rank**
Self: **A. My passion: what I like to teach**	7.2	**5**
B. I know the text	5.4	9
C. I have taught the text before	3.7	12
E. Being able to collaborate with others teaching the same text	5.5	8
F. It is a new challenge	3.9	10
G. Specimen 2001 HSC Examination Papers	1.4	17
H. Others have recommended the text	2.4	14
J. The text is part of the 'canon' of Western Literature	0.3	25
Students: K. The texts students have studied previously	1.5	16
L. The enjoyment that the students are likely to receive from the text	11.4	**2**
M. The broadening of the students' experience of literature	6.5	**6**
N. The text lends itself to a variety of student responses	7.9	**4**
O. The text lends itself to a variety of teaching & learning strategies	9.7	**3**
P. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' interests	12.0	**1**
Q. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' maturity	6.0	7
R. The text will link with another text being studied	2.4	14
S. The students themselves have chosen the text	0.3	25
Resources: D. The IT skills required for the text	0.5	23
T. The text is easily available from suppliers	1.1	19
U. The text is available via technology	0.4	24
V. The cost of the text	1.3	18
W. The text is in the Book Room	3.9	10
X. There are support materials available on the text	2.8	13
Y. The print text is available as a film	0.6	22
Z. The technology is accessible (e.g.: videos, computers)	1.1	19
I. The content will be acceptable to the school/parent community	0.8	21

There is strong consistency between the reasons for choosing particular texts for the Standard Course (Table 7.3) and with the reasons for choosing English texts in general (Table 7.1). Again, the same six factors are identified with most significance given to student factors (L, M, N, O, and P) and the factor related to the teacher (A). These top six factors for the teachers' specific selection of 2001 HSC Standard texts scored 54.7%, and there is substantial concurrence displayed across all three tables.

Although factor L: student enjoyment, was ranked first for both the general selection (Table 7.1) and the most significant three factors (Table 7.2), it moved to second rank when the respondents considered their actual text choices for the 2001 HSC Standard Course. In Table 7.3 factor P is slightly higher indicating that the selection of specific texts is based on the teachers' perceived relevance of them to their students' interests. Overall, this dominance of the cluster of factors related to students reveals that teachers report that they select texts for study most particularly for their connections to students. These reasons include making judgments about students' maturity, life experiences and learning styles, and considering the possible modes students may use to respond to texts. Although there appears to be a strong influence of students' needs on the selection process, factor A remains a consistent item favoured by the respondents. This suggests that a teacher's own personal response to a text is also a crucial determining factor in any selection of texts that is made for study.

Of note in these scores for the specific text selection (Table 7.3) is the inclusion of items E, B and W in the top ten ratings. The first two relate to a teacher's knowledge of a text (factor B) and to the ability to collaborate with other teachers teaching the same text (factor E). Item W concerns the availability of the text in the school's book room and this is the first indication that factors to do with resources are influential in text choice. Items to do with technology (D,

U, Y, and Z) remain consistently low in their scores, and the students' own choices in the selection of the texts are not considered as important in any ranking.

Factors affecting text selection for the 15 participants

A comparison of the data for the fifteen interview participants revealed their responses to be representative of the wider survey sample. They indicated the same factors as being of most importance both for their choice of texts in general and specifically for the Standard Course (as reported in Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3). However, as Table 7.4 shows, there is some reordering evident in their ranking of the 6 recurrent factors: A (self) and L, M, N, O, P and Q (students).

Table 7.4: Six most important factors for choice of Standard texts for the 15 participants

Factors (from Table 7.1)	**No of partic.**	**Rank**
A. My passion: what I like to teach	11	1
P. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' interests	11	1
L. The enjoyment that the students are likely to receive from the text	10	2
Q. The relevance of the issues in the text to students' maturity	9	3
O. The text lends itself to a variety of teaching and learning strategies	8	4
M. The broadening of the students' experience of literature	6	5
N. The text lends itself to a variety of student responses	5	6

Factor A: the teacher's passion was equal first for the interview participants but was fifth for the total survey group (Table 7.3). This appears to reflect the strong feelings revealed in the teachers' discourses about their personal enthusiasm for teaching English. The other notable variation for the fifteen participants is that they ranked Q: 'the relevance of the issues in the

text to students' maturity' more highly at number 3 than the wider sample where it was placed at number 7 (Table 7.3). Across all the rankings of both the respondents and the participants, factor P: 'the relevance of the issues of a text to students' interests' - was a major and consistent selection. The teachers seem to be saying by this priority that they match the material that is contained in a text to their perceptions of what is appropriate and pertinent to their students' lives.

Further explanation about their text selections was sought from the participants during the interviews. Neville was direct about his reason for choosing a text: "familiarity", and he added that, "every text I choose has to have something in it". This implies that he makes some intrinsic judgment about the value of a text and that he has his own measurement system. He defined this 'value' as being "something worth discussing, something worth examining ... technique is only so much of it ... in the end you want to talk about the human story." Not surprisingly, the top factor in all his rankings is B: 'I know the text'. Although Neville said he did not place any importance in the relevance of the issues in a text to students' interests, he still ranked this factor (P) in his top 3 groupings. In an apparent contradiction to his stated rankings in the survey, he claimed, "I'm not the least bit interested in relevance as far as being a teenager goes." What is highlighted here is an apparent gap between what the teachers think or say is important in their text selection, and what they actually do when it comes to making their specific text choices in practice.

Denise acknowledged her reasons for text selection to be a combination of her personal preferences and the students' interests. "I liked the choices that were available and because it gave me a chance to teach what I wanted to teach as well as picking things that I knew the girls would like or find interesting." Her response typified what most of the other teachers

said they are doing in their practices. Virginia is an exception to the rest of the participants because she involves her students in the decision making process. However, she admitted that her own textual knowledge is still influential and that she tells the class her preferences because her personal liking for a text remains a strong factor in her selections.

Responsibility for text decision making

The respondents to the survey were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale the responsibility various members of their school community have for making decisions about the selection of texts. The responses below are shown as percentages.

Table 7.5: Decision Making Responsibility for Text Selection

SCALE: 5. Total responsibility 4. Very considerable responsibility 3. Considerable responsibility 2. Some responsibility 1. None at all

	Total %	**Very %**	**Consid %**	**Some %**	**None %**
Principal	2	1	2	22	72
English Head Teacher	11	47	27	15	0.7
English staff consensus	11	41	33	12	2
Individual English Teachers	7	36	40	16	2
Students	0.8	3	6	47	43
Parents			3	19	79
School Council/ Board		0.4	2	11	87

The data show that both the Head Teachers and the teachers of English hold similar perceptions about the responsibility for text decision making. It would seem that decisions about the selection of English texts in a school are generally made within the English department with the various staff members having, in most cases, at least a considerable role in the choices. In most schools, there is little input from those outside the English department

(principal, parents, school council etc.), and students do not usually play a significant role in the decision making process.

HSC 2001 Prescribed Text Selection: Standard Course

In Part B of the survey, a closer investigation was made of the specific texts teachers selected for the 2001 HSC Standard English Course. The syllabus specifications for texts in the Standard English Course for the HSC require "the close study of at least FOUR types of prescribed text, one drawn from each of the following categories: - prose fiction; - drama; - poetry; - non fiction or film or media or multimedia texts" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p. 6). The intention of this particular aspect of the investigation was to see what texts teachers were actually selecting to teach the new syllabus, whether any newly prescribed texts were included in the respondents' selections, and if any pattern emerged in the text choices being made.

Those respondents who were teaching the Standard English Course for the 2001 HSC were asked to indicate the specific texts they had selected for study. The number of responses scored was 184. The following Table 7.6 records in raw figures the texts that were chosen for study from a list of 44 potential selections.

Table 7.6 Survey responses: 2001 HSC Standard English text choice

COMMON CONTENT AREA OF STUDY: CHANGE

(this section is studied in common with the Advanced Course).

Select ONE text from ONE focus:

Changing Worlds	
Card, Orson Scott, *Ender's Game*	3
Davis, Jack, *The Dreamers*	1
Watson, Ken (ed.) *Imagined Corners*	1
Lucas, George, *Star Wars – A New Hope*	16
Bragg, Melvyn, *On Giants' Shoulders*	1
total	22

Or

Changing Perspective	
Marchetta, Melina, *Looking for Alibrandi*	81
Nowra, Louis, *Cosi*	18
Skrzynecki, Peter, *Immigrant Chronicle*	8
Perkins, Rachel, *Radiance*	2
Bird, Carmel, *Stolen Children and Their Stories*	2
total	111

Or

Changing Self	
Morgan, Sally, *My Place*	7
Branagh, Kenneth, *Much Ado About Nothing*	1
Gow, Michael, *Away*	36
Guare, John, *Six Degrees of Separation*	2
Harwood, Gwen, *Selected Poems*	7
total	53

STANDARD MODULE A: EXPERIENCE THROUGH LANGUAGE

Select ONE text from one of the three electives

Elective 1: Telling Stories	
Tattam, Amanda, *Tales from the Blackboard*	4
Lawson, Henry, *The Penguin Henry Lawson Short Stories*	20
Fitzwater, William, *Through Australian Eyes* (video)	2
Pryor, Boori (Monty), with Meme McDonald, *Maybe Tomorrow*	2
total	28

Or

Elective 2: Dialogue	
Harrison, Jane, *Stolen*	11
Williamson, David, *The Club*	72
Komninos, *Komninos by the Kupful*	1
total	86

Or

Elective 3: Image	
Gilbert, Kevin, (ed.), *Inside Black Australia*	2
Lurhman, Baz, *Strictly Ballroom*	30
Weir, Peter, *The Truman Show*	35
Briggs, Raymond, *When The Wind Blows*	9
total	78

STANDARD MODULE B: CLOSE STUDY OF TEXT

Select ONE text:

Thomson, Katherine, *Navigating*	1
Misto, John, *The Shoe-horn Sonata*	14
Shakespeare, William, *Macbeth*	24
Cormier, Robert, *We All Fall Down*	13
Yolen, Jane, *Briar Rose*	23
Weir, Peter, *Witness*	56
Matthews, Gordon, *An Australian Son*	0
Australian War Memorial Web Site	1
Westbury, Debbie, *Mouth to Mouth*	1
Owen, Wilfred, *War Poems and Others*	40

STANDARD MODULE C: TEXTS AND SOCIETY

Select ONE text from one of the three electives:

Elective 1: The Institution and Personal Experience	
Monk, Scott, *Raw*	26
Strachan, Tony, *State of Shock*	8
Couturie, Bill, *Dear America*	3
total	37

Or

Elective 2: Exploration and Travel	
Adams, Douglas, A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	16
Hiddins, Les, The Bush Tucker Man	8
Davidson, Robyn, Tracks	1
total	28

Or

Elective 3: Consumerism	
Dawe, Bruce, Sometimes Gladness	122
Real Wild Child Consortium, Real Wild Child (CD ROM)	4
total	126

Table 7.6 shows clear clusters in the texts selected and the particular electives chosen, most strongly evident in Module C, Elective 3. From the potential list of 44 selections in total, there was a relatively narrow range of texts selected overall for the HSC Standard Course in 2001. The texts that scored over 20 selections, with the exception of the films (*The Truman Show* and *Witness*) and the prose fiction *Raw,* had all been set for previous HSC study under the old syllabuses. *Looking for Alibrandi* and *Strictly Ballroom* have been popular texts in the 2 Unit Contemporary English course; the poetry of Wilfred Owen and Bruce Dawe, the dramas *Macbeth* and *Away,* and Jane Yolen's *Briar Rose,* were all studied in the 2 Unit General English course. *The Club* is also a text that has been prescribed previously for HSC study. The cluster of these selections reveals an obvious reliance on what the teachers know and what they have taught before.

The text prescriptions of the syllabus require students to study either non fiction or film or media or multimedia. The take up of film, one of the new types of text added for study in 2001, appeared to be quite strong. This is especially the case for *Witness* and *The Truman Show*. By contrast, the study of multimedia: *When the Wind Blows*, *Australian War Memorial Web Site,* and *Real Wild Child* and media: *Through Australian Eyes,* attracted almost no interest. Non fiction was not a popular choice with a total of only 12 scores of the total 126

across all the electives, and 7 of these are for *My Place,* a text which had also been studied previously for the HSC. Although there are 8 different poetry selections available and all students are required to study a poet, only the well known Owen and Dawe rated significant scores with Dawe's poetry overwhelmingly the most popular text chosen from the whole Standard Course selection.

HSC 2001 Standard text selection by the 15 participants

The texts selected by the fifteen participants for their students are representative of the larger sample from the survey. Although these teachers were selected for interview because they were teaching Module C: *Consumerism* and Bruce Dawe's poetry, their other text choices for the Standard Course fell into a narrow and generally very predictable band.

Table 7.7 Text selections for HSC Standard Course by the 15 participants

Area of Study:	**No. of Partics**
*Looking for Alibrandi**	8
*Away**	4
*Cosi**	2
*My Place**	1
Module A:	
The Truman Show	7
*The Club**	3
*Strictly Ballroom**	2
Stolen	1
Tales from the Blackboard	1
Through Australian Eyes	1
Module B:	
Witness	4
*Macbeth**	4
*Briar Rose**	4
The Shoe-horn Sonata	2
We All Fall Down	1
Module C : *Dawe* *	15

(*: Texts previously studied in HSC courses)

From the possible 44 texts available for study in the Standard Course, the teachers chose only 16. All the texts they selected for the Area of Study have been set for HSC study previously, as have *The Club, Macbeth, Briar Rose* and *Strictly Ballroom.* The support they expressed for the inclusion of film in the new syllabus is reflected here with their selection of both *The Truman Show* and *Witness* instead of other non fiction or multimedia texts. These two films are the most popular choices of all the newly prescribed texts for the 2001 HSC.

Louise encapsulated the views of many of the other teachers when she said she selected "what was there, what I knew, what I was interested in." Vera identified the nature of her choices as "fairly conservative" and suggested that "being scared of the new syllabus", her staff had

opted for texts that they knew and felt "happy with." She also believed that the limitations of time in the introduction of the major syllabus changes meant teachers had not been able to read some of the new texts.

Katrina stated her concerns about the content in the prescribed prose fiction selections. As an example of factor A ('my passion') and signifying the importance of a teacher's own preferences and personal enjoyment, she says she does not like some of the texts herself. Katrina also thought that if she chose either Cormier's *We All Fall Down* and Monk's *Raw* for study, "the parents in this district would just get very upset". Her view contrasts markedly with Cara who was not only teaching *We All Fall Down* but has also published a study guide on it. She "really enjoyed" it because it was "a good psychological thriller."

On occasion it appeared as if the choice of a text had been made almost by default. Neville made his selection of *Tales from the Blackboard*, a new HSC text, without having read it. He said, "I must admit I chose one text this year blind ... because I hadn't got a copy yet. But it was the only one on the Course that even sounded like something I wanted to do. I knew what it was – I'd read the recommendation from someone else." There is an interesting use of the metaphor of blindness here – and in this case, it stresses Neville's complete lack of familiarity with the material to be studied. His revelation also raises a query about how a high rating can be consistently given to the factors linking the issues in a text as being relevant to students' interests and as promoting their enjoyment when that text is unfamiliar and has not been read by the teacher. This suggests that the rhetoric about text selections as presented in response to the survey questions may not always match the teachers' actions taken in the school context. A paradox seems to emerge here between what appears to be happening and is reported about text decision making, and what actually happens in practice.

Joseph identified the issue of resources as a problem for many schools when he explained, "it's very, very tight. It was difficult to choose. You're balancing what's in the book room." His text selection of mainly previously studied texts was based on "the fact that we had those texts in the book room." This reinforces factor B: 'knowing the text' - which appeared in the teachers' top 10 reasons for specific choices in the Standard Course (Table 7.3). The operation of this factor was also clearly demonstrated in the restricted range of selections made and the preponderance of choice of texts that were previously set for study (Tables 7.6, 7.7). Dorothy agreed that her decisions were "resource orientated" and suggested that "the choice of *Alibrandi* was because we had it." In another example of contradictory practices, where the actual selection was not being made because of students' interests and enjoyment, she added, "the boys aren't going to like it!"

2001 HSC Examination text selection for Standard English students

The data in the previous Tables 7.6 and 7.7 are supported by some of the statistics available from the 2001 HSC examination that indicate the actual Standard Course candidature for various texts and electives. The information below (Table 7.8) is based on the data that were collected by the Board of Studies from the HSC English marking centres and from an earlier survey it sent to schools. Board officers believe that this survey is not an entirely reliable indicator because there had been insufficient follow up to check the information obtained. However, the following data from the Board in Table 7.8 offer further validation as they appear to be consistent with the trends identified from the data obtained in this study as presented earlier in Tables 7. 6 and 7. 7.

Table 7.8 HSC Examination 2001 Text selection in Standard English Course

The total candidature for the Standard Course in the 2001 HSC was 36,479.

Text / Elective:	**Candidature:**
Area of Study: *Changing Worlds*	The smallest candidature in the Area of Study.
Area of Study: *Changing Perspective*	The most popular focus & the most popular text was *Looking for Alibrandi.*
Area of Study: *Changing Self*	The second most popular focus studied.
Module A: *Telling Stories*	6,543 The majority studied Henry Lawson.
Module A: *Dialogue*	14,256 Significantly most popular text: *The Club.*
Module A: *Image*	15,378 The majority chose *Truman Show,* followed by *Strictly Ballroom.*
Module B texts:	
The Shoe-horn Sonata	3,739
Macbeth	6,322
Cormier, *We All Fall Down*	2,117
Yollen, *Briar Rose*	3,110
Witness	11,420
Matthews, *An Australian Son*	95
Australian War Memorial Web site	156
Westbury	696
Owen	7,359
Module C: *Institution & Personal Experience*	7,541
Module C: *Exploration & Travel*	4,796
Module C: *Consumerism*	23,840 (most students studied Dawe)

Similar clusters emerge in this data as have been indicated in Table 7.6. This is especially evident with Module C and *Consumerism*, where 65% of the total 2001 HSC Standard Course candidature studied Bruce Dawe's poetry. The strong selection of the new text, *Witness* for almost a third of the students for the Close Study of Text (Module B), highlights the lack of interest in the other choices available for selection from the non fiction, film, media, and

multimedia category. Consistently texts from the previous syllabuses again remained the other most popular choices: *Looking for Alibrandi,* Owen's poetry, *Macbeth,* and *The Club.* Generally, according to the *2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre English (Standard) and English (Advanced),* for Standard Module C, "there was limited evidence of uptake of the newly prescribed texts set for study" (Board of Studies, 2002, p.17).

These selections tend to confirm that teacher knowledge is a key factor in text selection, particularly in HSC choices, and that teachers appear to favour texts that they have taught before. Their familiarity with material they know may be helpful for them in a time of major curriculum change but it is important to note that the new syllabus makes it clear that texts are not taught in the same ways as they have been in previous syllabuses. The focus is no longer on the literary based study of a single text. The particular manner in which texts are now grouped in the different modular structures and the various theoretical approaches in the English Stage 6 syllabus require a new view on well-known material.

2001 HSC Standard Course class structure

When asked the survey question: Do all Standard Classes study the same texts? the overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) answered yes. Many added that there had been mutual agreement among their colleagues that this system would allow for collaborative support and assist teachers during their first year of teaching a new course. This finding concurs with some of the implementation strategies identified in interview by the Head Teachers, which included teachers working together by teaching the same texts and jointly preparing resource materials and units of work.

Constraints in text selection

In response to an open question about the constraints on the teachers' choice of English texts, a different focus emerged. The responses were coded according to the following ten categories:

1. Resources: availability of texts in book room, money for purchases etc
2. Student issues: ability, literacy demands, gender etc
3. Teacher issues: knowledge of text, support materials etc.
4. Technology / Audiovisual: access to, skill in using, provision for film etc.
5. Grid: types of text required to be studied, particularly relevant to Stage 6
6. Issues & Values: morality, suitability of content, parental approval etc.
7. Quality of text: presentation, length, interest level, specific content e.g. : Australian
8. New Study: change, new challenge, unknown material etc.
9. Syllabus issues: demands of assessment, prescribed texts, elective rubrics.
10. Other: staff consensus of choice; class structure; previous study of texts; time for study; exam demands; specific location/ context of school.

The following Table 7.9 records the findings to two open questions regarding the constraints on teachers in their selection of texts. Respondents were asked to indicate: the restrictions on their choices in general; and then to respond specifically about the constraints on their selections for the 2001 HSC Standard Course.

Table 7.9: Comparison of Constraints identified in selection of English texts in general and specifically in HSC Standard English 2001

Constraints in text selection	in general %	2001 HSC Standard %
1. Resources	37	16
2. Student issues	21	27
3. Teacher issues	17	15
4. Technology/ Audiovisual		3
5. Syllabus Text Grid	12	20
6. Issues & Values	8	1
7. Quality of text		6
8. New Study		0.2
9. Syllabus issues		4
10. Other	8	7

37% of respondents indicated resources as the main constraint on their text selections in general. In the report of the reasons for making texts choices (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2) the cluster about resources was ranked third overall after the groups of factors related to students and teachers. Its strong presence in Table 7. 9 reflects the contextual realities of schools and one of the practical limitations that operates. Although teachers might like to select texts for a variety of reasons – and factors to do with students still appear to be very influential - when it comes to making their selections in practice, they are restricted in what they are able to choose because of budgetary and other resource pressures within their schools.

The question was intended to find out the constraints on text choice in general. However, some respondents indicated factors that were more specific to decisions about the English Stage 6 syllabus, for example: categories 5, 8 and 9. Of these three, only number 5 - the grid, which determines the types of texts to be chosen for HSC study - had a score of any note.

When they were asked to list the three most important constraints on their text selections for the Standard English Course, the respondents shifted the order of their restrictions. The open responses were coded according to the same 10 categories as above but changes were revealed in the scores. For this more directed question, the teachers responded with a specific group of students in mind and thought about a particular set of texts. Therefore, student issues rated more highly and the grid of the type of texts prescribed by the new syllabus was also, not unexpectedly, a strong influence. However, as noted earlier, the actual choice of texts made by teachers for the 2001 HSC did not entirely support the prominence given to student issues here. Interestingly, teacher issues and resources received almost the same score in this second question. This suggests the teachers' persistent concerns about support materials, the availability of texts, and their knowledge of the content when making their decisions about HSC study. The distinctive aspect related to the new syllabus that the teachers identified was mainly the grid determining the types of text so other issues, as coded in number 9, scored only 4%.

Constraints specific to the 2001 HSC Standard English Course

Further to the information obtained above, respondents were asked to identify, through an open question, factors and constraints – other than those they had previously addressed - that governed their choice of texts within the specific structural components of the syllabus. The purpose was to see if different Modules of the new syllabus necessitated teachers making different considerations when selecting their texts.

Table 7.10 Constraints specific to syllabus components of Standard Course

Factors/ Constraints	Area of Study %	Mod A %	Mod B %	Mod C %
1. Resources			3	
2. Student Issues	37	25	23	29
3. Teacher Issues	15	17	22	10
4. Technology/AV		1	1	
5. Syllabus Text Grid	20	24	21	31
6. Issues & Values				3
7. Quality of text	11	15	9	8
8. New Study		3	8	6
9. Syllabus issues	4	7	4	4
10.Other	15	9	10	10

In the Area of Study component, as is consistent with the previous findings, student factors appeared as the most important influence. All students from both Standard and Advanced English Courses answer the same examination question for this section and therefore, issues of student ability would be a strong consideration, particularly because of the degree of conceptual synthesis required in the Area of Study. The high score for this factor may be connected to the teachers' awareness of their Standard students in relation to Advanced students when they selected a text for the common content of the two English Courses.

Similarly, the relatively higher score for student issues in Module C in comparison to Modules A and B, is also likely to be linked to the more complex demands of this particular Module. The synthesis of a number of texts around a conceptual framework is central to Module C study. The familiar poetry of Bruce Dawe was the overwhelming selection and teacher issues are lower here because this text is so well known. Most of the other texts set in Module C are new inclusions for HSC study.

Teacher issues have the most influence in Module B, the Close Study of Text, which has some similarity to the literary approach and structure of single text study in the previous syllabuses. The actual texts that were selected support also the inference that teachers chose texts for this section based on their own established knowledge. However, the score for New Study in Module B slightly moderates this interpretation because *Witness* was a popular new choice and the positive take up of film as a new type of text has already been indicated by a number of teachers.

Category 5, the grid determining the types of text required by the syllabus scored consistently across the four components. It was most significant in Module C where respondents perhaps having made their other choices sequentially, may have felt locked into their selections by this stage. When asked an open question specifically regarding the syllabus grid of the types of texts to be studied, most teachers expressed their concerns about their loss of freedom of choice because of the need to meet the prescribed textual requirements of the syllabus. The general consensus expressed was that the grid is a "nightmare" and that "once you've chosen your texts, you're locked in there."

Summary of the decision making processes of Text Selection

The finding that 81% of teachers stated they selected a particular text by its title first rather than by either the type of text (Module B) or by the rubric description of the elective (within Area of Study, Modules A and C) indicates the centrality of a single text (by name) in teachers' selection processes. For the majority of teachers, it seems that when thinking about their choice of teaching content for the new syllabus requirements, their established practice of selecting an individual text for close literary study remained. It also suggests that the

conceptual framework of the new syllabus and the rubric descriptions of its content do not yet figure strongly in the teachers' perceptions and determinations, and as a result, established processes of text selection remain at the forefront.

The text choices that the teachers made for the 2001 HSC also revealed a close association with the past and with what they knew. There was only a narrow band of texts chosen for study from the available list and the majority of the selections made had been taught under previous syllabuses. Clusters of text choices occurred which may have been created by the operation of the new syllabus grid but these are more likely to have been the result of the teachers making their own personal judgments about what they wanted to teach.

There seems to be some tension and dissonance between the two clusters of factors to do with students and teachers when considered in relation to each other. A contradiction appears evident between the teachers' stated reasons for their choices and an analysis of the choices made in practice. The consistent indications given by teachers were that factors directly related to students were their main priorities in determining texts for study. Items such as 'the enjoyment students are likely to receive from the text' (factor L), 'the relevance of the issues in the text to students' interest' (factor P), and 'the broadening of the students' experience of literature' (factor M) all rated highly. However, the importance teachers placed on the items directly connected to themselves especially, 'my passion' (factor A), suggested that they made their selections based on what they like, and it seems also, because of what they know (factor B) and have taught before (factor C). What senior English students study, therefore, while assumed to be chosen from perceptions about their enjoyment and interests is actually connected to, and powerfully influenced by the teachers' personal preferences. The teachers' own passion for particular texts – and their knowledge of them – constructs and frames the

view that they use when deciding about the texts their classes will study. The selections appear to be made with an underlying belief that what the teachers enjoy will be suitable for their students' enjoyment also. It seems the teachers' rhetoric does not always match the actual decisions that are made in practice.

Against this apparent incongruity, there may be a mitigating influence in operation. The teachers acknowledged that a significant constraint on their text selections is the availability of resources. For a large number, the finances of the school and their restricted ability to purchase new texts and to support the use of these, limit their freedom of choice. So, they may want to select on the basis of student interest but instead have to use texts they have taught before, as these are available in their schools. Because they know these texts, it may be that they have also come to enjoy teaching them.

The significant presence in the ratings of the factor: 'the text lends itself to a variety of teaching and learning strategies' (factor O) conveys the view that teachers select texts that offer scope for study in various ways and that also allow them to adopt a range of different pedagogical approaches. Across the four Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4, this factor scored consistently within the top 5 ranking. This indicates another discrepancy because there was limited evidence in the teachers' discourses to suggest this happened in practice. Quite apart from the narrow band of texts selected for study, the examination of the pedagogical approaches the fifteen participants said they used, revealed a predominantly teacher centred approach. The methods the teachers identified are mainly related to modes of direct instruction, transmission, and the use of structured analysis. They were characterised by similar narrow features and did not seem to suggest a variety of strategies for working with texts.

Text selection is a complex decision making process. There is a connection between factors related to the students and the teachers' own preferences when selections are made. In many cases, these choices are constrained in practice by the availability of resources within schools. There appears to be some inconsistency in the teachers' espoused reasons for choice and the analysis of the actual decisions that they made, and therefore, it would seem that teachers' stated intentions do not always match their actions.

Teachers' practices: changes in teaching Stage 6 English

This section focuses more specifically on teachers' practices during a time of curriculum change by providing an analysis of the participants' discourses in relation to the changes they say they have made to their teaching as a result of their implementation of the new syllabus. These perceptions were obtained from the teachers' responses to an interview question that requested them to give any examples of changes made in their teaching practices. Presented below is what the participants themselves identify and describe as significant shifts and variations in their classroom teaching of the 2001 HSC Standard English Course.

With the exception of Joseph and Neville, most of the teachers said that some changes have occurred to the ways they are now teaching their HSC English classes. They tended to voice these views in general terms and did not provide detailed explanations or offer many specific examples. Because of this, the findings from the teachers' discourses about changes in their teaching practices have been grouped according to key features identified within some broader categories. From the teachers' perceptions about their teaching of the new syllabus three main clusters emerged, associated with changes in the content being taught; changes in the types of resources they were using; and changes to their own pedagogical approaches.

Changes in teaching content

The first cluster of changes that can be identified concerns aspects that are drawn directly from the English Stage 6 syllabus requirements and are prescriptions of actual content or inclusions within the mandated assessment or examination frameworks. These components relate specifically to the material or guidelines that teachers have to use in their teaching in order to fulfil the syllabus demands. The list, identified from the teachers' discourses, contains some of the main elements of the syllabus that are new - generally in terms of its prescribed content. Not many of the items listed here could be characterised as actual changes in teaching practices or pedagogical shifts. They do not relate specifically to the ways in which this content is actually approached in the classroom.

The changes in teaching content that the teachers reported and which are related directly to the syllabus include:

- The inclusion of film and technology as new types of texts for study;
- The incorporation of the study of visual texts;
- The increased use of a variety of types of related material, especially of a contemporary nature;
- The new emphasis on a guiding rubric which expands the focus of study beyond that of only a single literary text;
- The closer examination of the contexts of texts;
- The broadening of the language modes to be used for assessment to include speaking, listening, viewing and representing; and

- An expansion of the ways and forms through which students respond in their written tasks.

The adoption of film and visual material

It is clear that the inclusion of film and related visual material are a significant feature of the expansion of the types of texts prescribed for study in the new syllabus. Almost all the participants say they now augment the textual resources used in their classrooms with visual texts and graphics. The teachers saw this as a welcome change because they believe it to be of contemporary appeal with greater relevance for their students. However, the teachers' discourses contained no references as to how they teach students the language skills they need to examine this particular literacy or how they read visual texts. They did not indicate whether their own teaching strategies have developed or changed to accommodate this new syllabus content.

The teachers' discourses generally appeared to be highlighting the addition of a particular new text but not on addressing the broader implications of its inclusion. The introduction of film in the Stage 6 syllabus has consequences for teachers' learning and skills. They appear to be happy to introduce the new content but they also need more knowledge themselves about how to teach it. Virginia says that she "had to really get into film techniques" and identifies this as the major change in her teaching practice. Katrina explains that she and her staff "were worried about doing film because as teachers we are a little more confident teaching literature as a close study rather than film". Joseph expressed concern about his own lack of professional development in understanding visual texts and in teaching the study of film.

Other teachers shared this view and said they wanted more in-service to assist them in their teaching of this popular medium.

Perspectives for studying texts and their contexts

Some of the teachers say their examination of texts has shifted from a critical literary perspective to a broader exploration of how meaning is constructed and how multiple responses to a text are shaped. Although this is stated here as a change in practice, earlier in the interviews when they were expressing their views about English, a number were clearly continuing to privilege the traditional literary critical model of textual study. The newer approach is directed by specific information given in the syllabus rubric for each Module and Elective. The rubrics are the guiding frames for the study of the texts and in fact, could be considered as prescribed 'content'. Alexa acknowledged the shifts in the ways texts are explored in the new syllabus:

> *I think the interesting thing to remind ourselves of is that even teaching a novel or poem or a play which we've all done, everyone's done a hundred times before, it can't be done in the same way for this syllabus. We've really got to be conscious of doing it in a different way – the novel comes within the context of the Area of Study, the poems are coming within the context of Consumerism and Text in Society, so it's not a close study all the way through.*

What is noteworthy in Alexa's view is the way she names the specific details of the framework where the particular types of texts are placed within the syllabus. This was rare in the other teachers' discourses. They tended to identify texts by individual title rather than by their placement within a Module or Elective, an approach which reflects the model of textual study in the previous syllabus. A fairly recent graduate, Alexa studied the Stage 6 syllabus

during her preservice Teacher Education, and throughout her discussion she displays strong indications of her familiarity with the new structures and theoretical approaches. Her discourse reveals recurrent references to key syllabus principles that appear to be integrated with ease. When Alexa proclaims, "I can use all of the terminology", unlike the majority of the teachers her inclusion of the "new set of jargon" is unselfconscious and appropriately placed.

The inclusion of a range of textual material

The participants suggest that they now include more related textual material in their classrooms and this is also a specific requirement for various Modules in the syllabus. Some say that students are exposed to increased examples of the ways language is used and how different ideas about particular topics may be conveyed. No evidence is provided to explain how this range of textual material is actually used in practice. Again, what is included in the teachers' discourses is generally some of the rhetoric from the syllabus without much accompanying explanation. There is limited indication as to the specific strategies that they use to present any of this new content in their classrooms. The teachers mainly describe their collections of varied new resources and report how these are copied and given to students. This finding reinforces the teachers' strong concerns noted in Chapter 6 about their own desires for resources and print materials, and suggests that they see their distribution of amounts of textual material to students as a way of 'teaching' the new syllabus.

The nature of examination questions and students' responses

The teachers' discourses repeatedly make reference to changes in the ways in which students respond to the subject's content through the various types of responses, assessment tasks, and

examination questions they have to answer. This shift is guided by the syllabus, by the assessment prescriptions, and by the sample and specimen HSC examination papers, rather than necessarily by the teachers' own practices. The HSC assessment prescriptions determine the types of language modes to be assessed at school and there is also a directive to vary the kinds of written responses that the students compose so as to shift the focus away from the previous dominance of the more traditional essay. The model examination questions provided by the Board of Studies as a sample demonstrate the "range of imaginative, interpretive and analytical compositions" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p. 51) that students could be asked to write for their examination responses.

A strong influence on any of the changes that the teachers make in their senior classes is the HSC examination because of the significance that so many stakeholders attach to it. The teachers perceive the external examination as a critical concentration for their classroom practices and what they say about their teaching reveals that much of it is structured around meeting the mandated HSC requirements. Their discourses are filled with references to the "Big Quiz" as Virginia calls it, and one teacher suggests, "we don't know what is going to happen at the end of the year". Although the teachers' images evoke fear and uncertainty about the paths and directions to take through the new syllabus, the HSC appears to loom as their final destination. As a consequence of its significant force, they endeavour to make sure they are addressing the prescribed content, assessment demands and examinations specifications of the new syllabus in order to prepare their students for the end of year HSC papers.

Changes in teaching resources

The second cluster that emerges from the teachers' perceptions of changes in their practices is related to their use of web based and electronic resources in their teaching. While, there is some overlap with the first category of syllabus materials, most of the participants acknowledge, in some way, the changes that have occurred in their collection and use of resources for the classroom. As reported earlier, the use of the word 'resources' remains a recurrent feature of the teachers' discourses. In this instance, it signifies their own sources of information and the materials they use to support their teaching practices. This grouping includes the participants' use of the World Wide Web for information and identifies the utilisation of technology for teacher generated resources.

The adoption of technology

The participants report that their increased use of technology is contributing to changes being made in their classroom practices. A number of the teachers acknowledge their use of the Internet for research purposes and to obtain information particularly from the Board of Studies website or from sites about the new HSC. It is recognised that the inclusion of technologically based materials makes demands on the skills and time of both staff and students. At this stage, because of limitations in both the available facilities at schools and the technical competence of many of the teachers, web based materials are generally being used only as text resources in the classroom. Keith believes, "there's a lot of good stuff out there on the Web." In other words, what the teachers perceive is available is a new source of authoritative information to assist them in their teaching.

The findings indicate that essentially a change in the type and source of the teachers' materials has occurred rather than an integration of the use of technology into their actual pedagogical practices. For most, they say they download relevant web based resources and then print these off for classroom use. In effect, students are still engaged with reading print text but it is now derived from an electronic source rather than a book. There are no indications in the teachers' discourses that students are being taught how to read websites or to examine the language and structures provided in electronic contexts or to consider the ways in which technology could be utilised for independent learning. These views are further supported by the findings that the technologically based texts included for the 2001 HSC were most unpopular options. As Table 7.6 shows, from 184 responses only 1 respondent selected the Australian War Memorial Website for study, the CD Rom, *Real Wild Child* was selected 4 times, and the multimedia text, *When the Wind Blows* was chosen by 9 teachers.

It could be argued that the teachers' use of the Internet would certainly be acknowledged as a change because this could be seen as an inevitable consequence of the increased technological presence within contemporary society. Maree recognises this factor when she says "we do more in the way of technology but that's more an historical inevitability as opposed to linked explicitly to the syllabus." The short time frame of the curriculum implementation process also may have influenced the teachers' use of the Web as a potential source of information. As a number of the teachers indicate, in the absence of sufficient published reference books, computer generated materials are easily provided and quickly obtained. Most referred to particular pieces of textual material they obtained from the internet and had, as Cara said, "downloaded masses of stuff". While they obviously gathered a large number of web derived resources it appeared to be fairly indiscriminate and the teachers did not comment on the quality or value of their collections. In the particular instances that the teachers described as

changes to their practice, the World Wide Web is actually utilised as just another reference source for ideas and notes, rather than as a pedagogical tool.

Changes in teaching activities

The third cluster relates to teaching strategies and what the teachers describe as changes in their actual classroom practices. Their discourses imply that there may be a shift from the predominantly teacher centred pedagogy identified in Chapter 6 to a more inclusive student centred approach. These activities that the teachers report include more classroom discussion, student involvement and activity; more focus on students' skills; more variety of student activities including group work, role plays, presentations, mind maps, independent learning; and fewer study guides and limitations on written tasks.

These changes are all related to the types of activity students complete in the classroom. The participants generally acknowledge that there has been an expansion in the range of learning tasks senior students are asked to undertake, such as a greater use of drama and movement activities, more group work, and an increase in oral responses. The teachers also indicate that students are now involved in producing visual and mixed media representations of their ideas, writing in a wider variety of forms, and engaged in viewing popular media texts.

The generalised nature of the teachers' discourses about the sorts of changes in their pedagogies makes it difficult to assess the degree to which any change has occurred. However, it is difficult to characterise the teachers' perceptions of their teaching practices as providing evidence of a conceptual shift or of deep level change. Some of the features they identify, such as using speaking tasks or a variety of written tasks for assessment, are

mandatory syllabus requirements and the use of drama is a central concern of one of the Electives: *Dialogue* in Module A in the Standard Course. None of these changes could be viewed as significant shifts in teaching practices. Most could be considered as the sorts of pedagogical approaches and strategies that many English teachers have always used in their classrooms. Because further explanation was often not provided to support the teachers' general comments, such as there was now "more focus on students' skills", it is uncertain as to what was meant by the comparison implied in the remark.

Although Jonathon sees it as "a positive change" for students to have more variety and activity in their class work, he qualifies his response by saying, "it comes at a price in that they are not concentrating on their written school work as perhaps other Years 12s I've had did." His view implies that he thinks successful preparation for the HSC examination comes through written practice and perhaps also that learning occurs through the use of print texts. Denise also considers that "there's a lot of discussion and interaction in the classroom now". However, she does not explain how she has achieved this change but she believes that because the content of the Standard Course is more relevant for her students, they actually have something to say about it. Although this seems to be a plausible observation, when it is connected to the finding that a high proportion of texts previously studied are still being taught in many classrooms, it is more questionable.

When Vera reflects about her classroom practices, she admits, "I think we should have much more group work". She says that while her students are "doing mind maps and representations" she admits, "the examination dictates how far you can go with some of these exciting practices." Again, as her discourse reveals, the HSC looms as a determining influence on classroom teaching. Two strategies are identified here that seem to have been

adopted by a number of the teachers: mind maps and representations. These appear to have become part of a new lexicon of classroom activities that emerged when the participants discussed some of the approaches they use with students. The impetus for their adoption can be traced to one of the LIG training sessions where they were used as examples of possible student tasks for working with the new syllabus. Although the teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with much of the professional development program offered through LIG, this inclusion provides some evidence of their incorporation of the suggested approaches into their classrooms. Because Vera was one of the group facilitators for the LIG events, she has obviously included these in her teaching and cites them as examples of a change in her practice. For the other teachers who utilise these strategies, it may be that their urgent desires for authorised ideas for teaching the new syllabus outweigh their stated criticisms of the LIG events.

Katrina indicates that her students "don't do a very detailed study guide any more" but this really appears to be a change in the language she uses to describe her practice rather than necessarily any major shift in it. She makes it clear that what she now gives the students are copious amounts of "notes" and when she spoke about her pedagogical practices, Katrina revealed that she provides large numbers of photocopied materials. There seems to be only a fairly fine semantic distinction between detailed study guides and quantities of set notes.

In contrast to the other participants, Joseph and Neville are of the view that very little has altered in their practices. Both are unhappy with the new syllabus and indicate their resistance to a number of its elements. They maintain that their established practices are appropriate for their students' needs and so they continue in much the same way as they have previously. Joseph makes it clear that there is little change for him, "I'm finding, in a practical sense, that

really the way I'm teaching is not that much different to the way I taught the old Course." Neville believes that "whatever Course they give me, I've got my own agenda." He considers that only his "organisational practice" has changed and that the introduction of the new syllabus meant administrative not classroom based alterations whereby he now had to write his programs using outcomes. This is not directly related to the introduction of the new Stage 6 syllabus as outcomes were introduced into all NSW syllabuses in the 1990s (see Brady, 1995; Watts, 1998, 2000). Both men said they value a paradigm of English that focuses on literary criticism and they see the close exploration of a single text as central to their practices. Their discourses revealed their determination to maintain their fixed pedagogical practices and their own confident views about the ways that English should be taught.

Summary about teachers' practices: changes in teaching Stage 6 English

The participants' discourses appear to indicate that they think they are changing but there often seems to be a contradiction between what they are saying and what they are actually doing in practice. Frequently they insert into their discourses key expressions or phrases derived directly from the syllabus, but in many cases, these sound rather formulaic. Their discourses do not convey any deeper valuing of the changes as most of what they speak about is at surface level. What is not communicated is a sense of the teachers' ownership of the changes or that the new lexicon of the syllabus is included in a natural manner. In fact, a number mention that one of the changes is the "new jargon" and it is apparent that this has been adopted in a rather 'ad hoc' manner in their discussions. Tom jokes that, "rubric and paradigm – all of a sudden these are the 'buzz' words." Of course, as he implies, merely using the words does not indicate an understanding of the concepts they convey.

What the teachers identify as changes and their perceptions of change, are not necessarily what the new syllabus itself seems to be endorsing as significant notions of change. It is what is omitted or not said – the gaps - in the teachers' discourses that provides insight into the impact of the processes of change on their teaching practices. There is very little acknowledgement of teaching the critical examination of the multiple perspectives of texts or employing the recent developments in reading theory in their approaches. There is very limited consideration given to having to explore the different values in texts; and only in passing do a few teachers mention giving attention to the various contexts of texts in their teaching. The distinctive features of the new syllabus are derived from an eclectic range of theoretical perspectives and from contemporary views about different ways of reading, responding and composing. These were generally passed over or ignored in the participants' discussions. Essentially, these theoretical influences and shifts are at the heart of the new English syllabus and therefore, central to the teaching of it. To engage with these elements would reflect some of the new demands being made upon teaching practices for HSC English. At this stage, the evidence suggests that this engagement is fairly tentative and at a very preliminary level for most of the participants. Louise offers a reason for this limited take up of the syllabus concepts, "I don't think that we have come to grips with everything because it's so vast and we don't know totally where to focus."

The teachers' discourses show evidence of some commencement of the change process and it is possible to identify aspects of their attempts to implement the new curriculum. It would seem that to fully embrace the syllabus changes may require a process that is developed over a period of time. Cara's opinion that "teachers are now sounding more confident in this second year" reflects this view. At times, there is a difference between what the teachers say they perceive as changes in their practices and what has in fact occurred. Generally the

teachers are complying with the main prescriptions of the syllabus by including its particular and prescribed content into their teaching. They name the texts they are teaching and how this content is new or different, but there is not a significant indication of how this material is being taught in ways that reflect the wider theoretical shifts within the subject. In other words, what has to be taught is being included and mandated requirements such as assessment prescriptions are being addressed. It is, however, the prospect of their students completing the HSC examination at the end of their course of study that remains the main driving force for most teachers.

It does not seem that many of the participants have yet internalised their understanding of the curriculum changes, rather they see these as external features to be observed, addressed and included in their practice. For most, there is little evidence that the new syllabus principles have been integrated into their work in any intrinsic manner or that they are spoken about with the same passion that the teachers demonstrate when describing their views of themselves as teachers, their subject and their own pedagogical beliefs.

Teachers' practices: Teaching *Consumerism* in Stage 6 Standard English

Following the examination of the teachers' own perceptions of their classroom practices when a new syllabus is introduced, this section presents a close study of the teachers' written programs and their discourses about one Standard Course Elective they are teaching for the 2001 HSC. Elective 3: *Consumerism*, placed within Module C: *Texts and Society*, has been selected for particular investigation.

The prescribed text chosen in this Elective is Bruce Dawe's poetry, for many years a common selection by teachers for the literary study of poetry and taught previously for HSC English. The reasons for selecting this Elective for closer investigation include its overwhelming popularity in the teachers' choice for study by their 2001 HSC Standard students (see Tables 7.6 & 7.8); the poetry is a textual link between the old and new syllabuses; and the *Consumerism* Elective has a rather distinctive nature and is quite different in comparison to the other options within Module C (in ways that are described below).

In the light of the new syllabus requirements the poetry is now allocated to a completely different framework and the intention of this case study was to see if teaching practices have also changed. During their interviews, the fifteen participants were asked about their teaching approaches to this Elective and they provided copies of their unit outlines, programs and resources. The data that form the basis for this case study examination rely on what the teachers say they are doing and what is written down in their planning rather than what they may have actually done in their practice. There are obvious limitations to this investigation because the method of direct observation is not used and so it is difficult, therefore, to know precisely how teachers are teaching the Elective in their own classrooms. Nevertheless, the teachers' comments and their programs go some of the way towards illuminating their practice.

Module C, Elective 3: Consumerism, and the poetry of Bruce Dawe

In Module C: *Texts and Society* (for a detailed description, see Appendix E1) for the HSC 2001 – 2003, three Electives are prescribed: *The Institution and Personal Experience*; *Exploration and Travel*; and *Consumerism.* The Module "requires students to explore and

analyse texts used in a specific situation. It assists students' understanding of the ways that texts communicate information, ideas, bodies of knowledge, attitudes and belief systems in ways particular to specific areas of society" (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 15). There is a choice of texts set for study within each Elective but, as indicated in the survey results presented earlier, the choice of Bruce Dawe's poetry within the Elective of *Consumerism* is overwhelmingly the most popular text studied in Module C. Students are required to work from the focus of both the Module (*Texts and Society*) and the selected Elective (*Consumerism*), study the prescribed text (Dawe), consider a *Workplace and Community Texts* document (see Board of Studies, 2000), and gather their own other related texts.

The conceptual framework of Module C has been weakened through the prescribed Elective. This particular option of *Consumerism* is distinctive because it does not effectively realise the syllabus content and principles and it could be expected that teachers might avoid it for this reason. The Module seems to be artificially constructed, to have a tenuous theoretical base, and a limited rationale for its existence. In its construction, the Elective of *Consumerism* appears to be content driven because of the specificity of its actual title rather than exemplifying the Module focus of "texts used in a specific situation" and "designed around a specific social context". This suggests the need to explore the particular idea of consumerism within Dawe's poetry, in other words, to consider what is being said about this specific 'topic'. This interpretation appears to be the main concentration instead of addressing how the poems communicate "information, ideas, bodies of knowledge, attitudes and belief systems in ways particular to specific areas of society."

These views are strongly endorsed by the participants. Of all of the prescribed content in the new syllabus for Standard students, this Elective and the choice of text were criticised the

most. The teachers perceived it as artificial, inappropriate in its application to the study of poetry, and a construction that requires the synthesis of too many disparate elements. However, in spite of all these condemnations, this Elective and Dawe's poetry were chosen overwhelmingly for study by 65% of all the Standard Candidature in the 2001 HSC.

Reasons for the teachers' selection of the Elective

Most of the participants stridently criticise the demands of Module C as far too complex for their students and involving skills beyond the ability of many of the Standard candidature. Specifically, most also think that the connection of Bruce Dawe's poetry to an Elective on *Consumerism* is tenuous and that the six poems chosen are not necessarily all "first rate". Keith's description that "it's completely artificial and logically contradictory!" is fairly representative of the other teachers' opinions.

Given such strong objections, why did the participants choose to study Dawe's poetry within this framework of *Consumerism*? Maree acknowledged the main reason for her choice was "you look at Dawe and you think, 'ah! comfort zone!'" She also chose the Elective "because of Dawe but without having really read through with the fact that it was linked to *Workplace Texts*." Maree now regrets her selection saying, "I'm not happy and we will never do that one again." It was only later that she realised the full implications of her choice and that "to force a poet of his calibre to fit into *Consumerism* is actually quite insulting ... it insults his integrity as a poet because it's a very reductive philosophy." Neville's opinion reflects the views - often implied - of some of the others: "I like Bruce Dawe, I've taught him for years, I was familiar with it, so therefore I chose that. But the fact is that I don't like *Consumerism* but I'm still going to teach Bruce Dawe because I'm familiar with him." Keith's reasons echo

similar sentiments, "most people are familiar with Bruce Dawe and know that most kids can deal with him."

These reasons of teacher familiarity and teacher preference when making text selections are strongly supported by data from the survey. One of the highest ranking influences in the factors affecting the choice of texts for the Standard English Course (see Table 7.3) was the teacher's own interest: 'my passion: what I like to teach' (factor A) and also occurring within the top ten factors was 'I know the text' (factor B). It appears that even when there are serious concerns about the ways that Dawe's poetry is required to be studied, teachers stay with selecting and teaching a text they know. Neville recognises the weakness within the Elective, "if I was going to do a course on *Consumerism* I wouldn't use Bruce Dawe; well, he would be the last poet on my agenda but then a poet wouldn't be there." However in spite of this critical assessment, he remains determined to teach Dawe's poetry to his students.

Another reason why teachers may have chosen Dawe is because Standard students are required to study poetry as one of their types of texts, and this prescription to some extent forces the choice teachers make. Many complain that the grid, which indicates the types of texts to be studied, significantly constrains their selections (see Tables 7.9 & 7. 10). Once text choices were made, as Maree explains, "we were set on a course that we couldn't change."

Apart from the fact that Dawe's poetry is well known to teachers and that, to some extent, the syllabus grid determines the selection of poetry, both Keith and Joseph suggest the easy availability of the poems is another factor for choice. In the survey, 37% of respondents indicated resources are the most important constraint when making their text selections in general (see Table 7.9). When asked to consider their text selection specifically for the

Standard Course 16% saw resources as a constraint and overall, it was third in importance of the factors identified (see Table 7.9). With the selection of Dawe's poetry, because it is a long - standing popular text, multiple copies are available in school book rooms and this eases the allocation of funds to allow for the purchase of other texts. Keith also indicated that the poetry "accidentally fell on the photocopier and made its way out - completely unintentional breach - into the hands of eager young students and you don't have to wait as some schools do for the kids to buy their texts." Therefore, the text is easily available and it appears that the practice of teachers giving the students photocopies of the poems is common. Most of the participants mentioned that they do this, some even enlarging the copies so students could write on them.

Completely absent from the teachers' discourses was any reference to the cluster of text selection factors related to the students - their interests, their enjoyment and the relevance of the text's issues to their lives (factors P, L and Q). In fact, the teachers actually identified the difficulties of this Elective for their students. While the survey on paper reported this cluster of factors as being the most important for teachers' decision making (see Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, & 7.4), when they made their selections in practice, these reasons no longer appeared as considerations. Of most significance is the teacher's own familiarity with the material even when serious concerns are expressed about its conceptual framework and the syllabus rubric for the study of that text and the potential difficulties of teaching it under those specifications.

The inclusion of the Workplace and Community texts document

Many of the participants wondered about the purpose of the inclusion for study of the support document *Workplace and Community texts* as a supplement for this Module. It provides

"exemplars of types of texts" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p. 15) and will "help teachers in the delivery of all electives in Module C." (Board of Studies, 2000, p.1). Its introduction states:

> *The materials are examples of different kinds of texts used in the workplace and in the community. Some of the texts are authentic and others are appropriate models. In the English (Standard) course, Workplace and Community Texts complements the study of the prescribed text. The texts in this collection can be adapted to the situation that is being explored in the elective. The texts themselves are not examinable, but students should be able to use texts of this kind in a range of situations.* (Board of Studies, 2000, p.1).

This document presents problems for teachers as it has to be downloaded from the Board of Studies' website and this is another example of the defrayment of costs to schools especially as the document is approximately forty pages. The collection is then photocopied for the Standard students at the school's cost. A quarter of the participants, prior to the interviews, were unaware even of the existence of the document. In some of these cases, their planning for their unit of work on *Consumerism* was well under way.

The status of this support document appears to be somewhat ambiguous. Maree pointed out that initially she had not realised it was an addition to each of the Module C Electives. Cara said, "I don't know what I'm quite supposed to do with them". Keith believes this document adds to the general confusion about the nature of the Elective because it is "at odds with the broad themes of the texts selected from Bruce Dawe." His use of the word "themes" signifies the way in which teachers perceive the Elective of *Consumerism* as being a thematic study. The various readings they have of the rubric and the evident misunderstandings being generated through the ill advised inclusion of the *Workplace and Community texts* document further weaken the Module and its Electives. The use of this text, even "as a stimulus for

classroom teaching and learning" (Board of Studies, 2000, p.2), appears to define the nature of some of the teaching practices and in particular, to constrain the types of texts that students explore in their study.

Approaches to teaching Consumerism

Most striking in this examination of the teachers' programming is the strong similarity of approach in their units for the *Consumerism* Elective. Many of the collected units of work look very much the same. The degree of conformity evident in the teachers' programs is remarkably at odds with the unique versions of their subject and their own professional identities that the teachers constructed in their discourses. This may be interpreted as a form of written consensus. In other words, through the resource materials circulated at conferences and the samples suggested in the professional association journal, from published units of work, especially from the HSC On Line Web Site (maintained by the DET), and from the ideas promoted through the LIG training, teachers seem to have found a 'formula' approach to deal with the new demands. In their stress and anxiety during the early stages of implementation, the teachers' emphasis is very much on just dealing with content rather than on any critical interrogation of the concepts embedded in the Elective and Module.

The following report about the ways the teachers are teaching *Consumerism* and Bruce Dawe's poetry is drawn from the explanations, programs and documents received from the participants. It provides an overview of their units presented through a synthesis of the common program elements based on the teachers' own words and their written materials. These features are identified as syllabus outcomes, aspects of *Consumerism*, teaching and

learning approaches, types of resources, and assessment tasks. Attention is also given to the 2001 HSC examination question for this Elective.

Identification of Syllabus Outcomes

The inclusion of outcomes in programming to shape students' learning and to indicate their expected achievements was a part of the shift in the curriculum focus of the early 1990s and they are now mandatory components of all NSW syllabuses (see Brady, 1995; Watt, 1998, 2000). Most of the collected programs of work acknowledged designated outcomes for their unit. The majority of teachers refer to 4 or 5 similar outcomes from the Standard English Course. Only one Head Teacher's program demonstrates explicit links between the selected outcomes and her teaching and learning strategies. For most, the outcomes are just placed at the top of the unit or in a separate column, detached from the ways in which the students' achievement of these outcomes is to be facilitated. It is possible to speculate from this evidence that there appears to be some difficulty for teachers in their application of outcomes as an explicit guide for their teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Their programming generally seems to be content driven rather than on planning from the outcomes first and shaping the strategies necessary to achieve the specific skills, knowledge, and understanding that the targeted outcomes indicate students should acquire in the unit.

As discussed previously, Neville had suggested that one of the significant shifts in his practice was the inclusion of outcomes in his programs. He stated that now he "had to write unit plans ... because you need to make sure that you're satisfying the outcomes that you're covering." However, it is clear that he is still coming to terms with the purpose of outcomes and how they apply to the teaching and learning context. In his unit on *Consumerism*, Neville included a full list of all thirteen outcomes for the total Standard English Course of study. He

said he intended to work out which ones he had addressed after he had completed his teaching of the unit.

Interpretations of Consumerism

The ways that the teachers interpret *Consumerism* as a framing concept and how this meaning is then shaped by the texts they present reveals some clearly identifiable aspects. The prescribed syllabus rubric indicates that the study of the textual material will include the exploration and documentation of, "aspects of consumerism in society" and "consumer activity". From an examination of both their content and stated classroom activities, the majority of the teachers appear to frame their study around advertising, products, shopping, and the media. Some use definitions of materialism and capitalism as a feature for close attention and they also explore the negative aspects of consumerism. A small number consider the impact of globalisation, the commercialisation of suffering (for example, how the poor are portrayed as a product, material on sponsoring a child etc), and the substitution of values systems in contemporary society. Many give their students the Macquarie Dictionary definition of consumerism:

> *1. A movement which aims at educating consumers to an awareness of their rights and at protecting their interests, as from illegal or dishonest trading practices. 2. A theory that the economy of a western capitalist society requires an ever increasing consumption of goods.* (1991, p. 386).

However, it is difficult to discern in the collected materials real evidence of a critical engagement with any of these definitions or an examination of the poems in relationship to them. In all cases, it is assumed – and frequently stated - that consumerism is a particular concern of Bruce Dawe's poetry. There appears to be an uncritical acceptance of this

construct although, in their discourses, some of the teachers questioned its validity. It seems that for most teachers, consumerism equates with an analysis of advertising and the sale of products, and they see Dawe as being critical of these aspects and of the excessive consumption of material goods. There is some attention given to Dawe's portrayal of consumerism through the technique of satire. A perusal of some of the commercially available published study guides on this Elective confirms that these ideas are being perpetuated there as well.

The rubric of the overarching framework of Module C: *Texts and Society* is not addressed directly in most of the units of work. It is present mainly through inference, where teachers indicate an examination of textual features in the shaping of meaning, and for some, the specific contexts of consumerism in society. There is limited evidence of any engagement with the Modular aspects such as "the ways texts communicate information, ideas, bodies of knowledge, attitudes and belief systems." The attention is directed very much to the close study of Dawe's poems in relation to identifying consumerism through a topic or content based approach. The examination of specific poetic techniques seems to be used as the means to address "the ways" aspect of the rubric.

Approaches to teaching and learning

The teachers' units of work all followed a fairly typical pattern. The Elective focus is introduced through a brainstorm type activity and a definition of "consumerism" established. Dictionary definitions are also provided for the students. The concept is then explored through a collection of various pieces of supplementary material – supplied by the teacher - with a heavy reliance on pieces of advertising. Some use popular television programs as stimulus. The poems are then studied in a linear and chronological way; the six being treated one after

the other. It may be argued that this approach seems to be at odds with the spirit of the Elective. A typical example of the type of teaching and learning strategy indicated in the teachers' programs is "read and discuss the six assigned poems, noting how consumerism is portrayed in each poem. Point out the choice of language, use of poetic devices, structure etc. and how they contribute to Dawe's portrayal of consumerism." Even the way this task is structured tends to reveal consumerism being viewed as a thematic entity rather than as inviting a critical exploration of the conceptual framework of *Consumerism*.

When asked how they actually taught the poems – or how they intended to – some of the teachers said they did not see a lot of difference between how they had taught them in the past and how they would approach them now under the frame of *Consumerism*. Joseph's concern is that students will not be "getting the literary analysis or criticism of poetry" if he just looks at Dawe's "ideas about consumerism." He adds, "in my own class I'm certainly going to deal with poetic techniques." It is interesting to note here that Joseph seems to imply that poetic techniques would not be considered part of the approach to teaching the new syllabus. It is fair to assume that if ideas are expressed through language, then any discussion of poetic techniques would appear to be relevant. More directly, this view highlights Joseph's frequently expressed preference for teaching literature as a single text study and through an analytical and technical method. This opinion is also shared by many of the other teachers.

Warren said his head teacher has directed him to teach the poetry in terms of *Consumerism* but to also "teach it the old way as well." Denise's assessment is that "I think the way that I get the kids to understand is still basically the same" and in Virginia's opinion, "except for the added consumerism, I really will go with what I've always done." Keith believes a very limited approach is evolving whereby "we're not looking or studying Bruce Dawe as Bruce

Dawe sadly, we're studying him for what he has to say about consumerism." The programs collected from the teachers seem to bear out this topic type method of approach, regardless of whether Dawe actually addressed this particular idea in his poetry.

Even though a significant number of teachers said they are teaching the poems differently now, they also qualified this by stating they still think that the "literary side" is what students need to know. Although Louise believes, "the poetry to me was just a springboard to *Consumerism*" which echoes the new syllabus, she also describes the "bank of quotes" from each poem that she has prepared for her class and the close study of techniques she uses. Other participants offer similar strategies, for example, Virginia says she will "consolidate poetic techniques"; Dorothy has a "formula" for poetry to give her students; and Vera mentions she has included "some critical ideas about Dawe's poetry which is old fashioned stuff" in with her other resources for the students.

There is almost no evidence provided of the study of the poems being broken into sub units; for example, grouped by particular conceptual links, or being treated in ways other than a fairly traditional literary critical approach. It seems that consumerism is added as one of the key themes and ideas to be identified in Dawe's poetry. At times, this takes the form of students listing all the references to consumerism in a particular poem. There is no sign that any challenge to the syllabus construct has been provided for students. The concept of *Consumerism* is not critiqued or contested, the application of the framework itself is not interrogated even though all the participants expressed concerns about its artificiality. It appears that the prevailing orthodoxy is to accept the rubric's focus and then to frame all the learning around identifying examples of *Consumerism* as a topic in the poetry.

After the treatment of the poems is "finished", students participate in a variety of class activities; the most popular tasks are to create an advertising jingle or to sell a product. Written tasks generally included feature articles, letters to consumer affairs, and media reports. Most of the units of work concluded with a summary type lesson - for some, through the use of visual representations - in an attempt to synthesise the concept of the Elective, *Consumerism*.

In most cases, there is no indication in the programs or the books of readings provided of the inclusion of the *Workplace and Community Texts* document. This text remains problematic for the majority of participants as there are no explicit guidelines from the syllabus as to how it is to be utilised in the Module or in fact, how it links directly to the material being studied.

This examination seems to suggest that there is a dissonance in the teachers' rhetorical accounts of their practice, what is written in the work programs, and what is actually happening in their teaching of the Elective. Conflicting accounts are rendered through the teachers' written and spoken discourses. Crucial to understanding whether there is a real change in practice or whether a significant shift has occurred in the teachers' teaching and learning approaches would be to know how they actually taught the poems to their classes. The evidence suggests that these are being taught now in much the same ways as they were in previous practice. The indications are that the themes are identified, the poetic techniques are analysed, and that there are questions about the overall meaning of the poems. These aspects were certainly presented in most of the programs; the new syllabus Elective focus of *Consumerism* is placed as a surface overlay on more traditional and well established approaches.

Inclusion of resources

The teachers were very generous in offering samples of their programming and resources for this research. It is noteworthy that there is a marked degree of uniformity in the various pieces of material collected from them. Many of the notes and resource materials provided to the students do not specifically address either the Module: *Texts and Society*, or the Elective: *Consumerism*. They are derived from "old" sources and references on Dawe and contain biographical information, lists of themes, and general poetic analysis. Where new resources are provided, these have been copied and presented in a somewhat indiscriminate manner. Students receive booklets with pages of photocopied cartoons, ads, newspaper articles, extracts from Commerce textbooks, and materials downloaded from various websites. In a considerable number of cases, there is no particular rationale for their inclusion, no apparent organising principle, no guided activities, and little regard for any of the techniques of explicit literacy practice. Unfortunately, much of it is poorly copied and presented, some is quite difficult to read. This may be another reflection of the pressures of time and work overload that the teachers are experiencing and the lack of adequate facilities and resources in some schools.

Given the participants' repeated concerns about the complexity of the Elective for Standard students, especially those of lower ability, the overload of print material seems to increase the problem rather than to provide a structure for students' learning. The complaints the teachers make about this Module that students need to have higher order synthesis and conceptualisation skills for its study seem to be at odds with the huge piles of print text from which their students are required to construct some meaning. Clearly, as the participants argue, it would be difficult and rather overwhelming for many students, especially those of lower

ability, to deal with all of this resource material then to include the six Dawe poems and the *Workplace and Community Texts* document. The teachers appear to adopt the strategy that one way to treat the variety of content required by the syllabus is to give students more notes. However, there is minimal evidence of any indexing or structuring to provide a scaffold through the mountain of paper the students receive. Where questions are included, these are essentially comprehension type activities on individual poems or on feature articles and do not seem to particularly embrace the changed focus of Dawe's inclusion in the new syllabus.

The types of assessment tasks

There is also a similarity in the types of assessment tasks students are asked to complete during their study of *Consumerism*. Many teachers requested that students respond in the form of a particular type of text and required them to integrate and synthesise their knowledge of the poems and related material in connection to some aspect of *Consumerism*. The main types of text chosen for these tasks are editorials, feature articles and advertisements. The language modes generally used for assessment are either writing or speaking. Only one of the fifteen tasks addressed the specific rubric of Module C: *Texts and Society* – the overarching frame of the whole study.

Katrina asked her students to write a feature article where they discussed the ways society is warned about the effects of consumerism and she provided very detailed feedback to them. Of particular interest is one of the comments in the three pages supplied back to the students. It reads: "rather than trying to find ways to criticise the Module and its content you could try to come to grips with the messages within it. This would be far more beneficial to your HSC." This written instruction makes explicit that the construct for the Elective – however artificial it is – is to be accepted without challenge and the various texts and concepts are not to be

critiqued. This seems to work against some of the fundamental principles informing the Stage 6 syllabus. Yet again, it appears that success in the HSC examination operates as a primary motivation and the intended destination for the teaching and learning journey.

The 2001 HSC Examination Question

These programs for teaching the *Consumerism* Elective were all collected prior to the conduct of the 2001 HSC English examination. A report is presented here on the nature of the set exam question for this particular study, an overview of the students' responses to it, and feedback based on the HSC marking processes.

Although the 2001 HSC examination question addressed the specific Elective of *Consumerism*, it follows the same format as the questions for the two other Electives in Module C (see Appendix E3). It is framed around some of the aspects drawn directly from the rubric of the overall Module: *Texts and Society*. It required students to write a report – a type of text represented in the *Workplace and Community Texts* document – from the perspective of a specific workplace context for an imagined audience. The question focuses on an investigation of the ways texts influence particular members of society (specifically consumers for Elective 3) and requires the inclusion of a variety of textual material. It is a demanding question that challenges students to synthesise a range of texts, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of both the Module and the Elective, and to write with a specific awareness of audience, purpose and form.

The *2001 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre* acknowledge that some candidates successfully displayed the required skills. However, specific areas of concern are also identified:

> *Many displayed little understanding of a workplace document and/or a report format. A significant weakness was the inability of many candidates to synthesise their ideas and evidence within the parameters of the question. This was related in part to the use of inappropriate related material that was clearly not a text of the candidate's own choosing. For many candidates there was an over-reliance on recount of content rather than addressing the central requirements of the question.* (Board of Studies, 2002, p.17).

The examination question and the students' responses highlight the complex nature of both the Module and the specific Elective. Standard Course students demonstrated some difficulty with understanding how texts communicate meaning and the techniques composers use to do this. The Examination Notes comment that "weaker candidates ... commonly struggled with addressing the 'how' element, particularly in Elective C 'Consumerism'." (Board of Studies, 2002, p.17). The higher order skills of synthesis and the conceptualisation of the Elective and the integrated use of related material proved demanding for many of them. The strong reliance on the particulars of content, found to be a feature of the teachers' written programs, was also evident in some of the students' responses to this examination question.

Summary about Teachers' practices: teaching *Consumerism* in Stage 6 Standard English

The data collected from the participants – both oral and written – indicates the very considerable amount of work that they did in their preparation for this Elective. Many included a variety of interesting activities for their classes. However, there seems to be an

overload of print material and resources that perhaps make it difficult for the teachers to sort out the intention and focus of their programming. It is evident that there has been a particular shaping in the ways they have created their units for the students. Most of the programs are content driven. The artificiality of the Elective's construction and the kinds of interpretations that the teachers make of it, contribute to creating some tension between the syllabus rubric and the way it appears to be taught.

Many of the participants say there is a difference in the ways they are now teaching Dawe's poetry. However, it seems there is a discrepancy between the teachers' spoken discourses and their written programs, and possibly also with their practices as well. What really appears to have changed is the identification and inclusion of consumerism as a new part of their content, but not necessarily any change to how they are actually teaching the poems. Although more evidence would be needed of the teachers' actual classroom practices, it would seem that consumerism has become another idea that can be identified uncritically in Bruce Dawe's poetry. The approach to the study of the poems then remains much the same as in previous practice, except that consumerism now becomes a main focus or thematic concern. This same perspective is then applied to other related texts through the use of a variety of other resources, particularly drawn from advertising and popular media, and links are forged between these materials and the poems.

The syllabus does not prescribe pedagogy or teaching strategies. It gives direction to teachers as to the guiding principles and prescribed content for Stage 6 English. Teachers have to read and interpret the document, and then decide how they will teach a Course. Their particular approaches in the classroom are, to a great extent, self determined. This is an interesting consideration in the light of the 'consensus' of approach in evidence with this case study. It

appears that there is a movement away from the syllabus to use pieces of stimulus material and published study guides as a source of interpretation for the unit and for the teaching of the Elective. The teachers appear able to mask some of the deeper issues and any interrogation of the syllabus by putting in place an appearance of change. What seems to emerge is a high degree of uniformity where the approach is adopted of making consumerism another thematic concern in Bruce Dawe's poetry. This practice occurs instead of a reconceptualisation of the ways to teach the familiar poetry.

The prescribed Elective of *Consumerism* does not have a clear connection to the Modular rubric and it shows a distinct weakness in both its design and representation of the syllabus frame. This then seems to make changes in teaching practices more difficult to achieve because teachers fall back on their known methods and their assured habits of the past to help them deal with the new aspects. This is especially the case when the text they select for their students to study is so familiar to them and where a wealth of resource material is already available to support their teaching.

The pressure of time and the work demands of so much that is new to teachers, their personal uncertainty and anxiety about their enactment of the curriculum changes, and their professional concerns about their students' abilities and HSC examination performances, all contribute to their reliance on their established pedagogical practices even when teaching a new syllabus.

The teachers' programs demonstrate limited changes being made in their practices. The adoption of additional or revised content does not signal a shift in their teaching or in the ways they view their actions in the classroom. Their plans and resources indicate the teachers

have done a great deal of work but they do not show deeper conceptual engagements with the syllabus. They do not critique the Elective or the Module and their unquestioning acceptance of the construction allows them to maintain many of the ways of teaching Bruce Dawe's poetry that it appears they have valued and used in the past.

Chapter 6 reported the findings about the nature of teachers' discourses about themselves, their subject and pedagogies when a new syllabus is introduced. This chapter has identified perceptions of teachers' practices and their decision making for classroom instruction during their implementation of major change. A discussion about the relationship between the teachers' discourses and practices and curriculum change will now be analysed more fully in the following Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION:

RHETORICS, REALITIES AND CHANGE

"the elucidation of the relationship between 'rhetoric' and 'reality' remains one of the most profound challenges to future curriculum histories"

(Goodson, I., 1985, p.11)

Introduction

This investigation of the discourses and practices of teachers' work through the lens of the participants' voices sheds new light on the ways in which they relate to each other during the implementation of a new syllabus. Study of the relationship of these dimensions of rhetoric and reality provides a complex view of how teachers give voice to curriculum changes and implement a new syllabus. The layers of partial and created meaning that are characteristic of their discourses can also be applied to the plurality of interpretations found in the teachers' classroom practices. The presence of paradoxes in both their words and actions indicate that there are deep forces at work, that ironies mask some of their views and conduct, and that the lines between perception and actuality are blurred.

The collective voice

Lortie's (1975) seminal study of the schoolteacher reminds us of both the individuality and isolation of teachers. Although we can identify the unique voices of particular individuals here, what is striking are their similarities and the collective voice being heard. The teachers involved in this study had no contact with each other, and are from a selection of locations

and school systems from across the state, and yet there is extraordinary consistency found in their ways of thinking and behaving. Their collective voice speaks loudly even though their particular contexts for implementation are markedly different. While there are some exceptions such as their individualised views about their professional identities, their stated preferences for particular aspects of the syllabus, and their differing theoretical backgrounds, overall, the patterns are consistent and true for these teachers most of the time.

It is not possible to identify whether the more experienced or newer teachers embraced the curriculum changes with greater ease. Even those teachers who appeared to be closer in spirit to the new syllabus through their own academic studies, personal inclinations or involvement in the curriculum development process, did not – for various reasons – appear to adapt easily. For some, such as Vera, part of their own style of teaching counteracted the extent to which they might have adopted change; for others the prevailing culture of their subject department worked against their implementations; and even Alexa, the new graduate found it difficult to deal with some of the contextual shapings of change around her.

Patterns in teachers' discourses and practices

The most distinctive feature of the patterns identified in the teachers' discourses and practices was the multiplicity of contradictions and ironies inherent in every aspect of what they said and did. The contradictions in these patterns can be analysed in relation to:

- that in a time of extreme professional challenge the teachers' sense of professional identity remain unchallenged;
- the teachers' perceptions of how they are implementing change and what they actually do in the classroom;

- the teachers' confidence in their own pedagogies while desperately seeking resources authorised by others; and
- teaching students ways of reading critically in terms of the syllabus and yet not perceiving the relevance of this approach to their own practices.

Times of professional challenge and teachers' professional identities

The teachers' discourses about their individual self concepts suggest that their professional identities, and what they value in their subject, are vitally important components of these constructs. Most teachers viewed these professional elements as being closely aligned with, or even inseparable from, their sense of self, and as occupying a large, significant part of the territory of self. The teachers' frequently expressed uncertainty and stress about the curriculum change contrasts sharply with the powerful way they perceive their professional identities as part of themselves, and the confident ways they characterise English. Their professional identities seemed to remain virtually unscathed by the challenges created by the processes of change set in train by the implementation of a new syllabus.

A distinctive feature of the participants in this study is the very direct connection between their professional identity, the things they particularly value in English as preparation for life, and their confident sense of ownership of their subject. It appears as if this is what they cling onto in the midst of all their confusion as they search for guidance to implement something that is new and different. This is ironic because it happens at a time when the nature of the subject English itself is undergoing major changes in its redefinition. There are multiple Discourses heard battling for authority within the subject. The introduction of the new senior syllabus furthers this ongoing debate about the constitution of English and the shifting borders

of its territory. For the teachers, then, their strong professional identities become their only security in these challenging and uncertain times.

How the teachers perceive these identities is directly related to how they view and respond to, the processes of change. Other studies have distinguished the various components that make up a teacher's professional identity and it is generally acknowledged that this involves a complex interplay of elements. For example, 'pedagogical content knowledge' is the term Shulman (1987, 1999) uses to classify the domains and types of teachers' knowledge while Elbaz (1983) and Connelly and Clandinin (1988) describe what a teacher knows of a classroom as 'personal practical knowledge'. What this research highlights is that the teachers' interpretations of themselves as professionals are based firmly on their core beliefs about their subject. Each teacher has created a unique interpretation of English shaped from his or her academic studies and preservice training, from teaching experience, and from a personal way of looking at things. The teachers' voices reveal how central the subject English is to their identity as teachers.

The significance of the teaching subject discipline for secondary teachers' identities has also been acknowledged in the literature (see, for example, Ball, 1985; Clark, 1995; Little, 1995; Goodson & Marsh, 1996). However, there is no general agreement in the research about the exact character of teachers' subject knowledge partly because it is considered that the nature of school subjects themselves is open to debate (Green, 2000). The finding from this study adds a further contribution through its recognition of the primary role of the teacher's subject, in particular English, in the construction of their professional identity and behaviour. The teachers' personal meanings about English lie at the very heart of their professional view of themselves. A number of their deeply held beliefs about the intrinsic qualities of their

teaching subject have become features of their practice. This sheds light on their responses to the process of change, especially a change that attempts to challenge their core beliefs and understandings about their subject. Such firm boundaries around a strongly personal pedagogy make it difficult to alter practice.

No unified definition of subject English is offered by these teachers, a finding that supports the current thinking that there are in fact many "Englishes" (see, for example, Morgan, 1997; Pope, 1998) and that a plural form may be a useful tool (Green & Beavis, 1996; Peel, 2000). It may be suggested that English teachers are a particularly distinctive group in the creation and interpretation of their professional identities because the nature of their subject is so unique and so contested. To date there has been little research on this specific connection and it would seem that the multiple Discourses that are characteristic of subject English influence the multiple ways teachers within its discipline also portray themselves. The prevailing state of flux in the subject's identity over the past twenty years has led to its practitioners crafting their own domains within its shifting territory. Each teacher in this study has established a personal definition of English and having created this unique signification for themselves - in more cases than not - it remains fixed and appears unlikely to be challenged.

The teachers' professional identities have absorbed the way the subject can allow itself to be represented differently to various people. There is a chameleon effect created as the teachers determine their own versions of English and impose their own values on the subject. The emotive, almost fervent language they use to describe their subject fuses their beliefs, values, and identity. Also embedded within their constructions is an acknowledgement of the value the subject can bring to their students through its development of particular competencies or by its importance for learning for life. English is regularly depicted as a 'gift' the teachers can

bestow on their students because most of them perceive the subject in terms of an empowerment that merges the line between learning and life. In this way, the professional power and personal value of the English teachers themselves is validated because they are the source or providers of important life preparation either by skills' acquisition or the enrichment of self and cultural awareness.

Ball and Lacey (1995) believe that teachers create their own contextual interpretations of a subject based on their own values, knowledge and contexts. This research extends the understanding of how teachers create their versions of English by showing how closely aligned their personal and professional values are. The typical attributes of the subject such as its textual, literary or cultural features and its ability to appeal to the affective domain allow these teachers to draw their own responses and shape their personal meanings about English. They refer to particular literary works they "love" to read, they mention activities such as drama or writing that they enjoy, and they acknowledge some of the specific topics for discussion that they like to share with their students. The teachers' professional identities, then, are constructed through this passionate defining and valuing of their subject.

The participants' concepts of themselves as English teachers - in more cases than not - are positive and well established. Unlike their views and images about the new syllabus, their self-descriptions are firmly drawn through their confident and enthusiastic personal statements and their personally chosen images of distinctive behaviour and practice. The accounts of their preferred instructional styles are presented with similar assurance. There is little hesitation when describing the type of teacher they are; the images and metaphors they use convey particular characteristics which define the ways individuals act. The most dominant quality uniting their collection of images is the sense of commodification that

positions them as possessing skills or creating assets that are made available for others to consume. This links directly to the ways they place themselves at the centre of their educational philosophies and practice. Their consistent use of first person in their discourses stresses how they position themselves in their local contexts, and much of what they say revolves around individual statements that blur their personal and professional identities. Their reliance on descriptions from the affective domain further confirms the emotional attachment they feel to their professional selves. It seems they hold secure, familiar ideas of themselves and their subject that are derived, in many cases, from longstanding judgments. Because they appear to draw on their past knowledge and experiences, they convey confident images of themselves in their current professional roles. Such a portrayal is at odds with their expressions of anxiety about the new syllabus and the images of darkness and confusion that they choose to describe its implementation.

At a time when it could be expected that the teachers' confidence might be shaken, especially given their obvious anxiety, it is striking and paradoxical that their self-confidence is actually reinforced. Because many of the teachers feel left in the dark about the nature of the changes and remain unfamiliar with some of the theoretical shifts occurring in the subject and reflected in the new syllabus, they tend to maintain and reinforce their own beliefs. English as a subject occupies a powerful interior place for most of the teachers – it is understood and felt in a deeply personal way and their possession of it is articulated in aesthetic and affective terms. The exclamation, "I love English" typifies their feelings. When the teachers speak about their professional selves, they mingle the boundaries of self and profession, particularly merging their emotional and subject identities to a point where this fusion becomes intrinsic to their being. This synthesis forms a solid, almost impenetrable core and it frames and guides their professional actions. It appears this core is able to both withstand efforts to alter it and is

capable of being profoundly anguished when attempts are made to bring about any change to its nature. When the teachers' deeply held beliefs are challenged by the new syllabus, they hold onto what they know and value, and in fact, keeping control of these core aspects of their identity become a means of coping with their confusion surrounding the reforms.

In yet another contradiction, the imagery in their discourses that reveals their feelings of a loss of control is in conflict with the bolstering of their inner self that takes place. Because their interior beliefs are strong and their subject convictions and professional identity are unwaivering, although there is a great deal of external turbulence and they experience obvious symptoms of stress, there is not a fundamental engagement at a deep level with the change process. Both their resilient individuality and their strength of attachment to their subject conceptions heighten the difficulty of mandating and enacting complex curriculum change that affects the heart of the discipline profile.

For the majority of the teachers, their professional identities are built from the overlap between what they value in themselves and their individual subject conceptions. Their discourses suggested that emotional and affective dimensions are more important than intellectual ones and there is a curious balance presented between aesthetics and practicalities in what the teachers say about their identity as teachers. This duality creates a tension that is revealed in their contradictory and paradoxical words and actions. Two participants, Neville and Warren, describe their self identities as being in "flux", and yet, their assurance in speaking about their practices and the confidence of their assertions about the negative aspects of the curriculum changes are strongly at odds with their proclaimed view of themselves. In what is a common pattern among all the teachers, while they say that they lack certainty about what to do with the new syllabus and they project an image of themselves as being oppressed

by the whims of others, they actually speak authoritatively of their pedagogical approaches as if these are the only way to teach English.

This study highlights the ways in which English teachers' different views of their subject are firmly entrenched, internalised and incorporated into their distinctive ways of being and acting. It is almost inevitable then that the imposition of major change will collide with this firm core of beliefs and values and it is not surprising that the teachers report feelings of being destabilised. Although hesitancies and uncertainties are evident in the teachers' work, the portraits they draw of themselves suggest that any long-term residency in these 'grey' areas of doubt is not likely to occur. Paradoxically, the introduction of a new senior English syllabus does not appear to have affected the teachers' images of themselves or to have particularly shaken their inner self-confidence. In a sense, their conception of themselves and their subject beliefs are reinforced when challenged rather than being profoundly altered, and so, their adoption of the new remains, for most, fairly shallow. In their attempts to stand firm in the destablised world in which they work, they impose their own order by keeping hold of their certainties.

Teachers' perceptions of change and classroom realities

The teachers' discourses indicated that they have changed their practices and yet, simultaneously they reveal that they have not changed. There are inherent contradictions present and some of these can be related to definitions of the word change itself. The teachers put some surface appearances of change in place and these are in line with a view of change as "to replace the coverings of" (Macquarie Dictionary, 1989, p.170). In other words, the teachers enact some of the necessary and obligatory components of the new syllabus such as

revised assessment procedures, new rubric frames around particular content, more specific marking guidelines, and the inclusion of film and various other texts in their teaching. They meet the mandated requirements and the HSC examination remains the driving force for most teachers. Yet, what the teachers identify as changes and their perceptions of change, are not necessarily what the new syllabus itself seems to be endorsing as significant notions of change. They name the texts they are teaching and state that this content is new or different, but there is not a significant indication of how this material is taught in ways that reflect the wider theoretical shifts within the subject. They provide many examples of aspects that they identify as evidence of a change in their teaching approaches and which they say constitutes their implementation of a change in practice. Essentially these are "coverings" – they replace one lot of procedures or texts with others. The teachers' discourses reveal that they think they have changed and that their opinion will be supported by the various examples they offer of their current practices.

The teachers seem to be unwaivering in their convictions about the particular ways they believe their version of English should be taught and how best to achieve learning outcomes for their students. Through their discourses, the teachers convince themselves about what they are doing, or at least what they think they are doing, in their teaching. They use language to construct a view of their own practices that, at times, appears to contain inherent contradictions. It is not simply that they are espousing one thing and then doing something else; the discourses are not separate from the practices. The teachers actually think they are doing what they indicate in their discourses and they do not always realise the discrepancies and the paradoxes that they reveal as they speak.

When selecting their texts for HSC study, for example, there is a tension between what is expressed as the teachers' reasons for their choices and an analysis of the text choices made in practice. Although they say they value the importance of considering students' interests and enjoyment, there is some evidence in their practices that disputes this. While they rate students' interests as the most important reason for their selection of texts, and state that they wish to share the aesthetic and empowering dimensions of literature with them, what the teachers do in practice contradicts this. The choices that are actually made appear to be for other reasons such as the texts have been studied previously or that the teacher knows and likes them. An obvious inconsistency is present between their espoused reasons for choice and their actual decisions. While maintaining they have embraced changes and that the priority for their selections is their students, their choice of 2001 HSC texts reveals a close association with the past and with what the teachers know. Although they believe and say that they have shifted in their thinking about text selection, they are, ironically, making judgments based upon the factors most connected to themselves ('my passion' - factor A, and 'what I know' - factor B) and the version of English that they privilege. This is not simply a gap between what is said and done. The teachers do acknowledge the importance of the factors related to them and many assert the importance of their love of literature in their construction of English. What they have not done in practice, however, is make a decision based on all their stated priorities, which included as most significant, 'students' enjoyment' and 'interests' (factors L and P).

In the teachers' implementation of the new syllabus, there is very little evidence of teaching strategies that reflect the conceptual frame suggested by the syllabus. They declare their practices have changed yet the close examination of their units on *Consumerism* reveals their approach to the study of Bruce Dawe's poems remains much the same as in previous practice

except that consumerism now becomes a main identification or thematic concern. Rather than this being just a gap between the teachers' rhetoric and reality, it is more complex. They believe they have adopted an appropriate teaching model to demonstrate the change in the syllabus treatment of Dawe and that their shift in reinforced by the inclusion of new materials. In fact, paradoxically, even though they teach in very different locations and contexts, there is remarkable consensus in their approaches and their units on *Consumerism* are strikingly similar. The pattern that emerged here was that they had constructed the new syllabus requirements into something with very familiar echoes of past practice – sometimes old questions and notes - and then added some other pieces of material onto the teaching program without necessarily rethinking or reshaping the whole. Even though the teachers criticised the artificiality of the construct for teaching Dawe's poetry, they accepted the rubric frame of the syllabus without any interrogation of it in their teaching.

The very distinctive creations of the teachers' own versions of subject English that have been identified are, interestingly, at odds with the significant degree of conformity seen in this case study. In their best endeavours to implement the changes, it appears that the teachers have sought out advice from professional development and possibly from commercially available study guides, and worked collaboratively with colleagues to produce similar materials. They expressed great concern about their urgent need for support documents and samples to direct them. However, it is the absence of any critical interrogation of the syllabus rubric for the Module and the Elective that disturbs this view. The teachers' inclusion of new pieces of content does not necessarily indicate that any significant pedagogical change or deeper intellectual engagements with the syllabus paradigms have occurred. Their effectiveness of the change implementation is somewhat diminished because there seemed to be no emotional or intellectual connection with the material they had devised. In spite of their own stated

confidence, it appears that many have followed, rather too slavishly, anything that was offered to them as a model.

Teachers' pedagogies and their pursuit of resources

Although the teachers assert confidence about their subject paradigm and their professional role, they cry out for assurance and guidance in teaching the new syllabus. They see themselves as the most valuable resource in the classroom yet the main focus of their rather frenzied activity is to find resources created by others. The more their rhetoric suggests their escalating stress, the more unproductive they appear to become in their behaviour. In their urgent pursuit of whatever materials are available, the strength of their inner confidence seems to be ironic.

The teachers' professed desires for support materials allowed the available gap in the market to be filled in a variety of ways. As Scott (1999) has suggested, the wider educational and professional associations play a key role in providing resources and development courses in times of change. In this particular case, the English Teachers' Association exerted a strong influence over a majority of the participants who acknowledged its work in making a positive contribution to their preparation for the new syllabus. Unfortunately, there were also some entrepreneurs who took advantage of this situation by seeming to present quick fix solutions and in some cases, by merely recycling out of date resources with a few new terms added.

The teachers' repertoires of pedagogical strategies seem firmly entrenched and are spoken of authoritatively as suiting the needs of their particular students. At the same time as the teachers acknowledge the importance of tailoring their approaches to meet their students'

abilities, ironically they stress the centrality of their own role. There is a blurring between their rhetoric and their practice because they see themselves as the most valuable resource in the classroom and it is this view that frames their decision making about curriculum. The implementation literature (for example, Clark & Yinger, 1987; Koswnen, 1994; Hargreaves, 1998b; Kirk & McDonald, 2001) indicates that generally teachers will transform curriculum variously through their decision making to suit their own preferences for materials and topics, their students, and their local contexts. This research extends that opinion by identifying that these teachers believe their personal characteristics and their own construction of English will inevitably lead to strategies that suit and engage their students. Yet, the classroom practices that they most often referred to represent a fairly narrow range of teacher centred strategies, such as direct instruction, providing notes, and explicit teaching and modelling. Reference to student centred strategies such as workshops, drama activities and discussions were infrequently mentioned. In their perceptions, the teachers remain convinced that it is through their own particular self determined methods they are guiding their students and assisting them to success.

It appears that much of the change and implementation process remains external to these teachers. They are tired, busy, and stressed; in this emotional condition they do not engage with many of the underlying issues of the new syllabus. The deeper aspects of intellectual interpretation and critical exploration are masked by concerns about acquiring materials that are ready to teach, finding enough hours to complete new assessment tasks and units of work, and having sufficient resources. In working collaboratively, they reinforce an activity-based approach to get things done. They are highly receptive to whatever appears to offer guidance or provide a practical solution for them and will alleviate some of their stress and confusion. Their discourses reveal the ways they put in place an appearance of change through working

hard, gathering resources especially print material, talking with colleagues, and going to workshops to obtain handouts. The absences in what they say and do are related to their neglect of critiquing of the syllabus or challenging and reflecting on their own pedagogical practices.

The familiar echoes in the metaphors of blindness and direction the teachers use evoke their lack of certainty about the process of change. The confidence and assurance they often indicated in their discourses was undercut by their frequent reliance on their choice of images related to a loss of control. The teachers' decreased agency and personal stress reflect both a lack of ownership and a lack of understanding of the new curriculum developments. There is real tension between their discourses and practices and this interplay illuminates the very complex nature of change implementation. These experts in curriculum delivery are now disquieted and uncertain. Their discourses about the new syllabus are emergent ones and the things they say are not particularly fixed as the various contradictions and paradoxes that are present reveal. Their practices – strongly informed by their own individualised constructions of self and subject – reflect genuine attempts to engage with aspects of the changes but, in many cases, without sufficient understanding as to how to enact major curriculum reform.

Teachers' ways of reading and critiquing in relation to their practices

Many of the teachers' established views and values about English and their own identities are out of kilter with a syllabus that promotes flexible and multiple reading perspectives. The English Stage 6 syllabus itself advances the previous view of a syllabus as a single text. It supports contemporary thinking that the making of meaning is a relational process and that any text can be seen as a site for the production of multiple readings. Ironically, instead of

embracing the plurality of meanings available, the teachers attempt to read and define the syllabus in particular ways, imposing their values on it, and in so doing, limiting its possibilities. The eclectic nature of the theoretical perspectives informing this new syllabus increases the teachers' confusion and many feel uncertain about the current paradigms and developments in their subject. While the new lexicon of the syllabus is embedded into the teachers' discourses, with the clear exception of new graduate Alexa, it is not always used in a meaningful way and the ideas are not then represented in their actions. New meanings about subject English have to be shaped out of the various dominant Discourses, pedagogical approaches and theoretical stances of the new century. This research shows that the debates about the different Discourses of English (see Chapter 3) serve to intensify the perplexity many of the teachers feel and cause a further enshrinement of what they already know and value.

The plurality of meanings encouraged in poststructuralist readings and which inform the new syllabus do not make for simple or single interpretations. Instead of using this knowledge to shape his own meaning, Warren for example, complains that no one has told him how to read the syllabus. With the exception of Alexa, the teachers have been preconditioned by the long history of the previous syllabus and its very explicit theoretical perspective. Most have constructed their individual frames of English to satisfy the demands of this well-established syllabus. The teachers' quest for a definitive interpretation of the new syllabus arises from their knowledge of the Leavisite view that informed the previous one. The power and security derived from obtaining one true meaning from a text and then being able to pass this on to others is an authority that some of the teachers wish to reclaim. Part of their anxiety arises because they feel disempowered.

What is absent in their discourses is any sense of a shift in their core beliefs and values. In most cases, the very firm and determined nature of their subject paradigms and pedagogical commitments belie any sense of flexibility. As may be expected at this stage, it does not seem that many of the participants have yet internalised their understanding of the curriculum changes. They see them instead as external features to be observed, addressed and included in their practice. There was no direct relationship in terms of the length of teaching experience with the likelihood of consistent and detailed implementation. For most, there is little evidence that the syllabus principles have been integrated into their work in any intrinsic manner or that these are spoken about with the same passion that the teachers demonstrate when describing their views of themselves as teachers, their subject, and their own pedagogical beliefs. Ironically, although they espouse their awareness of the critical base of the new syllabus and indicate some knowledge of the reading theory that underpins it, many of the teachers do not apply this theoretical stance to their own reading of the syllabus. Although they say they are teaching their students ways of reading critically, the teachers are not adopting this approach in their own practices.

There is no one 'right' path or reading to direct the teachers' journey of change into the 'newer world'. Wider forces, some with authoritative voices such as the HSC examination, in-service programs, support materials, and the professional association are also at work creating new Discourses and new meanings for the subject. Some of these views in construction may even lose touch with the new syllabus and produce other patterns of interpretation. Inevitably, the HSC examination generates powerful messages about the syllabus but this is only one aspect, somewhat narrow, of a broader canvas of study. The teachers attempt to negotiate their positions through these various discourses about change that are circulating and try to shape a meaning that allows them to meet their professional obligations to their students. In many

cases, a fear of the unknown and feelings of disempowerment motivate their words and actions. The teachers' voices echo with the confusion and anguish they experience which is manifested in the discordance, paradox and contradiction of their rhetoric. In the absence of other certainties they are also receptive to whatever models of guidance appear to ease their distress.

Advancing understandings of curriculum change

Teachers' discourses are not separate from their practices; they exert a powerful influence upon each other and are connected through the teachers' words, ideas, beliefs and actions. What the teachers produce in both their rhetoric and reality is fluid, shifting and complex. The evidence of ironies and the examination of the patterns of contradictions running all the way through what the teachers say and do advance understanding of theories of curriculum change.

Although the teachers put in place some appearances of implementing the new syllabus, they appear to be able to remain largely outside the process of change. Their perceptions about their implementation of change were contradicted in many cases by their actions. The strength of their professional identities suggest that they are unlikely to respond to attempts to influence or change their values and beliefs about their subject, and therefore, unlikely to change in any profound way. The forceful and frequent desires expressed by the teachers for more assistance and practical support highlight the pressures of time and stress they felt they were under and indicates why they often relied on others for help, in particular their subject department colleagues.

Teachers' work is acknowledged as complex and demanding so it appears to be even more difficult for them to change when experiencing intense emotional feelings. The tension between the teachers' attempts to teach their students about ways of reading critically and the absence of this approach in their own practices also indicates their responses to the change process at a meta level. Because they were so confirmed in their own views about their subject and their pedagogies, they seemed unable to apply new paradigms and concepts to their ways of thinking and then, to implement these in their actions. Other external factors and pressures had an impact on the teachers' responses to the reforms. The influence of mandatory institutional requirements and public examinations affected the sorts of decisions that the teachers made about their implementation of the new syllabus and significantly shaped their responses to curriculum change. It is the layering and combination of all of these various elements related to the teachers' discourses and practices, set within both the broader postmodern context and the local school context, that provide the furthering of knowledge about theories of curriculum change.

The nature of the curriculum change process for teachers

The distinctive ways these English teachers use language to construct and give voice to their definitions of themselves as teachers, their subject and pedagogical approaches, and their views about the new syllabus expose personal and multiple responses to change which impact directly on how they act in their classrooms. However, it is not a simple linear transformation of intention into action. This study draws attention to the fact that no single formula can be applied to the very complex nature of curriculum change implementation. The character of the change process is complicated and dynamic. It moves back and forward, there is no logical progression, and each change participant takes action at a uniquely individual rate. The

teachers' responses to the introduction of the new syllabus are shaped and established through their intensely personal discourses and the paradigms and practices of English that they particularly value. From case to case this varies. The contested nature of subject English, the multidiscursive qualities of curriculum, the various cultural frames and competing domains within the teaching profession, all play a part in teachers' individual mediation of the syllabus. Some of the teachers are more responsive or prepared than others to implement the changes and have the necessary means to do so; others do not subscribe to the reform and attempt to disconnect from it; and there are some who select only parts of the new syllabus to integrate into their familiar practices. Because any progress is also accompanied by regression, various stops and starts occur as new ideas are sifted, introduced or shed. The course of change has a recursive pattern because the gains also become losses, the known is held onto and yet overtaken, and collectively, the group does not move together uniformly in one direction at the same time.

The strength of their professional identities and their confidence about their subject allows these English teachers to reside almost outside of the process of change, retaining their individuality and only appearing to engage in some surface aspects of the implementation of the new curriculum. While there are evolving discourses about change emerging around them, the teachers seem to maintain a firm subject Discourse of their own. They appear resistant to change at any deep level. Fullan (1991, 1993) indicates changes in teachers' beliefs are difficult to achieve, especially those that are deeply held, and the literature on the implementation of change (see, for example, Fullan, 1991; Scott, 1999) suggests that there is a broadly perceived time frame for the change process. This may take anywhere from three to five years and up to ten years with differing lengths of time for the phases of initiation, implementation, and continuation (Fullan, 1991). This research has thrown light on the

initiation and early implementation stages – the first couple of years - by highlighting the way in which an individual's perception of self can influence that process. The close alignment of the teachers' professional identities, subject values and their sense of themselves make them able to withstand the forces of major change on their practices. The study suggests that time will not really make much difference for these teachers even if schools and authorities, to assist their implementation, provide more support. Their subjective realities appear to be strong enough for them to maintain their core beliefs and practices through the next stages of transition for the new syllabus. What the teachers look likely to do is to continue to appear to make change happen but at the same time, it seems possible for them to remain quite separate from its processes.

Curriculum change and teachers' professional development

Fullan's (1991) view that "if there is any single factor crucial to change it is professional development" (p. 289) is confirmed by this study but with some modification. Certainly in the absence of the availability of professional development for some participants, and in its lack of suitability for others, many of the English teachers felt they were unable to change their practices in ways that allowed them to fully implement the new syllabus. However, as the study has demonstrated English teachers have extremely strong professional identities and subject values, and the close alignment of these with their sense of self tends to make them resistant to change at any deep level. Thus even if well planned professional development had been uniformly provided for the teachers, it may still have failed to make a significant impact. (The implication of this for further research is suggested in Chapter 9).

In this example it was not just a case of needing professional development but also of receiving a particular kind given by a particular model. Teachers need to have opportunities to learn, to participate with ownership, to reflect, and to have the advancement of their professional selves supported. The train-the-trainer model, which was used in this case, is acknowledged in the literature (see, Butler, 1996; Naylor & Bull, 2000; Sayre, 2002) as unlikely to promote the effective delivery of professional development to bring about long term changes in beliefs and actions. Its heavy reliance on an instrumentalist approach with manuals and standardised programs does not capture the distinctive nature of a subject or challenge any of the deeply held paradigms of its practitioners. As Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) report, subject specific training needs to be developed instead of generic, one size fits all models. In this particular instance, a further difficulty was that access to the professional development sessions was restricted to only two teachers from each school. There is also evidence that some of the superficial changes teachers put in place during the implementation process were derived from the Department of Education's LIG training sessions. Many of the participants were critical of the training approaches used and the ways in which the facilitators, who showed limited knowledge of the changes themselves, conducted the sessions. The LIG workshops constructed a version of the syllabus that then circulated and competed among the other versions that were shaped in other locations and by other voices. This served to heighten the confusion of many teachers and to destabilise their confidence even further.

Curriculum change and teachers' work

The nature and power of the features shaping the teachers' interior professional landscapes have been discussed earlier. The study also found that there were identifiable forces at work

in the domain that forms the exterior geography of the teachers' worlds. These exerted an impact on their responses to the processes of curriculum change. In the contemporary context, teachers' work is increasingly demanding and subject to ongoing change. Previous studies (for example, Lortie, 1975; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Connell, 1985; Hargreaves, 1994) have identified the competing pressures on teachers, and Apple (1989) acknowledges one that is particularly important. The intensification of the teachers' working day and the stress that this creates for them is a major concern. While it is recognised that many complex factors influence teachers' work in the postmodern age, it was very clear from the research, that some factors were more important than others. Increasing demands placed upon the teachers' working day and the associated pressures on their time and effort to meet these demands affected them the most and impacted upon their feelings with the greatest intensity.

These contemporary teachers experience considerable personal stress sometimes to the point of emotional and physical exhaustion, and their work occupies seemingly endless amounts of time. Their hours of duty extend far beyond those of their paid employment at school and many report working late into the night and over weekends. The teachers identified a number of reasons that contribute to this expansion of their workload which encompassed the changing terms of curriculum and assessment, the inclusion of technology and resourcing needs, the diverse learning requirements of their students, and the range of socio-economic and cultural influences within their specific contexts. Added to the significant pressure exerted by these elements, most teachers highlighted the accountability they feel for their students' academic performance and results particularly in external examinations. They take their ethic of care (see Noddings, 1992) and emotional commitment (see Arnold, 2005) very seriously indeed. Political scrutiny and community and media interest further intensify the focus on HSC results and schools are under increasing strain to perform for places on 'league

tables' of academic achievement. These teachers believe they are held directly accountable for this measurement and, at the same time, for equipping all their students to meet the various challenges of both employment and life in the twenty-first century.

Time and teachers' work

Although most researchers assume time to be a key factor affecting the local implementation of new curriculum, it is the related emotional intensity that teachers attach to feeling deprived of time that is the critical aspect here. It seems this is often understated in the literature. This study reveals that it is the teachers' intense emotions about a perceived lack of time as a consequence of the expansion of their workloads that have significant implications. Time represents one of the teachers' most serious concerns. It appears as a recurrent pressure for them in both objective and subjective terms; however, it is not just a case of finding enough hours in a day. Although these teachers attribute their inability to deal fully with the necessary syllabus changes to a lack of time, it seems that the phenomenological or subjective conception of time is actually more powerful than technical rational perceptions. What is most time-consuming are the interior mental shifts required to cope with new paradigms of English, to adopt different ideas, and to review their pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning. The absence of their time spent in these ways leads to the teachers' increased anxiety and uncertainty, their perceived loss of efficacy in their familiar teaching practices, and their inability to make clear meaning of the required changes.

Of most significance is what time actually represents in the teachers' discourses through its relationship to their emotional and physical stress and the erosion of their personal wellbeing brought about by their feelings of being overwhelmed by the amount of work to be completed.

Symptoms of stress and tiredness manifest themselves in many of the teachers and caused some to make purely emotional judgments about their work and about the new syllabus. Joseph, for example, even speculated about what other job he could do instead of teaching. These deeper implications of the intensification of teachers' workloads and their perceived lack of professional and personal time affect their implementation of new curriculum. In general, affective, emotional responses were made to the new syllabus stated in terms of 'liking' or 'disliking' it. For many there is limited evidence of discriminating judgment of, or intellectual engagement with, the new syllabus and its theoretical frameworks. Most of the teachers express a great deal of uncertainty about the value of all their extra hours of work and are frustrated by the constant erosion of their private time. The teachers' choice of images evokes confusion and disorientation and their discourses are characterised by negatives and absences. They focus on what they do not have, in particular, sufficient time for both their professional and personal lives. Signs of tension and contradiction are clearly evident in the descriptions of their responses to the new syllabus and while they demonstrate strong personal and emotional commitment to their work, they appear to be confused and overwhelmed by its intensification.

Hargreaves (1998b) draws attention to the emotional dimension of teachers' professional lives and the burdens they feel as a result of the strong attachments they have to their students and their work. Similarly, because of their strong emotional investment in their work, these teachers' discourses highlighted their practical difficulties and perceived disadvantages. They portrayed the obstacles and absences that impede their implementation of the new syllabus without acknowledging that these are often elements at a surface level in the course of change. For most, their stress was exacerbated by a lack of sufficient support and equipment when their workplaces did not furnish the necessary materials for them to adequately carry out their

duties. The teachers' reports also provided a new insight into this stressful situation through their accounts of the direct personal cost to them of providing resources themselves for their students and by conducting their computer searches and downloads at home. Some purchase their own teaching aids; Denise, for example, mentioned buying a copy of the prescribed film to show her class for their HSC study; and most teachers spend hours at night using their own internet service providers to obtain necessary documents from the Board of Studies website. This defrayment of costs to teachers for essential teaching resources is another ramification of the busy working day where there is no time at school to wait for slow computer connections or where the equipment is not available at all. Apart from the erosion of their personal time, some of the teachers' expenditure also included paying to attend professional subject conferences and weekend in-service courses when their schools were unable to finance their attendance, with the country teachers in addition, having the extra costs of accommodation.

It is obvious that these teachers are wrestling with the demands of their 'newer world' and they want some practical solutions. What motivates many of their time consuming activities is their repeatedly expressed need for more published resources. Their emotional anguish, their uncertainty about the changes, and their perceived absence of sufficient preparation time are represented in their desires for signposts to guide their instruction. In their personal stress, instead of engaging directly with the syllabus itself, they seek out – often indiscriminately – whatever material is available that has been provided and given authority by others.

The subject department and teachers' work

Although the hegemonic culture of individuality is well established in the teaching literature, in this case, the introduction of a new syllabus appears to have forced a reconsideration of

some English departmental practices. While each teacher asserted the enormous individual effort required for meeting the challenges of the new, the participants reported that their subject department was instrumental in shaping their responses to the mandated changes. In most cases, they identified increased cooperation with their subject colleagues and acknowledged some productive team experiences. The organisational frame of the English department and in particular, the head of department's role, contributed a tangible presence of support for the majority of teachers. This study confirmed the belief that Heads of English departments are particularly influential in establishing a prevailing culture of responsiveness to the demands of a syllabus and for facilitating the implementation of specific policy changes (see Ball & Bowe, 1992; Siskin & Little, 1995; Busher & Harris, 1999). Warren was a significant exception. Unrealistic decisions made by his head teacher about class allocations and the ways texts were selected had a negative impact on his attempts at implementation. Because Neville and Dorothy are Head Teachers of tiny departments and have limited opportunities to work with others, their geographic isolation added to their feelings of uncertainty and stress.

The departmental level relationships identified in this research reinforce the established opinion (see Ball & Lacey, 1984; Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995; Goodson & Marsh, 1996) that a subject subculture can define the micropolitical context of a teacher's work and exert an influence over both teaching practice and cultural associations. Certainly, these subject based collaborations seemed to lessen the teachers' anxiety through their planning of units of work together, teaching the same texts, and sharing resources. It is not necessarily the case that more effective teaching and learning practices developed as a result of this. Personal desperation or the need for information about subject content or texts appears to have driven many of these collaborations rather than any particular focus on

pedagogical issues and a deeper critical engagement with the new syllabus. For some teachers, such as Warren and Joseph, the cooperation created what may be identified as "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves, 1994, p.195) where rather fragile alliances were forged through necessity and for expediency of administrative purposes.

Curriculum change and teachers' responses to external factors

The curriculum change literature (see, for example, Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves et al, 1998) identifies there are both internal and external factors that contribute to the implementation of new syllabuses and the change process. These influences range from aspects related to the change participants themselves, to the local context of the change, and to the wider systemic or bureaucratic authorities and frameworks. There may be strong external factors that will ensure some implementation and that the adoption of change will occur, even if teachers appear to resist change and hold onto their own beliefs and practices. While endorsing these previously acknowledged factors, this investigation establishes that in this specific case of change, it is the broader institutional factors that appeared most influential in creating an impetus for the English teachers to implement change.

The overarching influence of the Higher School Certificate with its formal credentialling requirements and the precise demands of the examination of English act as powerful imperatives for these teachers to modify their practices in some way. At the very least, there are prescribed textual and assessment requirements for the HSC that must be met. Given its systemic and community power, the HSC then, operates as a specific driver of the new curriculum implementation whether the teachers approve or not. What complicates this external motivation to change is that the adoption by the teachers is often superficial or at

least, pragmatic. In other words, they do what they have to do in order for their students to satisfy the requirements of the mandatory examination. The emotional dimension of the teachers' work and their perceived responsibilities for their students, the pressures of accountability for results and the fact that their work is frequently open to scrutiny by colleagues within their subject department add further intricacy to the teachers' responses to change. Sometimes they are compelled by circumstances, syllabus prescriptions or subject heads to act in ways other than they intend or in ways that they genuinely value. Any repositioning of their approaches tends to occur through the force of external pressures rather than through internal shifts, and because the teachers see themselves as professionals who will do the work that is required of them.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION:

HEARING THE TEACHERS' VOICES

...that which we are, we are;...

(Tennyson, A., 1842, Ulysses)

Introduction

When teachers' voices were silent no longer, their chorus resonated with powerful representations of how they perceived themselves and their professional landscapes. A multiplicity of contradictions and ironies was found to be inherent in every aspect of the teachers' discourses and practices. What the teachers said and how they behaved were related in paradoxical and unusual ways. How the teachers viewed their implementation of the early stages of significant curriculum change was markedly at odds with their classroom actions. They exhibited confident professional identities that were framed around their own powerful values and deeply held views of their subject and yet simultaneously, they displayed anguish and uncertainty about how to implement the new syllabus. Paradoxically, the more active the teachers became in trying to come to terms with curriculum change the further they seemed to enshrine and confirm the professional identities they had previously established. The study showed that the teachers' impressions that they were implementing the new syllabus often concealed the fact that they were actually just adopting appearances of change.

Listening to the authentic voices of teachers as they charted a new world of mandated change has important implications for both educational theory and practice and for the effective implementation of change within a contemporary school context. The findings about the

complex and interrelated nature of teachers' discourses and practices during the introduction of a new English syllabus provide a significant contribution to understandings about curriculum change. This examination of features of the teachers' discursive practices has application for educational researchers, curriculum developers, and the teaching profession. The identification of teachers' attitudes, perceptions and actions gives insight into the relationship of teachers to substantive curriculum change; the type of requirements needed for professional development to support the implementation of major change; and the role that the curriculum subject has in influencing its practitioners and their actions, and in shaping changes in its discipline profile.

Implications of the research

The relationship of teachers and curriculum change

How the teachers responded to a new syllabus and the nature of the actions they took contributes important understanding about the centrality of the teacher's role in the implementation of curriculum change. There is a complex relationship between teachers' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and their subject epistemologies, and the ways these various domains affect their implementation of change in the classroom. The established view of change as a cycle and the sequential movement implied by this term are challenged by what was found in the study. What the teachers said about their perceptions of the syllabus, their subject paradigms and their pedagogies did not translate into any particular manner of bringing about a change in their practices. There was not a simple linear transformation of intention into action. In fact, it appeared as if there was no pattern at all. The teachers' discursive constructions keep them in the discourses - and they tend to get lost there - rather

than advancing their practices. There are shifts backwards and forwards within their discourses with new discursive constructions being negotiated there but there is a lack of movement in terms of any significant advancement of the teachers' thoughts and actions.

This research illuminates the multidimensional nature of change and highlights the ways that it operates in frequently contradictory and shifting patterns. There was no single or regular process in operation. Not all of the change participants followed the same stages or patterns of implementation and the outcomes of change varied significantly from case to case. As their discourses revealed, the teachers' perceptions of their actions were crucial and as this case demonstrated, the teachers actually thought they had changed their practices when in fact, they had not. The teachers said they had changed their teaching but at the same time, they remained disconnected from producing any major shifts in their thought and actions. They put in place appearances of change and believed they were changing their practices. In this early stage of the implementation of the new syllabus, what occurred were surface coverings - the inclusion of mandatory requirements – but no deep engagement or enduring alterations to practice.

The research has identified the ways in which the teachers managed the demands of momentous change and how they responded to an enforced challenge in their teaching subject. The English teachers' confidence was shaken by changes that they did not always understand and they felt destablised by so much that was new. The curriculum changes occurred in a time when many other things were in a state of flux including the shifting territory of the subject of English, and the particulars of teachers' work in the postmodern world. These broader contextual aspects also made the teachers feel less certain. In their confusion, the teachers clung to their secure professional identities as a way of coping with the demands made of

them. What this study contributes is an understanding of how that professional identity is constructed and therefore, how it affected the change process.

The teachers' discourses suggested that their professional identities and what they value in their subject are vitally important components of their individual self concepts. Most teachers viewed these professional elements as being closely aligned with, or even inseparable from their sense of self, and as occupying a large, significant part of the territory of self. When the forces of curriculum change challenged them, the teachers held onto what they knew and valued about themselves and their professional identities. The study acknowledged the power of the affective domain and the significance of the particular subject conception in influencing the teachers' actions and these dimensions warrant continued consideration and further exploration. In the future, those who work to promote change should take into account the powerful value systems underpinning the construction of teachers' professional selves and the ways that these shape their responses.

These findings are also helpful in conceptualising the impact of widespread change on teachers when it is imposed within a strict operational schedule. The depth of the emotional burden experienced by these teachers needs consideration when thinking about the implications of change at a local level. It was more than a lack of time that oppressed them: the effects on the teachers' physical and emotional wellbeing as a result of feeling so pressured were significant. As a consequence, their anxiety led them away from the syllabus and into a dependence on the authority of others to provide practical solutions to alleviate their stress. Future planning for curriculum implementation and for professional development should reflect the need to build teachers' independence with sufficient time and support for them to engage directly with the main substance of the changes.

In this case, the teachers believed that the curriculum change was imposed by a political imperative to reform the HSC and that it was developed by bureaucrats disconnected from the 'real world' of school. The study makes clear that teachers need to be enfranchised to contribute actively to the design of curriculum, especially at a local level. It is difficult to promote a climate of teacher professionalism if teachers are charged with merely implementing the curriculum of others. Similarly it may be that there is more 'ownership' of reform if there is greater participation by all the stakeholders in the development processes. In this specific case, there had been considerable consultation and a broader engagement with the syllabus processes (see Chapter 1). However, there is evidence here that some of the teachers' perceptions of an apparently top down model of syllabus change alienated them from its implementation. Some participants considered that their voices were unheard and that others' voices had been privileged during the syllabus consultation and development phases. They also constructed the Board of Studies – responsible for the production of the syllabus – into "they" and the "other" as discursive references. In this way, the teachers were able to set up an adversarial position and had an identity to blame for the reforms they did not welcome. It is worth observing that any substantial development of change needs to create perceptions of a transparency of process, sufficient opportunities for critical engagement, and suitable mechanisms for adequate feedback. The findings also highlighted a need for the major educational authorities, in particular, the Board of Studies and the DET, to make clear the designated role each agency has in the curriculum change processes.

The relationship of teachers and professional development

This study revealed serious implications for those who prepare professional development programs designed to assist teachers to bring about changes in their attitudes and behaviours

and to implement major change. The findings are strong that a "one size fits all model" of in-service does not facilitate the sorts of shifts required to engage teachers in critically rethinking and replanning their practice. Because of the variety of individual responses expressed by teachers about change and the complex relationship between teachers' professional identities and their subject constructions, an educative program needs to acknowledge and discuss the underlying assumptions and beliefs of its participants. More planned opportunities are required through professional development for teachers to explore the unknown, to transform what is already known, and to construct new knowledge.

It is difficult to see how profound change can be encouraged when some of the strategies utilised in the DET professional development program for the HSC reforms appeared to run counter to the new English syllabus' directive to "study how meanings are shaped in and through texts" (Board of Studies, 1999c, p. 11). Sufficient time is required to assist teachers to develop their skills in critical reflection in order to critique the material they are being asked to implement. In this case, there was an absence of active critical engagement with the syllabus and the teachers did not apply their knowledge about theories of reading critically to their own reading practices. Few opportunities were provided for experimentation or risk taking, both important components for learning about new ideas and new approaches. A greater focus on the processes of learning with the use of the principles of adult learning (see Scott, 1999; Naylor & Bull, 2000) should form the basis of any pedagogical approach being adopted in professional development. Teachers need to be central to the program and to participate in similar sorts of innovative methods of engagement and delivery that are encouraged for the effective classroom learning of their students.

More coherent professional development programs that specifically addressed the distinctive characteristics of the subject (see Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995) and which promoted ideas of professional autonomy and self-efficacy may have enhanced the implementation of the new English syllabus. Certainly, the teachers stated they wanted more from the training sessions than bringing in samples of their own units and sharing their troubles. The standardised model of LIG training offered by the DET - and presented in some cases by underprepared and uncertain facilitators - actually undermined the confidence of many of the teachers who attended the workshops. Although the teachers emphasised their desire for support materials, it would seem more appropriate - given their rather indiscriminate adoption of whatever models were available - to develop their expertise in producing their own materials which could be tailored for their local contexts and to assist them to locate high quality resources. It is noted that while information technology can provide access to various resources, teachers will need further assistance in their management and selection of web based materials. Additionally, educational authorities will have to address infrastructure costs and equity of provision issues in the near future particularly at the school level.

A further difficulty of the LIG program was that not all of the English teachers had access to the workshops and consequently, privileging occurred. Some teachers were exposed to a form of emergent and legitimising rhetoric that was produced during the training sessions. Others believed they were disenfranchised by not attending and therefore, they were unable to participate in some of the shapings of change around them. As the study indicated, it was the subject's professional association that contributed the most valuable support for many teachers and it is obvious that it should continue its work to enhance the professional development of its members. What is essential though is that ongoing opportunities are given for all teachers to continue to learn and to monitor and evaluate their progress through the

changes. Fullan (1991) and Scott (1999) both state the importance of evaluation as part of the curriculum change process. To date there has been little coordinated follow up or formal evaluation of the implementation of the new English Stage 6 syllabus.

The relationship of the subject of English and syllabus change

The study makes clear their subject has a crucial role for English teachers in constructing their professional identity and self concept and that this then influences their responses to change. The character of the subject of English varies considerably in definition and the views presented in the data add to the plurality of interpretations being constructed within the territory's shifting borders. In this case, the teachers' discourses revealed how their own personal meanings and subject values had a major effect on the way they read and viewed the changes to their subject as it is represented in the new syllabus. Understanding of this process gives useful information for syllabus developers and professional development programmers about the need to allow teachers to critique the range of meanings about English that are in operation and to further their acceptance that different conceptions of a subject are able to co-exist.

The application of poststructuralist understandings to the act of reading and interpreting a text reinforces the acknowledged view of a syllabus as a multi facetted, dynamic text rather than as a static entity from which a definitive meaning can be derived. This affords a direct connection between the theoretical frames that inform the text and the application of these to the reading of it. In different contexts, different meanings can be created and in practice, different emphases may be given. In accepting this notion of flexible and multiple interpretations, a difficulty emerges for any consensual shaping of meaning about a new

syllabus. It is obvious from the research that although teachers wanted a definitive interpretation, this is counter to the principles that inform the text of the syllabus. These contradictions caused further confusion for teachers and enshrined their own established meanings and practices in the subject.

Indications from the research suggest that the first HSC examination in 2001 promoted particular 'readings' of the syllabus and future HSC examinations are likely to continue to construct other readings that may or may not be closely aligned to the syllabus. New Discourses about the Stage 6 syllabus will emerge over time and these will shape themselves into others. These will be negotiated in various ways through teachers' discourses and practices. This is not to suggest that a syllabus is without meaning but rather that finding meaning is an individual process. Teachers negotiate their own meanings through their personal understandings about what English is as a subject for them, through what the syllabus represents English to be, and through listening to what others have to say about the subject. A greater awareness of the nature of this multifaceted process and recognition that each teacher shapes a unique meaning in some way through using these three avenues may assist the creation of more flexibility in teaching practices.

Recommendations for further research

The findings of this investigation into the teachers' discourses and practices of curriculum change suggest that further research in the area of teachers' subject constructions and their responses to change would contribute to the field of knowledge about teachers' work. The study has revealed that English teachers construct their professional identities in distinctive ways. Their responses to change are contradictory and indicate complex forces are at work. A

particular application of these insights could allow for comparisons to be made with how teachers from other subject disciplines construct and characterise their professional identities, and how they respond to mandated change in their subject area. The question as to whether all teachers share this connection of self and subject or whether English teachers are unique in their values, attitudes and practices would be an enticing future project.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY ON TEXT DECISION MAKING

TEXT SELECTION IN HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ENGLISH

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
School of Education, Macquarie University

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Age: ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49
☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 +

Years of teaching experience:
☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15
☐ 15-20 ☐ 20-25 ☐ more than 25

Academic Background in English:

☐ Major ☐ Minor ☐ None

Institution where you completed your academic English studies:

_____

Teaching Responsibilities:

	Senior classes	*Junior classes*
Head Teacher: English		
Teacher of English		
Other:		

Are you currently teaching the Preliminary Course in English?
☐ Yes Which Course _____
☐ No

Do you expect to be teaching English for the 2001 HSC?
☐ Yes Which Course(s)? _____

_____

☐ No

How many years have you been teaching at your current school? _____

YOUR SCHOOL

Which educational sector best describes your school?

- ☐ DET
- ☐ Catholic Systemic
- ☐ Catholic Independent
- ☐ Other Independent
- ☐ TAFE
- ☐ Other: _____

Location of your school:

☐ Urban ☐ Rural

Type of School:

	Selective	Comprehensive
Co-educational		
Single sex boys		
Single sex girls		

Size of secondary school:

0 - 400	
401 – 700	
701 – 1000	
1000 +	

Approximately what proportion of your school is N.E.S.B? _____

Is the ESL course being offered for the 2001 HSC? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many Senior English classes does your school have?

	ESL	Standard	Advanced	Extension 1/2	Fundamentals
Current Prelim HSC					
Anticipated HSC 2001				/	

PART A: FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF ENGLISH TEXTS

1. TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS INFLUENCE YOUR CHOICE OF ENGLISH TEXTS?

SCALE: To a great extent
To a considerable extent
To some extent
Not at all
Not applicable

		Great Ext.	Cons Ext.	Some Ext	Not at all	Not Appl.
A	My passion: what I like to teach					
B	I know the text					
C	I have taught the text before					
D	The IT skills required for the text					
E	Being able to collaborate with others teaching the same text					
F	It is a new challenge					
G	Specimen 2001 HSC examination papers					
H	Others have recommended the text					
I	The content will be acceptable to the school/parent community					
J	The text is part of the 'canon' of Western Literature					
K	The texts students have studied previously					
L	The enjoyment that the students are likely to receive from the text					
M	The broadening of the students' experience of literature					
N	The text lends itself to a variety of student responses					
O	The text lends itself to a variety of teaching and learning strategies					
P	The relevance of the issues in the text to students' interests					
Q	The relevance of the issues in the text to students' maturity					
R	The text will link with another text being studied					
S	The students themselves have chosen the text					
T	The text is easily available from suppliers					
U	The text is available via technology					
V	The cost of the text					
W	The text is in the Book Room					
X	There are support materials available on the text					
Y	The print text is available as a film					
Z	The technology is accessible (eg: videos, computers)					

Please rank the THREE most significant factors (A to Z) from the previous table responsible for your choice of English texts:

i. _____

ii _____

iii _____

2. What constraints are there in your choice of English texts?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY:

What responsibility do the following have for making the decisions about the selection of English texts in your school?

SCALE: Total responsibility
Very considerable responsibility
Considerable responsibility
Some responsibility
None at all

	Total	Very	Consid	Some	None
Principal					
English Head Teacher					
English staff consensus					
Individual English Teachers					
Students					
Parents					
School Council/Board					

Any further comment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

IF YOU ARE NOT TEACHING THE STANDARD COURSE FOR THE 2001 HSC OR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE NOT RELEVANT TO YOU, PLEASE TURN TO THE LAST PAGE.

PART B: HSC PRESCRIBED TEXT LIST 2001

1. Please tick the texts you will teach for the STANDARD HSC course in 2001.

AREA OF STUDY: CHANGE

Changing Worlds
- ☐ Card, Orson Scott, *Ender's Game*
- ☐ Davis, Jack, *The Dreamers*
- ☐ Watson, Ken (ed), *Imagined Corners*
- ☐ Lucas, George, *Star Wars – a New Hope*
- ☐ Bragg, Melvyn, *On Giants' Shoulders*

Changing Perspective
- ☐ Marchetta, Melina, *Looking for Alibrandi*
- ☐ Nowra, Louis, *Cosi*
- ☐ Skrzynecki, Peter, *Immigrant Chronicle*
- ☐ Perkins, Rachel, *Radiance*
- ☐ Bird, Carmel, *Stolen Children and Their Stories*

Changing Self
- ☐ Morgan, Sally, *My Place*
- ☐ Branagh, Kenneth, *Much Ado About Nothing*
- ☐ Gow, Michael, *Away*
- ☐ Guare, John, *Six Degrees of Separation*
- ☐ Harwood, Gwen, *Selected Poems*

MODULE A: EXPERIENCE THROUGH LANGUAGE

Elective 1: Telling Stories
- ☐ Tattam, Amanda, *Tales from the Blackboard*
- ☐ Lawson, Henry, *The Penguin Henry Lawson Short Stories*
- ☐ Fitzwater, William, *Through Australian Eyes*
- ☐ Pryor, Boori (Monty), with Meme McDonald, *Maybe Tomorrow*

Elective 2: Dialogue
- ☐ Harrison, Jane, *Stolen*
- ☐ Williamson, David, *The Club*
- ☐ Komninos, *Komninos by the Kupful*

Elective 3: Image
- ☐ Gilbert, Kevin (ed), *Inside Black Australia*
- ☐ Lurhman, Baz, *Strictly Ballroom*
- ☐ Weir, Peter, *The Truman Show*
- ☐ Briggs, Raymond, *When The Wind Blows*

MODULE B: CLOSE STUDY OF TEXT

☐ Thomson, Katherine, *Navigating*
☐ Misto, John, *The Shoe-horn Sonata*
☐ Shakespeare, William, *Macbeth*
☐ Cormier, Robert, *We All Fall Down*
☐ Yolen, Jane, *Briar Rose*
☐ Weir, Peter, *Witness*
☐ Matthews, Gordon, *An Australian Son*
☐ Australian War Memorial Web Site
☐ Westbury, Debbie, *Mouth to Mouth*
☐ Owen, Wilfred, *War Poems and Others*

MODULE C: TEXTS AND SOCIETY

Elective 1: The Institution and Personal Experience

☐ Monk, Scott, *Raw*
☐ Strachan, Tony, *State of Shock*
☐ Couturie, Bill, *Dear America*

Elective 2: Exploration and Travel

☐ Adams, Douglas, *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
☐ Hiddins, Les, *The Bush Tucker Man*
☐ Davidson, Robyn, *Tracks*

Elective 3: Consumerism

☐ Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness*
☐ Real Wild Child Consortium, *Real Wild Child*

2. In making your choices did you consult the Board of Studies Annotations for Prescribed Texts, 2001, 2002? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any further comment:

_____

_____

3. Do all Standard classes study the same texts? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Any further comment:

_____

_____

_____

THE HSC STANDARD COURSE 2001

Please refer back to the table on page 3.

3. Select the 6 most important factors (*from A to Z) that have influenced your choice of a particular text specifically for the 2001 HSC Standard Course.

i. _____

ii _____

iii _____

iv _____

v. _____

vi. _____

4. Please focus now on the range of texts your students will study across the total 2001 HSC STANDARD Course.

In addition to the above factors are there other influences that governed your choice in:

Area of Study: _____

_____

Module A: _____

_____

Module B: _____

_____

Module C: _____

_____

5. List the 3 most important constraints in choosing a text for the Standard Course:

_____

_____

_____

6. What general problems did you have in selecting texts across the overall Standard Course to meet the Board of Studies requirements:

i) of the grid of the types of texts to be studied?

_____

_____

_____

ii) for the modes to be assessed across the components?

_____

_____

_____

7. a) Looking at the Standard Course in the Area of Study, Module A and Module C, did you:

(i) Choose the elective first by its rubric? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(ii) Select a text first? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Any comment?

_____

_____

_____

b) Looking at the Standard Course Moduie B, did you:

i) Choose the **type** of text first?☐ Yes ☐ No
ii) Select the text first? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Any comment?

_____

_____

_____

8. Has the way in which you choose texts for the new syllabus changed at all from your selection process prior to this year?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your time in completing this survey.

If you would be interested in participating in an interview on this issue of Text Selection, would you please complete the following details?

Name: _____
School: _____

Contact details (please include phone number)

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY USING THE REPLY-PAID ENVELOPE BY:

FRIDAY, 8th SEPTEMBER

APPENDIX B1: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS AND CONSENT FORM FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT SURVEY

24/7/00

Dear Principal

Re: Doctor of Philosophy Research entitled:

"Factors influencing teachers' decision making in Higher School Certificate English text selection."

My name is Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan and I am a Lecturer in the Secondary English Teacher Education Program at Macquarie University. My current research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Macquarie University, under the supervision of Dr. Donna Gibbs, Senior Lecturer, School of Education - phone: 98508632. The aim of my study is to investigate the factors that influence teachers' choice of texts in Higher School Certificate English, with a focus on the new Standard English Course. I am seeking your assistance to involve members of your English faculty in my research.

Schools randomly chosen from across sectors and rural and urban locations have been invited to participate. I enclose a letter of approval from DET to approach your school. The research will be conducted during Terms 3 and 4, 2000 involving initially a questionnaire which should take approximately twenty-five minutes to complete. There are three questionnaires enclosed. One is for the Head of the English Department and the other two are for assistant teachers of English. In order to gain a greater insight into the information gained in the surveys, a small sample of teachers who volunteer their interest will be invited to take part in a confidential taped interview relating to their decision making about H.S.C. English texts. Interview times will be arranged separately at a mutually convenient time during Term 4.

All identifying information will be removed from the surveys and interview tapes and each respondent will be identified by a code so the information will be totally confidential. No individual teacher or school will be identified in any publication of the research. The results of the study will be published in the completed PhD thesis and will also be disseminated in journals and at conferences. Participants in the study have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason.

I do hope that you will allow your English staff to participate in this research. It will enable the development of greater insight into the implementation of the new Stage 6 English syllabus and the nature of the decisions made about the English texts students study for their H.S.C. A statement of agreement to participate in the research is attached for you to sign and return. If you agree for your school to participate would you please pass the enclosed questionnaires to the Head of the English Department? I would appreciate the return of the consent form in the reply paid envelope by **Friday, 8th September, 2000**. Thank you for your assistance in directing this to the English faculty.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer, Teacher Education Program
Phone: 9850-8702 [1]

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[1] "The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: rachael.krinks@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome."

24/7/00

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Research Study:

"Factors influencing teachers' decision making in Higher School Certificate English text selection."

I _____ agree for my school to participate in the research study named above being conducted by Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan from the School of Education at Macquarie University and outlined in the information letter. I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequences.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Date

_____ _____
Signature of Chief Investigator Date

Chief Investigator: Ms Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer
Teacher Education Program
School of Education
Macquarie University NSW 2109

APPENDIX B1: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS AND CONSENT FORM FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT SURVEY

24/7/00
Dear Head Teacher of English

Re: Doctor of Philosopy Research entitled:
"Factors influencing teachers' decision making in Higher School Certificate English text selection."

My name is Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan and I am a Lecturer in the Secondary English Teacher Education Program at Macquarie University. My current research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Macquarie University, under the supervision of Dr. Donna Gibbs, Senior Lecturer, School of Education - phone: 98508632. The aim of my study is to investigate the factors that influence teachers' choice of texts in Higher School Certificate English, with a focus on the new Standard English Course.

The research will be conducted during Terms 3 and 4, 2000 involving initially a survey which should take approximately twenty-five minutes to complete. I am asking the Head of the English Department and two additional members of the Senior English staff to participate by each completing the enclosed questionnaires. Schools randomly chosen from across sectors and rural and urban locations have been invited to participate. In order to gain a greater insight into the information gained in the surveys, a small sample of teachers who volunteer their interest will be invited to take part in a confidential taped interview relating to their decision making about H.S.C. English texts. Interview times will be arranged separately at a mutually convenient time during Term 4.

All identifying information will be removed from the surveys and interview tapes and each respondent will be identified by a code so the information will be totally confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the research. The results of the study will be published in the completed PhD thesis and will also be disseminated in journals and at conferences. Information about publication will be available from the author. Participants in the study have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason. You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

I do hope that you will agree to take part in this research. It will enable the development of greater insight into the implementation of the new Stage 6 English syllabus and the nature of the decisions made about the English texts students study for their H.S.C. The return of the completed questionnaire will signify your consent. Would you please pass on the others to two members of the English staff? I would appreciate the return of all three questionnaires in the reply paid envelope by **Friday, 8th September.**

Thank you for your assistance and your time, I look forward to working with you on this study.
Yours sincerely,

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer
Teacher Education Program Phone: 9850-8702
[2]

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[2] "The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: rachael.krinks@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome."

Date

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Research Study:

"Factors influencing teachers' decision making in Higher School Certificate English text selection."

I _____ agree to participate in the research study named above being conducted by Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan from the School of Education at Macquarie University and outlined in the information letter. I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequences.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____
Signature of Chief Investigator Date

Chief Investigator: Ms Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer
Teacher Education Program
School of Education
Macquarie University NSW 2109

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS AND AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

Area 1: Focus of investigation: views of subject & pedagogy, practice, perceptions about self as teacher, the culture of the English teacher.

- How would you describe yourself as an English teacher?

Probe: in terms of your views/ attitudes about your subject and your pedagogy, particularly in relation to HSC English.

Area 2:

Focus of investigation: response to, understanding of, New Syllabus; attitudes to, & knowledge of, the changes in the Stage 6 English Syllabus.

- What do you think of the new Stage 6 English syllabus?

Probe: Why? What are your reasons for your view? What shifts from the previous syllabus do you see in the new Stage 6 syllabus? What is the emphasis of study? How does it fit with your views about HSC English?

Area 3:

Focus of investigation: curriculum change; internal & external factors affecting implementation of new syllabus.

- Now you've begun implementing the new syllabus, what factors have affected your implementation of it?

Probe: Perhaps use the word "things". Factors: -positive and negative-, internal and external- in school/ outside school.

To what extent have you been supported in the process of change to implement the new syllabus? How? Is there collaboration in the English Department or are you working on your own?

Area 4:

Focus of investigation: selection of texts; text choice & decision making.

- What do you think about the Prescribed text list for the Standard Course? In particular, how and why did you choose the texts your students are studying?

Probe: What was your role in making decisions about texts?

Any limitations on your choices?

Area 5:

Focus of investigation: Change in Practice? Implementation: in the classroom, teaching & learning strategies, student experiences of the new syllabus, assessment practices. Change outside the classroom?

- The new syllabus represents a change in direction in HSC English, can you give me any examples of how you have changed your teaching practice?

Probe: What strategies are you using to implement the new syllabus?

What are you doing differently in the classroom? Are there other areas of change in your practice beyond the classroom? Can you identify any changes in your teaching of this year's HSC from your previous experience eg: class assessment tasks, use of types of texts?

CASE STUDY:

Consider the teaching of Module C: Texts and Society, Elective C: *Consumerism*, Text: Bruce Dawe.

- Could you describe your programming for this unit of work, (look at the program)
- How did you introduce the unit?
- Give me some examples of some of the activities you used.
- What formal assessment tasks were completed?
- How do you think this unit went?
- Were there any differences in the way you taught Bruce Dawe's poetry this year from your previous practice?

OPTION:

- Were there any differences in the way you taught Bruce Dawe's poetry this year from your previous practice?

APPENDIX D:

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Date
Dear

Re: PhD thesis Research entitled:
"Implementing a new syllabus: Teachers, text choice and curriculum change."

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a taped interview. As agreed, this interview will take place on
at
It should take approximately an hour.

I would like to ask you five questions focusing on your views of the new Stage 6 English Syllabus, your implementation of it, and your selection of texts for the Standard Course. In particular, I am also interested in your teaching program for the Standard Course, Module C, Elective C, the poetry of Bruce Dawe. If possible, when we meet for the interview, may I have a copy of your program for this Elective for my research purposes?

All identifying information will be removed from the interview tapes and each respondent will be identified by a code so the information will be totally confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the research. The results of the study will be published in the completed PhD thesis and will also be disseminated in journals and at conferences. Information about publication will be available from the author. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

I appreciate your consent to take part in this research. It will enable the development of greater insight into the implementation of the new Stage 6 English syllabus and the nature of the decisions made about the English texts students study for their H.S.C. A statement of agreement to participate in the research is attached for you to sign. I will collect this at the interview.

Thank you for your assistance and your time. I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer
School of Education Phone: 9850-8702[3]

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[3] "The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: rachael.krinks@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome."

Date

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of PhD Research Study:

"Implementing a new syllabus: Teachers, text choice and curriculum change."

I _____ agree to participate in the research study named above being conducted by Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan from the School of Education at Macquarie University and outlined in the information letter. I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequences.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Chief Investigator Date

Chief Investigator: Ms Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan
Lecturer
School of Education
Macquarie University NSW 2109

APPENDIX E1: THE SYLLABUS RUBRIC FOR MODULE C: TEXTS AND SOCIETY IN THE STANDARD ENGLISH COURSE

Module C: Texts and Society

This module requires students to explore and analyse texts used in a specific situation. It assists students' understanding of the ways that texts communicate information, ideas, bodies of knowledge, attitudes and belief systems in ways particular to specific areas of society.

Electives in this module are designed around a specific social context and the texts that are characteristic of and valued within it. Prescribed texts will be drawn from a variety of professional and social contexts. Students are also required to supplement this study with texts of their own choosing related to the module.

Students explore the role of textual features in the shaping of meaning in specific contexts. They develop the communication skills necessary for a wide variety of personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts. Composition focuses on analysing and experimenting with textual forms characteristic of the specific contexts. These compositions may be realised in a variety of forms and media.

(Board of Studies, 1999c, p.34)

APPENDIX E2: THE PRESCRIBED SYLLABUS RUBRIC FOR STANDARD COURSE MODULE C, ELECTIVE 3: *CONSUMERISM*

In this elective students will explore texts that deal with aspects of consumerism in society. Students will respond to and compose a range of texts related to consumer activity. They will examine the features of texts that document aspects of consumerism and the particular ways these texts influence response.

Students will choose ***one*** *of the following texts as the basis for their further exploration of texts that deal with aspects of consumerism.*

Poetry: Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness, 1954 – 1982,* (Revised edn). Longman, reprinted 1985. *Enter Without So Much as Knocking, Americanized, Abandonment of Autos, Breakthrough, The Not-so-good-Earth, Televistas.*

Students are to supplement this study with texts of their own choosing related to the elective. The support document, Workplace and Community Texts (see http://www.boardofstudies.nws.edu.au*), provides exemplars of the types of texts and may further supplement their study of this elective.*

(Board of Studies, 1999c, p.16)

APPENDIX E3: THE PRESCRIBED SYLLABUS RUBRIC FOR STANDARD COURSE MODULE C, ELECTIVE 3: *CONSUMERISM*

2001 HSC Exam question:

Standard English Paper 2, Module C, Elective 3, *Consumerism*

"You work for the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Your workplace supervisor has asked you to write a report based on your investigations of how texts influence consumers.

Write the report. In your answer, you should refer to your prescribed text, and a variety of other related texts of your own choosing."